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AFGHANISTAN: BAKER/SHEVARDNAZE DISCUSSION ms

SUMMARY

1. DISCUSSION IN MOSCOW OF AFGHANISTAN SQUEEZED BY OTHER ISSUES. BUT SOME PROGRESS TOWARDS A SET OF COMMON PRINCIPLES FOR A SETTLEMENT. POSSIBILITY OF A JOINT STATEMENT AT THE BUSH/GORBACHEV SUMMIT.

DETAIL

2. WE HAVE SPOKEN TO POLICY PLANNING STAFF, STATE DEPARTMENT ABOUT DISCUSSION OF AFGHANISTAN AT THE BAKER/SHEVARDNAZE BILATERAL. THEY SAID THAT DISCUSSION HAD BEEN BADLY SQUEEZED BY OTHER, PRINCIPALLY ARMS CONTROL, ISSUES. AFGHANISTAN WAS THE ONLY REGIONAL ISSUE WHICH WAS INCLUDED IN BAKER'S TALKING POINTS FOR THE ONE-TO-ONE. IN THE EVENT, THERE WAS ONLY TIME TO HAND OVER A US SUGGESTED LIST OF PRINCIPLES FOR A SETTLEMENT. THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION AT THE SUBSEQUENT SMALL GROUP MEETING ON REGIONAL ISSUES, AND ROSS CHAIRED A 45 MINUTE EXPERTS MEETING

3. AT THE END OF THESE MEETINGS, THE TWO SIDES HAD AGREED ON THE FOLLOWING FOUR PRINCIPLES:

- I) A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT SHOULD INVOLVE A TRANSITION PERIOD.
- II) THE UNITED NATIONS (AND THE OIC) SHOULD BE INVITED TO WORK WITH THE AFGHANS TO ESTABLISH APPROPRIATE TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.
- III) THERE SHOULD BE ELECTIONS TO CREATE A FINAL GOVERNMENT.
- IV) HUMANITARIAN NEEDS WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED AS PART OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

STATE SAID THAT THE RUSSIANS HAD SEEMED RATHER LESS ENTHUSIASTIC THAN PREVIOUSLY ABOUT THE IDEA OF OIC INVOLVEMENT (ALTHOUGH IT WAS THEY WHO HAD PUT IT TO THE US SIDE DURING THE HELSINKI TALKS). THE US SIDE HAD TRIED TO INCLUDE, AS A FIFTH PRINCIPLE, THAT THE TRANSITIONAL AUTHORITY SHOULD RECEIVE POWER FROM THE NAJIBULLAH GOVERNMENT. THE RUSSIANS WERE NOT WILLING TO ACCEPT THIS, BUT HAD PRESSED FOR REFERENCE TO A CEASEFIRE AND NEGATIVE SYMMETRY. THEY SUGGESTED THAT BOTH OF THESE, BUT PARTICULARLY A CEASEFIRE, SHOULD

BE AGREED IN ADVANCE OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS. THESE POINTS, IN TURN, HAD BEEN REJECTED BY THE US SIDE.

4. STATE SAID THAT THERE WERE NO PLANS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION IN ADVANCE OF THE SUMMIT. THE ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT YET REACHED A DECISION ON HOW TO PLAY THINGS, BUT THE LIKELIHOOD WAS THAT THEY WOULD PREPARE A DRAFT JOINT STATEMENT, INCORPORATING THE FOUR AGREED PRINCIPLES, TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE SUMMIT AND HOPEFULLY, ISSUED AT ITS CONCLUSION. THE DRAFT WOULD PROBABLY INCORPORATE SOME WORDING ON A CEASEFIRE AND NEGATIVE SYMMETRY, POSSIBLY IN THE FORM OF AN AGREEMENT TO TALK ABOUT THE SUBJECTS ONCE THE POLITICAL PROCESS GOT UNDERWAY. STATE WERE ADAMANT THAT IT MADE NO SENSE TO TRY TO NEGOTIATE A CEASEFIRE IN ADVANCE OF A POLITICAL PROCESS: IT WOULD BE TIME CONSUMING AND PROBABLY IMPOSSIBLE TO IMPLEMENT. THERE APPEAR TO BE DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION ON WHETHER IT WOULD BE RIGHT TO TALK NOW ABOUT A WILLINGNESS TO CUT OFF ARMS SUPPLIES. SOME ARGUE THAT THIS WOULD DISCOURAGE THE MUJAHIDEEN, LEADING TO A RELAXATION OF MILITARY PRESSURE. OTHERS SAY THAT THAT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED.

