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CONTROLS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 003164

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO CARTER PILCHER ON SEN. BROWN'S STAFF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/14/06

TEXT

TAGS: PREL, PGOV, UN, PK, AF
SUBJECT: SENATOR BROWN AND CONGRESSMAN WILSON DISCUSS
AFGHANISTAN WITH PAKISTANI OFFICIALS

REF: ISLAMABAD 2945

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY JOHN C. HOLZMAN, DEPUTY CHIEF OF
MISSION, EMBASSY ISLAMABAD. REASON: 1.5 (D).

SUMMARY

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2. (C) PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO TOLD SENATOR BROWN (R-CO) AND CONGRESSMAN WILSON (D-TX) APRIL 7 THAT THE GOP BACKED THE U.N., NOT THE TALIBAN, IN AFGHANISTAN. SHE SAID A TRANS-AFGHAN GAS/OIL PIPELINE WAS NEEDED QUICKLY TO MEET GROWING PAKISTANI DEMAND, PROVIDE AN OUTLET FOR THE CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS OTHER THAN VIA IRAN AND RUSSIA AND TO HELP BRING PEACE TO AFGHANISTAN. THE PM SAID THE U.S. SHOULD HAVE REPRESENTATION INSIDE AFGHANISTAN, NOTING THAT KANDAHAR AND JALALABAD WERE SECURE; SHE URGED THE U.S. TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE, SAYING SHE FEARED AFGHANISTAN COULD DISSOLVE UNLESS STEPS TO PROMOTE PEACE WERE TAKEN SOON. FOREIGN MINISTER ASSEF ALI, IN A SEPARATE MEETING, SAID PAKISTAN WANTS TO WORK WITH THE US, EU, AND RUSSIA TO DRAFT A SET OF "PRINCIPLES" TO GOVERN A FUTURE AFGHAN PEACE PLAN, AND THAT HE HOPES TO WORK ON THE DRAFT PRINCIPLES WITH SA A/S RAPHEL ON HER UPCOMING VISIT. ASSEF ALI ASKED SEN. BROWN TO TELL AFGHAN PRESIDENT RABBANI THAT PAKISTAN IS NOT AGAINST THE KABUL GOVERNMENT, WILL NOT BUILD ROADS OR SIGN A PIPELINE AGREEMENT WITHOUT KABUL'S ASSENT, AND IS WILLING TO TALK TO SETTLE OUTSTANDING DIPLOMATIC PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

PM BHUTTO ON AFGHANISTAN

3. (C) PRIME MINISTER BENAZIR BHUTTO TOLD VISITING SENATOR HANK BROWN AND CONGRESSMAN CHARLIE WILSON OVER LUNCH APRIL 7 THAT THE PERCEPTION PUT ABOUT BY THE KABUL GOVERNMENT AND OTHERS THAT HER GOVERNMENT WAS BACKING THE TALIBAN WAS SIMPLY UNTRUE. INSTEAD, SHE NOTED, PAKISTAN STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE U.N. PEACE MISSION. STRESSING THE NEED TO BRING PEACE QUICKLY TO AFGHANISTAN TO PREVENT ITS POSSIBLE DISSOLUTION INTO A TALIBAN, PASHTUN SOUTH AND A PRO-IRANIAN, MINORITY ETHNIC NORTH, THE PM SUGGESTED THAT A TRANS-AFGHAN PIPELINE COULD HELP ACHIEVE A NATIONAL RECONCILIATION SINCE, SHE STATED, THE KABUL GOVERNMENT AND ALL THE OTHER FACTIONS SUPPORTED THE PROJECT. THE PIPELINE SHOULD BE BEGUN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, SHE REMARKED, BEFORE OTHER ROUTES CAME ON LINE; THE GOAL SHOULD BE TO PROVIDE AN OUTLET FOR THE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES WHICH DID NOT RUN THROUGH RUSSIAN OR IRAN. THE PM WAS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PIPELINE IDEA, WHICH SHE SAID WOULD HELP MEET PAKISTANI DEMAND FOR GAS AND ALSO WOULD ENCOURAGE EFFORTS TOWARDS NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IN AFGHANISTAN. THE PM URGED THE UNITED STATES TO GET MORE INVOLVED IN AFGHANISTAN, SAYING THE U.S. SHOULD HAVE REPRESENTATION INSIDE THE COUNTRY -- PERHAPS IN EITHER KANDAHAR OR JALALABAD WHERE SECURITY WAS GOOD. THE U.S. SHOULD GIVE MORE BACKING TO THE U.N. TO HELP ESTABLISH A BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT, BUT FIRST A PEACE FORCE WOULD BE NEEDED, THE PM CONCLUDED.

