

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
Secretary's First One-on-One with Shevardnadze

TIME: 4:55 to 6:30 pm, Monday, March 21, 1988
PLACE: Secretary's Outer Office

SUBJECTS: Organizational Questions, ABM Treaty, Nuclear
Testing, Afghanistan, Central America

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.

U.S.S.R.

THE SECRETARY
Gen. Powell

FOREIGN MINISTER SHEVARDNADZE

EUR/SOV Director Parris
(Notetaker)

(Soviet Notetaker)

Dimitri Zarechnak
(Interpreter)

Pavel Palazhchenko
(Interpreter)

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THE SECRETARY welcomed Shevardnadze, noting that the two were meeting frequently. But the more they met, the more they seemed to have to do. The present meeting was no exception.

The President was looking forward to seeing Shevardnadze on Wednesday, the Secretary indicated. It was well that the two ministers could have this Monday afternoon meeting. It would enable them to go over the agenda and begin discussion of certain issues. The Secretary thought that it might be particularly useful to talk about Afghanistan in a preliminary way. That was a current issue, and one important to both sides.

SHEVARDNADZE expressed his own warm greetings and those of the Soviet leadership, including General Secretary Gorbachev. He agreed with the Secretary that the more often the two ministers met, the more problems seemed to pile up. As he had driven to the Department in his motorcade, he was interested that people in the street seemed to take no notice. They seemed to think that this was natural, as it should be, especially as the President would soon be in Moscow. Shevardnadze emphasized that the Soviet leadership believed that the summit would be an important event, even if, for the

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BY *[Signature]* NARA, DATE 6/1/95

POWELL noted that the U.S. was working hard to design JVE's which would meet our needs, but pointed out that no tests could take place before early summer -- after the summit. He agreed that work should continue on a parallel basis, but warned that time was short if the two sides were to seek advice and consent before a summit.

SHEVARDNADZE reiterated that the issue could be revisited the next day. It would be a mistake, he said, to delay the JVE until after the summit. It could be done sooner.

Afghanistan

Moving to Afghanistan, THE SECRETARY recalled that the two ministers had discussed the issue the previous fall in the Secretary's private office. Shevardnadze had told him then that Moscow had decided to withdraw. The Secretary had accepted that. The ministers had agreed that it would be in the interest of all concerned were that to happen as soon as possible.

In the intervening months, they had discussed the problem a number of times. Some things had fallen into place or were about to. There had been extensive discussion of a possible interim government. The Secretary had shared some views with Shevardnadze at various points, and the Soviets had subsequently broken the linkage between their withdrawal and establishment of an interim regime. All seemed to agree that agreement on an interim government was desirable, but it was a hard thing to bring about. The Secretary believed that the Pakistanis had come to see that, too, although they felt that the more that could be done, the better.

Thus, the remaining issue was one which, in large part, had to do with the way any Geneva accords presented themselves. We felt that the accords must present themselves as balanced. The U.S. could not be asked not to support those it had supported, while the Soviet Union was allowed to continue supplies to those it had supported. What one guarantor was allowed to do, the other should be, as well. Otherwise, there would be a perception of imbalance. This was something the Secretary and Shevardnadze had discussed at some length in Moscow. The Secretary felt that there were a variety of ways to get at the problem. But it appeared that our attempts to engage the Soviets had hit a stone wall. So the Secretary had been looking forward to Shevardnadze's visit to see what progress might be made at their level. He would be interested in the Foreign Minister's views.

SHEVARDNADZE said that what he had told the Secretary in his private office remained in effect. The Soviets had decided to withdraw. They had announced a timetable: Gorbachev had initially indicated it would be ten months; in Geneva they had agreed it could be nine. The U.S. had raised phasing of withdrawals, and Moscow had decided on that, as well. Half its forces would be out in the first three months, the rest in the remaining period. Shevardnadze could not provide any further breakdown. He had personally looked into the matter, and it could not be done. But this was not a fundamental issue. By the end of the year, the withdrawal would be complete -- and this would happen under the Reagan Administration.

As for the relationship between withdrawal and establishment of an interim government, Shevardnadze said, this was something which could not be worked out in the context of the Geneva talks. Whether one talked in terms of an interim government, a coalition government, or a transitional government, such an approach was not realistic. If one looked at the range of players -- from the current regime, to the Peshawar "7", to Zahir Shah and his supporters, to the internal combatants, it was clear that it would be very hard to find a common language. It would take time. The Soviets did not want to postpone their withdrawal by establishing a linkage to interim government arrangements. Let the Afghans decide the matter.

