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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE
AND SECURITY

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 39/13 of 15 November 1984, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the principles involved and the action required with regard to the situation relating to Afghanistan.
2. I have pursued with determination my efforts to promote the search for a political solution because I have been assured repeatedly that they are strongly supported by the international community. There is also a growing conviction on both sides that a negotiated settlement is the only possible way to achieve peace in Afghanistan. Peace, and the degree of national reconciliation that it should entail to allow the Afghan people to decide their own future, cannot be attained by military means.
3. When the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed in 1982 to move through the intermediary of Mr. Diego Cordovez, my Personal Representative, into substantive negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive settlement, they reached a number of understandings that have acquired special significance and have been the subject during the past year of different interpretations that threaten to disrupt the diplomatic process.
4. The Assembly will recall that these understandings allowed negotiations to start on a document that contained draft texts of all the provisions that the interlocutors had agreed were needed to resolve the issues involved and to establish solid foundations for good-neighbourly relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The form of the settlement was to be considered and decided upon at a more advanced stage of the negotiations. On that basis, substantial progress was made when the interlocutors held a round of talks in April 1983, to such an extent

that most of the provisions that they considered necessary for the achievement of an effective settlement were agreed upon. Unfortunately the interlocutors subsequently encountered serious obstacles in trying to reach agreement on some of the key provisions under consideration. The efforts made in the last two years to overcome these difficulties were reviewed in my previous reports to the Assembly (see A/38/449-S/16005 and A/39/513-S/16754).

5. During a visit to the area in April 1984 my Personal Representative suggested to the interlocutors, as a means of breaking the serious deadlock that had developed, that they should seek to reach agreement on the formal character of the instruments that would contain the actual settlement, their structure, legal status and the formalities required for their implementation. Given the strong distrust that obtained, this was expected to enable the interlocutors more effectively to test the sincerity of each other's stated intentions and thus foster the atmosphere of mutual confidence that would be essential for the implementation of the measures envisaged in the settlement. It was also decided to change the format of the negotiations, which were thereafter conducted through "proximity" talks.

6. During the round of negotiations held in August 1984 the question of the form of the settlement was accordingly carefully considered by the interlocutors, who agreed that the provisions concerning non-interference and non-intervention would be included in a bilateral agreement. It was not possible to agree on the form of other aspects of the settlement. The interlocutors none the less decided to continue efforts in that direction at a round of talks that was scheduled to be held in February 1985.

7. At the beginning of this year the Government of Pakistan requested a postponement of the round of talks on account of the fact that elections had in the mean time been scheduled in that country. A number of difficulties raised by both sides at that time led me to conclude that another round of talks would not be useful - and even, perhaps, counter-productive - if held in the absence of a comprehensive understanding on the form of the settlement. I consequently requested my Personal Representative to visit the area once again to work out such an understanding as a priority matter and at the highest level.

8. Mr. Cordovez travelled to the area from 25 to 31 May 1985. In Islamabad he met with President Zia ul-Haq, Prime Minister Muhammed Khan Junejo and Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan. At Kabul Mr. Cordovez met with President Babrak Karmal and Foreign Minister Shah Mohammad Dost. For technical reasons Mr. Cordovez was unable to land at Teheran, but he briefed the Permanent Representative of Iran in New York upon his return.

9. Mr. Cordovez reported to me that at Kabul and Islamabad an understanding was reached that the political settlement should consist of a set of instruments that would include a bilateral agreement on non-interference and non-intervention; a declaration (or declarations) on international guarantees; a bilateral agreement on the voluntary return of refugees; and an instrument that would set out the interrelationships between the aforementioned instruments and the solution of the question of the withdrawal of foreign troops in accordance with an agreement to be

concluded between Afghanistan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. A new round of talks was accordingly convened at Geneva from 20 to 24 June 1985.

10. During the June round of talks it was possible virtually to complete the formulation of two draft bilateral agreements, one covering the principles of mutual relations, in particular on non-interference and non-intervention, and the other containing all the arrangements for the voluntary return of the refugees. It may be noted that the latter instrument cannot be finalized before it has been ascertained - as envisaged in one of its draft provisions - that the arrangements for the return of the Afghan refugees are satisfactory to them. The task of preparing these instruments was facilitated by the fact that most of the texts incorporated therein had already been agreed in the document that had been used as a basis for discussion at previous negotiations. It should be stressed that the interlocutors participated in the exercise with renewed determination and vigour.

11. At the June round it was also possible to conclude the formulation of a declaration on international guarantees, which can be made either individually or jointly, the text of which was then conveyed to the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and of the United States of America, the designated guarantors, for their comments. The draft instrument on interrelationships was not considered and the interlocutors agreed to hold a further round of talks in August.

12. The interlocutors accordingly reconvened at the Palais des Nations from 27 to 30 August 1985. The Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, referring to one of the understandings reached at the inception of the diplomatic process, reiterated the view that the negotiations on the instrument on interrelationships should be conducted in direct talks. The Foreign Minister of Pakistan, invoking the same understanding, stressed that a change in the format of the negotiations was not as yet justified. It was not possible to resolve this matter and therefore a draft instrument on interrelationships could not be considered. The interlocutors agreed, however, to hold another round of talks from 16 to 20 December 1985.

13. In the course of the proximity talks held in August the interlocutors considered the written comments received from the designated guarantors and requested my Personal Representative to transmit each of the comments to the other designated guarantor. This was done on 9 September 1985. The Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America have reiterated on several occasions their Governments' support for a negotiated political settlement and for the continuation of my efforts.

14. In accordance with the understandings reached at the beginning of the process, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran was kept informed of the discussions and has consistently reiterated that it supports an early solution that would meet the legitimate aspirations and interests of the Afghan people.

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15. It is indeed regrettable that an impasse on the procedure for the negotiations should stall the diplomatic process at a time when both sides have re-emphasized their conviction that a political settlement is possible, when both sides have expressed their unequivocal determination to achieve a negotiated settlement and when both sides have indicated that agreement on the substance of all the pending texts should not present insurmountable difficulties. It is obvious, however, that the reasons underlying the position of both sides on the procedure for negotiations have fundamental political import for each of them. This cannot be underestimated. In connection with this procedural issue, as in connection with the substantive issues under discussion, there is, therefore, a question of political will. Both sides must ensure that their determination to conclude the negotiations successfully will prevail. I trust that in considering the decisions that are required to that end they will bear in mind the overriding advantages of an effective settlement for the peoples of the region.