5. WE ASKED WHAT CONTACTS THE ADMINISTRATION HAD HAD WITH THE UN. STATE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN DISCUSSIONS WITH SAVAN. HE HAD MADE CLEAR THAT THE UN WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO HOLD POWER ON AN INTERIM BASIS IN AFGHANISTAN, BUT WOULD BE WILLING TO PLAY THE ROLE OF HELPFUL PARTNER. THIS COINCIDED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION'S VIEW OF THE UN ROLE, THOUGH THERE WOULD CLEARLY NEED TO BE MORE DETAILED DISCUSSIONS. WE ALSO ASKED ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF THE PAKISTANIS AND THE SAUDIS. STATE SAID THAT PAKASTANI IDEAS ON A POLITICAL PROCESS WERE ALONG SIMILAR LINES (THEY REFERRED TO PRESIDENT GHULAM ISHAQ'S RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH THE AIG LEADERS). THE SAUDIS APPEARED TO BE AVOIDING THINKING ABOUT A POLITICAL SOLUTION, BUT STATE THOUGHT THAT KING FAHD WOULD BE WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH A SETTLEMENT WHICH DID NOT REQUIRE THE SAUDIS TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE OR TAKE ANY RESPONSIBILITY. STATE ADDED THAT THEY HAD MADE CLEAR TO THE RUSSIANS THAT ANY AGREEMENT ON NEGATIVE SYMMETRY WOULD BE A PURELY US/SOVIET DEAL: THE RUSSIANS WOULD HAVE TO COME TO THEIR OWN AGREEMENT WITH THE SAUDIS. ON THE MUJAHIDEEN, STATE SAID THAT WHILE SOME WOULD OPPOSE - SAYYAF HAD DENOUNCED ELECTIONS AS UNISLAMIC - MOST ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE JIHAD WAS OVER AND WERE WILLING TO LOOK FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THEY ADDED THAT, WHILE THE AIG COULD NOT EXPECT A ROLE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS, THERE WAS NO REASON WHY THE AIG LEADERSHIP SHOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED AS PROMINENT AFGHANS.

6. STATE SAID THAT THE RUSSIANS STILL APPEAR TO BE GIVING LIMITED ATTENTION TO FINDING A SETTLEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN, LARGELY BECAUSE OF

PREOCCUPATION WITH OTHER ISSUES. NEVERTHELESS, STATE WERE HOPEFUL THAT A JOINT STATEMENT COULD BE AGREED. THE MAIN STICKING POINT REMAINED THE ROLE OF NAJIBULLAH IN THE RUN-UP TO ELECTIONS. SECRETARY BAKER CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THAT NAJIB SHOULD NOT BENEFIT FROM THE ADVANTAGE OF INCUMBENCY. BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, THE EXPERIENCE OF NICARAGUA HAD ENCOURAGED BAKER TO BELIEVE THAT A POLITICAL PROCESS BASED ON ELECTIONS SHOULD BE ACHIEVABLE, AND PRODUCE THE RIGHT RESULT IN AFGHANISTAN. STATE THOUGHT THAT THE NAJIBULLAH PROBLEM WAS INCREASINGLY A SYMBOLIC ONE AND IMPLIED THAT, IF OTHER FACTORS CAME TOGETHER, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO FIND A WAY AROUND IT.

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