FOREIGN SECRETARY CHIMES IN

4. (C) FOREIGN SECRETARY NAJMUDDIN SHAIKH, WHO ALSO ATTENDED

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THE APRIL 7 LUNCH, SAID NEUTRAL PEACEKEEPERS WOULD BE NECESSARY TO MONITOR AND REINFORCE A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT. IN THE CURRENT SITUATION, HEKMATYAR AND MASOOD WERE "RECONCILING NOT FOR PEACE, BUT FOR CONFRONTATION WITH THE TALIBAN." A PIPELINE PROJECT, BY CREATING REASONS FOR THE FACTIONS TO COOPERATE WHILE OFFERING SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL BENEFITS TO THE NATION, WOULD BOTH HELP LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT AND HELP CREATE CONDITIONS IN WHICH SUCH A GOVERNMENT COULD OPERATE, HE OPINED. IN TERMS OF PAKISTAN'S APPETITE FOR NATURAL GAS, SHAIKH SAID DEMAND WOULD OUTSTRIP SUPPLY, EVEN OVER THE NEXT 30 YEARS. AN EXPECTED 22 PERCENT INCREASE IN PAKISTANI INDUSTRIAL USE OF GAS, PLUS CONVERSIONS FROM OIL TO GAS, SUGGESTED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEMS WITH SURPLUS GAS OUT OF THE 1.4 BILLION CUBIC FEET OF GAS BEING PLANNED FOR DELIVERY VIA AFGHANISTAN. THE PROJECT COULD PROCEED, SHAIKH CONCLUDED, BECAUSE ALL THAT WAS NEEDED WAS THE KABUL GOVERNMENT'S "PASSIVE ACQUIESCENCE," NOT FORMAL APPROVAL

-- AND, OF COURSE, THE AGREEMENT OF LOCAL AFGHAN COMMANDERS ALONG THE ROUTE.

GOP WANTS TO WORK WITH US, EU, RUSSIA ON AFGHAN "PRINCIPLES"

5. (C) FOREIGN MINISTER SARDAR ASSEF ALI TOLD SEN. BROWN IN A SEPARATE MEETING APRIL 7 THAT PAKISTAN WANTS TO WORK WITH THE U.S., THE EU, AND RUSSIA TO COME UP WITH A SET OF "PRINCIPLES" TO GOVERN A FUTURE PEACE PLAN FOR AFGHANISTAN. AMPLIFYING ON POINTS IN REFTTEL; ASSEF SAID SUCH A SET OF PRINCIPLES -- IF COORDINATED WITH AND SUPPORTED BY THE US, EU, AND RUSSIA -- COULD REENERGIZE THE UN MISSION OF MAHMOOD MESTIRI, WHICH HAS OTHERWISE "RUN OUT OF STEAM." ASSEF ALI HOPED HE AND SA A/S ROBIN RAPHEL COULD BEGIN A DRAFT OF THESE PRINCIPLES ON HER UPCOMING VISIT TO PAKISTAN. HE SAID HE HAD ALREADY DISCUSSED THE PRINCIPLES CONCEPT WITH THE BRITISH, FRENCH, GERMANS, AND RUSSIANS.

GOP NOT AGAINST KABUL GOVERNMENT

6. (C) ASSEF ALI ASKED SEN. BROWN TO CARRY A MESSAGE TO AFGHAN PRESIDENT RABBANI WHEN HE MET HIM APRIL 8. HE ASKED THE SENATOR TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- PAKISTAN IS NOT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN;

-- THE PAKISTANI PEOPLE HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF AFFECTION FOR THE AFGHANS, AND WERE PLEASED TO BE OF ASSISTANCE DURING THE AFGHAN WAR;

-- PAKISTAN HAS NOT DE-RECOGNIZED THE KABUL GOVERNMENT; IT SITS AND WORKS WITH IT REGULARLY IN THE U.N., THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC), AND THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION

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ORGANIZATION (ECO);

-- PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN ARE WELL ON THE WAY TO SOLVING THE DIPLOMATIC PROBLEM CAUSED BY THE ATTACK ON THE PAKISTANI EMBASSY IN KABUL; THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN IS READY FOR A MEETING FOCUSSED ON THESE ISSUES;

-- PAKISTAN DOES NOT INTEND TO BUILD A ROAD OR PIPELINE THROUGH AFGHANISTAN WITHOUT THE AGREEMENT OF THE KABUL GOVERNMENT;

-- PAKISTAN BELIEVES THERE SHOULD BE A PLACE FOR THE TAJIKS IN ANY FUTURE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE TAJIKS PRESENTLY CONTROL KABUL;

-- PAKISTAN DOES NOT BELIEVE THERE CAN BE A MILITARY SOLUTION IN AFGHANISTAN, OR THAT ANY GROUP OR FACTION CAN WIN -- HENCE PAKISTAN SUPPORTS PROGRESS TOWARD A BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT IN WHICH ALL GROUPS ARE FAIRLY REPRESENTED.

7. (U) CODEL BROWN HAS APPROVED THIS MESSAGE. CODEL WILSON DEPARTED BEFORE THE MESSAGE WAS PREPARED.

SIMONS

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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