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OF 061100Z DECEMBER 88
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MY TELNOS 699 AND 701: AFGHANISTAN: SOVIET/MUJAHIDEEN TALKS

SUMMARY

1. KING FAHD RECEIVED VORONTSOV FOLLOWING CONCLUSION
OF SOVIET/MUJAHIDEEN TALKS AT TAIF.

2. ACCORDING TO STATEMENT RELEASED BY MUJAHIDEEN THE
TALKS COVERED THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN,
COMPENSATION AND FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO
COUNTRIES. DIALOGUE TO RESUME SOON IN PAKISTAN.

DETAIL

3. THE SAUDI PRESS AGENCY TODAY (6 DECEMBER) REPORTED
THE KING FAHD RECEIVED SOVIET FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN
MINISTER YURI VORONTSOV IN RIYADH ON 5 DECEMBER FOLLOWING
THE CONCLUSION OF HIS TALKS WITH MUJAHIDEEN LEADERS.
THE MEETING WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY CROWN PRINCE ABDULLAH, PRINCE
TURKI AL FAISAL (WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED THE SOVIET DELEGATION
FROM TAIF), AND A NUMBER OF OTHER SAUDI MINISTERS.

4. THE MUJAHIDEEN DELEGATION ISSUED A STATEMENT
AFTER THE TALKS IN WHICH THEY REITERATED THEIR
FIRM RESOLVE TO SEE AN END TO THE SOVIET
OCCUPATION OF THEIR COUNTRY. THE STATEMENT
SAID THAT THEIR POSITION IN THE TAIF TALKS
HAD BEEN BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- THAT AFGHANISTAN WAS AND ALWAYS WOULD BE A FREE ISLAMIC
STATE WHOSE FATE LAY IN THE HANDS OF ITS OWN PEOPLE:
- THAT THERE COULD BE NO DELAYS IN THE SOVIET WITHDRAWALS:
- THAT FOLLOWING THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL, POWER IN THE
COUNTRY WOULD BE IN THE HANDS OF THE PEOPLE,

REPRESENTED BY THEIR 'VANGUARD', THE MUJAHIDEEN.

5. THE STATEMENT WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE TALKS HAD COVERED THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

- THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS AND THE HANDOVER OF POWER TO THE PEOPLE AS REPRESENTED BY THE MUJAHIDEEN:
- THE PAYMENT OF REPARATIONS TO AFGHANISTAN IN COMPENSATION FOR THE LOSSES INCURRED AS A RESULT OF THE OCCUPATION:
- THE NEUTRALITY OF AFGHANISTAN AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN EACH OTHER'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

THE DELEGATION APPRECIATED SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO TURN OVER A NEW PAGE IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN AND HOPED TO SEE CLEARER INDICATIONS OF THIS IN THE FUTURE. THE TWO SIDES HAD AGREED THAT THE TALKS WOULD RESUME IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN PAKISTAN. THE STATEMENT ENDS WITH AN EFFUSIVE EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE FOR SAUDI SUPPORT FOR THE MUJAHIDEEN.

6. VORONTOV ALSO ISSUED A STATEMENT, IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT THE TALKS HAD BEEN USEFUL AND WOULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ENDING THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE FORMATION OF ABROAD-BASED AFGHAN GOVERNMENT. HE TOO THANKED THE SAUDIS FOR THEIR HELP WITH THE TALKS, AND CONFIRMED THAT IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THEY SHOULD RESUME SOON IN PAKISTAN.

7. RABBANI IS REPORTED IN AL SHARQ AL-AWSAT AS SAYING THAT THE MUJAHIDEEN HAD REJECTED THE SOVIET IDEA OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, AND INSISTED ON DIRECT TALKS. THE TAIF MEETING HAD BEEN AT SOVIET REQUEST. RABBANI CLAIMED THAT THE MUJAHIDEEN HAD REJECTED A SOVIET REQUEST FOR A CEASEFIRE, BUT HAD SAID THEY WOULD SAFEGUARD THE WITHDRAWAL IF THE RUSSIANS AGREED NOT TO INTERFERE WITH THE LOCAL POPULATION. HE ADDED THAT THE RUSSIANS HAD ALSO RAISED THE QUESTION OF POWER SHARING AND COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN ANY REGIME ESTABLISHED AFTER THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL, BUT THE MUJAHIDEEN HAD DECLINED TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. RABBANI SAID THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD GO AHEAD WITH WITHDRAWAL AS PLANNED. THE TAIF MEETING REPRESENTED AN ADVANCE IN

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THE SOVIET/MUJAHIDEEN DIALOGUE, TAKING IT A STEP BEYOND THE GENEVA ACCORDS.

COMMENT

8. THE MEETING BETWEEN VORONTSOV AND THE KING HAD NOT BEEN FORESHADOWED IN EARLY REPORTS OF THE TAIF TALKS, AND SEEMS TO IMPLY SAUDI WILLINGNESS TO IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

9. HEAD OF CHANCERY CALLED ON JINDAN, HEAD OF THE POLITICAL ANALYSIS DEPARTMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ON 5 DECEMBER. JINDAN CLAIMED NO SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT HAD GONE ON IN TAIF BUT SAID THAT THE MEETING SEEMED TO HAVE GONE WELL, AND MIGHT PROVE TO BE A SIGNIFICANT LANDMARK IN SAUDI/SOVIET RELATIONS. IN HIS VIEW, IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE RELATIONS WERE RESUMED (THOUGH HE WAS CAREFUL TO LINK THIS TO FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS, AND AGREEMENT ON SATISFACTORY POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN). HE WAS DISMISSIVE OF THE SUGGESTION THAT THE 'ULEMA MIGHT BE ABLE TO RESTRAIN SUCH A DEVELOPMENT IF THE POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT WANTED IT FOR FOREIGN POLICY AND ISLAMIC REASONS.

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