

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 17, 2010 7:50 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: talk with Qureshi

FYI. We are working some of this into the remarks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Holbrooke, Richard
Sent: Tuesday, August 17, 2010 5:50 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Fw: talk with Qureshi

Jake--pls share this immensely worrying email on vali's talk in NY this afternoon with Hillary asap, and make sure it is reflected in her remarks Thursday. RH

----- Original Message -----

From: Nasr, S Vali R
To: 'HolbrookeR@state.gov' <HolbrookeR@state.gov>
Sent: Tue Aug 17 17:44:22 2010
Subject: talk with Qureshi

----- Original Message -----

From: Vali Nasr [redacted]
To: Nasr, S Vali R
Sent: Tue Aug 17 17:36:06 2010
Subject: talk with Qureshi

B6

I just spoke at length with Qureshi--he had just checked into his hotel. Some of what he said may be useful for Secretary's speech, others are generally instructive:

1- He has a 3.5 minute curtain raiser comment planned about what has happened followed by a five minute "documentary" on the floods that they plan to distribute as CDs.

2-The flood is the biggest since 1929 (almost two decades before Pakistan was born)

3-The Monsoon season will last another 3-4 weeks, and if rains continue things will get a lot worse. He says we are only witnessing the effects of the first flood wave, the second is about to happen, and they are expecting a third wave before the end of the monsoon. The current flood is largely caused by the swelling of Kabul and Indus rivers, the next waves will include the major rivers running from India through Azad Kashmir and Punjab into Sind. The pressure is already building in Indian dams and soon they have to release the water.

Pakistan is talking to India, but there is little India can do about the issue.

Flooding in eastern rivers will engulf Baluchistan and Punjab as well, more agricultural lands, creating more refugees and forcing the first wave of refugees to move again.

4-The greatest damage is done in the two areas of the country where the security problem is worst: Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Southern Punjab. Devastation is not just by the water but also by the refugee problem (major issue in Punjab and Baluchistan). As a result tents and refugee relief is the most needed follow up to helicopter support. The problem in these areas will impact fight against extremism, but he said that exodus to larger cities, and dryer rural districts is bound to cause a variety of other social and political problems.

5-The Pakistan government was caught by surprise by the magnitude of the problem, especially at local level. Local authorities in many cases were busy evacuating their own families, and then were overwhelmed by the size of the problem. The only functioning effort was by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) that was created as part of 2005 earthquake relief, and is led by General Nadim (working closely with ODRO). But Qureshi says that while NDMA functions well at national level, at local level it lacks capacity.

6-The largest challenge is complete collapse of local government (the level at which implementation is and will have to happen. And this involves not just PPP, but PMLN and MQM and ANP as well. As a result, the flood has created interest in cooperation between all political parties, since local governments of all of them are lacking and face protest.

7-In Islamabad Gilani is in charge, but in effect the army has stepped in to fill the vacuum for lack of local government. But even the army is not up to the task.

8-Because of collapse of local government and infrastructure, helicopters were the single most important thing, and there the US contribution was singularly important.

9-He said friend and foe in Pakistan praises what US has done. The perception is that the US was first out of gate to help Pakistan. What has impressed Pakistanis is not just the assistance, but what US officials have said publicly, and the very visible compassion they have shown for Pakistan. He singled out Ambassador Holbrooke's passionate plea for assistance to Pakistan as having made an important impact.

10-Qureshi said he is deeply worried that the international community may not understand that the worst is yet to come, not just floods but what comes after.

He said: Pakistan will have to revise its budget, its cotton exports are gone and it will have to import food it once produced to feed its own. It will have to invest hugely in infrastructure and rural development, He said the "economic future is bleak" and if "we don't act quickly the consequences will be disastrous". Pakistan he said needs immediate relief, but also investment in capacity building and reconstruction.

11-He is considering skipping DC this trip (to be confirmed), and organizing a separate trip there later that would include visit to the Hill and doing the think tank round.