There was a better approach, Shevardnadze suggested. Cordovez had indicated he would be prepared in a "private" capacity to use his good offices to mediate among the parties in the wake of a Geneva agreement. The Soviets and Afghan government had not yet endorsed his mission. But now the Kabul regime had reached the conclusion that such an attempt would be not only possible, but desirable. Thus, once Geneva were signed, work could get underway promptly on a coalition government.

Shevardnadze noted that the problem had recently been complicated by Hekmatyar's election as leader of the Peshawar Alliance. Hekmatyar was a fundamentalist, a person of extreme views. It was doubtful that he could deal with the Zahir Shah faction, to say nothing of the current regime in Kabul. Hekmatyar had said he did not rule out that, in the event of an agreement in Geneva, the camps now in Pakistan would be moved to Iran. It was no accident that he had come to the fore at this juncture; trouble was in store. This had made the possibility of any linkage between withdrawal and interim government arrangements even less workable.

As for the situation in Afghanistan itself, things were winding down. Skirmishing continued, but with waning intensity. Shevardnadze had previously told the Secretary that Soviet troops had been withdrawn from twelve provinces. The figure was now thirteen, maybe fourteen. In some villages, counter-revolutionary forces reigned; in others, the Kabul regime held sway. But they lived as neighbours. That was the Afghan way. It had taken the Soviets time to understand this.

As to the problem of supplying arms, Shevardnadze wanted the Secretary to understand the situation. Since 1921, the Soviet Union had cooperated continuously with Afghanistan in various fields, including the military. Weapons being supplied to the current regime were in accordance with the terms of a bilateral treaty. It would not be understood if Moscow now sought to break that contractual relationship. Much thought had been given this point by the Soviet side, and Shevardnadze could tell the Secretary that Moscow could not accept such a step. The decision to withdraw had not been an easy one. If followed by "such an action" it would not be understood. The Soviet Union had said it did not drop its friends. Were it to cut off their weapons, it would not be understood..

Thus, Shevardnadze, said, cooperation would continue with the current regime, as it had under the King. Moscow had no desire to terminate a relationship which had existed for decades. Afghanistan was a neighbor. The Soviet Union wanted normal relations with it.

But this raised a question. Were Afghanistan to become a neutral state, as the Soviet Union wished, what would its status be? Neutral status could be incompatible with a military supply relationship. But that would have to be decided in the future.

Another question was the military aid supplied by the U.S. to Pakistan. This was done on a government-to-government basis. The Soviet Union had no problem with that. As for those supplies which went to "anti-government" forces, the Soviet Union considered this illegal. It would be in Moscow's interest, and in the interest of all countries in the region, for that aid to stop. If the U.S. continued such aid, it would be inconsistent with any obligations it might undertake as a guarantor of non-interference. Thus, the ideal solution would be for the U.S. not to supply Hekmatyar.

THE SECRETARY pointed out that this would be ideal for the Soviet Union, but not for the U.S. The Soviet Union, would also take on the role of a guarantor in the event there was a

Geneva agreement. If the Geneva accords required that a guarantor stop the supply of arms, it applied to both guarantors equally. There had to be a consistent standard. The practical effect of such an arrangement would not be so great. The political effect would. What was needed was a way of balancing things; it was largely a question of how it appeared. The Soviet Union would have withdrawn its forces. All the factions would have to work out the aftermath. It would not be easy, but that was their task.

In the meantime, the Secretary stressed, there had to be a balance. The U.S. wanted to settle. It was in everyone's interest that the situation in Afghanistan be settled in an orderly way. We wanted to work something out. We hoped it was possible to find a balanced way of expressing would would take place. The Secretary had been asked how this might be done. He had said that there were various ways, but that experience had shown that it was possible to work out some very difficult problems with the Soviet Union. Both sides seemed to want to resolve this one.

SHEVARDNADZE said that there was a big difference between U.S. and Soviet aid with respect to Afghanistan. Soviet assistance was on the basis of an intergovernmental agreement. The factions the U.S. supported were not the government of Afghanistan. At the same time, Shevardnadze recognized that the U.S. had a moral and political responsibility to those it had supported. There were various options for dealing with this problem.

The first, as he had suggested earlier, was for the U.S. unilaterally to end supplies to the resistance. As much as Moscow might welcome such an outcome, Shevardnadze acknowledged that it would be unacceptable to the U.S.

