

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

DATE: 1/17/81

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AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN-IRAN: Talks To Resume

The agreement by Afghanistan and Pakistan to resume indirect talks through a UN intermediary in Geneva in mid-June continues a process begun by the UN Secretary General last fall in New York. The issues for discussion are the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, noninterference in Afghanistan's internal affairs, and the voluntary return of Afghan refugees. For the first time, Iran will be involved with the talks to the extent that its Ambassador in Geneva will be "kept informed" of their progress.

Comment: Islamabad has long fought Iranian association with its diplomatic efforts on Afghanistan and will look to Tehran for added pressure for the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the return of the refugees. Moscow and Kabul probably regard the dropping of self-determination as an issue for discussion as a concession, although Islamabad views this as an inherent part of the demands concerning refugees. Neither Islamabad nor Moscow is prepared to give ground on substantive issues, but both are seeking diplomatic advantage by giving the appearance of flexibility.

