

RELEASE IN PART B1,1.4(B),1.4(D)

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 2, 2011 12:19 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: A few points from Istanbul

Classified by DAS, A/GIS, DoS on 10/30/2015 ~ Class: CONFIDENTIAL ~ Reason: 1.4(B), 1.4(D) ~ Declassify on: 11/02/2026

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From: Sullivan, Jacob J
Sent: Wednesday, November 02, 2011 11:57 AM
To: Abedin, Huma
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D; Burns, William J
Subject: FW: A few points from Istanbul

Below is SRAP's readout of the Istanbul conference, to go to S when she has time to read it. Bill, would be curious if this tracks your assessment -- sounds like it does.

I. The outcome is largely along the lines we had hoped when we began planning for Istanbul this Spring.

--The communique contains 4 important things: a clear affirmation of the obligations in the 2002 Kabul Declaration, extended from immediate neighbors to the larger region; an extension and specification of those commitments, and especially clear regional assurances of support for reconciliation, transition, and regional trade; trackable confidence building measures (CBMs); and, an agreement to meet in this format again.

--Of course, the outcomes could have been stronger in a number of ways. The principles and objectives are pretty good, as are many of the CBMs. The framing of/level of commitment to the CBMs could be better, as could the level of commitment to this format for future dialogue.

--Seen as a potential start to a process, though, this is good. It will clearly need a lot of attention from us and support to the Afghans if it is to take hold.

II. The final communique negotiations went well.

--Our key points we met on the details. Most importantly, the "red lines" are spelled out as part of regional support to reconciliation.

We were also able to help fix a few poor drafting choices that may have been read to weaken regional commitments to key international principles like, say, sovereignty.

--We would have liked an explicit endorsement of the New Silk Road, but China and Russia strongly opposed the phrase while accepting many of the concrete commitment.

--The Afghans also got their key points through: the outcome is the Istanbul Process, not a weaker "declaration;" the CBMs are in the body, not in an annex, and an FM meeting was accepted for Kabul next year, preped by an experts meeting an under Afghan leadership.

III. A few notes on the drafting.

--The most striking thing is how seriously and intensely all of the countries involved treated these negotiations. 9 plus hours of word by word negotiations. Everyone but the Uzbeks were actively engaged. This region may also have learned some lessons from the CSCE experience and so are approaching this with great caution. In any case, though, no one can claim that this text is anything but a very carefully thought through set of commitments by all parties.

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IV. A few interesting things from the regional interventions this morning

--Karzai was quite positive on SPD

--As noted in a previous e-mail, FM Khar half-insinuated that Pakistan would only accept the outcome through the lens of their extreme and rejected written comments. We'll need to keep on this.

--Kabulov was constructive in his CN comments, using agreed language and not Russia's preferred "peace and security" language.

V. For wider distribution, 5 good things about the final outcome

--The region affirmed and considerably strengthened the principles first laid out in the 2002 Kabul Declaration of Good Neighbourly relations, advancing its commitments to apply to current challenges.

--Afghanistan's neighbors and near-neighbors -- including Pakistan, India, China, Russia, and Iran -- have spoken in one voice to assure Afghanistan of their support for Afghan-led reconciliation and transition to Afghan national security forces. They endorsed the principles that need to guide reconciliation, including renounce violence, the respect for the Afghan constitution and human and women's rights, and they recognized the importance on long-term international support to the ANSF.

--The region has agreed on concrete and implementable confidence building measures, giving a benchmark to measure progress toward the high aspirations in the agreement.

--The confidence building measures include robust steps toward implementing the New Silk Road vision of integrated regional economic growth.

--The agreement reached today is called -- and clearly conceived as -- a process. The countries have agreed to follow up on their commitments, starting with meetings in Kabul next January and a foreign ministerial in Kabul next June.