A second outcome -- although an undesirable one from the Soviet standpoint -- would be for the U.S. not to sign on as a guarantor of the Geneva accords. The problem with such an option was that the U.S. would thereby remove itself from participation in the resolution of one of the most acute problems of the time. This was not desirable to Moscow, but could be considered. Under such a scenario, the Geneva accords would be mostly a bilateral document, with the Soviet Union participating to the extent it dealt with the dates for the withdrawal of Soviet forces. Shevardnadze emphasized yet again that this option was not desirable.

A third variant took as its point of departure the fact

that the documents elaborated in Geneva did not deal directly with the question of arms supply. Thus, the issue could be omitted from the discussion entirely. The U.S. might at some point, e.g., in the event the Afghans resolved their internal political differences, decide assistance was no longer necessary. In the meantime, maybe the issue should just be dropped. Obviously, if Shevardnadze were asked by the press, he could not say he approved of the U.S. supplying forces hostile to Soviet friends. But that was the U.S.'s business.

Summing up, Shevardnadze reiterated that the first option was the ideal, but would not be acceptable to the U.S. The second was probably as unacceptable to the U.S. as it was undesirable to Moscow. The Soviets would prefer another outcome. It believed that the U.S. had a voice to be heard. U.S. involvement would make for a more stable settlement.

THE SECRETARY said he agreed. He suggested that what Shevardnadze had described as the third option held the most promise. Noting that the Geneva accords imposed certain obligations on Pakistan with respect to what went across the border, the Secretary emphasized the need to be able to state that, as far as the U.S. was concerned, we would be able to supply those whom we had aided if the Soviet Union supplied those it had supported. If we saw that the Soviet side had ceased its assistance, the U.S. would no longer have to continue its own supply effort.

In any case, the Secretary pointed out, humanitarian aid would continue. The refugees would have a tough time of it when they returned. They would have an urgent need for seed, supplies, equipment.

The Secretary proposed that the two sides make an effort while Shevardnadze was in Washington to find a way in the context of Shevardnadze's third alternative to describe an arrangement which would be balanced in such a way that both sides could live with it. The Secretary did not know whom Shevardnadze might charge with the task, but the Secretary would ask Under Secretary Armacost to work the problem. They ought to get to work the following morning. There were a variety of possibilities which should be explored openly.

SHEVARDNADZE said that Deputy Foreign Minister Adamishin, seconded by Middle East Countries Department Chief Alekseev, could work with Armacost. It seemed to Shevardnadze that, in the event the two sides agreed to sign the Geneva accords, it would be unnecessary to advertise that arms supplies were

continuing, since the Geneva accords did not address that issue. At the same time, he supposed, Congress would probably ask questions.

THE SECRETARY assured him that this would be the case. The U.S. would have to be able to say that what we would do would depend on what the Soviet Union would do. But, he reiterated, the experts should have at the problem and come up with some ideas. If they had something to say to the ministers, they could interrupt them. It would be well to reach some meeting of the minds by the time of Shevardnadze's session with the President.

SHEVARDNADZE agreed that the two sides appeared to have the basis for a good discussion the following morning. If it proved possible to reach agreement on the military aid question, he added, and if the Afghan parties agreed to Cordovez's private mediation, the only obstacle to signing in Geneva was the question of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Briefly reviewing the history of the matter, Shevardnadze pointed out that Pakistan was insisting on language in Geneva which referred to respect for the "internationally recognized border" -- i.e., the Durand Line. But Afghanistan had withheld recognition of the Durand Line since 1922, because it artificially divided the Pushtun nation. India also had an interest in the matter, which it had registered with the Kabul government and the U.N. Afghanistan had proposed a simpler formulation -- "existing borders" -- to resolve the issue. Shevardnadze expressed the hope that, if the other issues he and the Secretary had discussed could be resolved, Pakistan would withdraw its demands on the border issue. This would make conclusion of the Geneva accords a real possibility.

Central America

THE SECRETARY suggested that the two ministers brief their delegations on their discussion, and be prepared to meet again the following morning at 8:30.

SHEVARDNADZE said he would first like to ask a question. What about the troops that the U.S. had sent to Honduras? Would they stay there?

THE SECRETARY replied that our troops had been sent to the region at the request of the Honduran government, and in response to Nicaragua's incursion across into Honduras. We had indicated that the force would be withdrawn within about ten

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