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	VCE-00	AC-01	NEA-00	DCP-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	DHS-00
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TAGS: OSCE, PHUM, PREL, IZ

SUBJECT: UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES PRESENTATION FOR OSCE PC--GUIDANCE FOR APRIL 7 OSCE PC

REF: EMAIL FREDERICK-SOBOTKA APR 6

1. IN PREPARING AN INTERVENTION RESPONDING TO THE COMMENTS OF THE EU FOREIGN MINISTER, POST MAY DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

MR. CHAIRMAN, LET ME JOIN IN WELCOMING THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, RUUD LUBBERS. WE APPRECIATE HIS VERY THOUGHTFUL INTERVENTION AND THE EXCELLENT COOPERATION THAT UNHCR MAINTAINS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

MR. CHAIRMAN, I'M GRATEFUL TO MR. LUBBERS FOR RAISING THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN IRAQ. I KNOW THAT THIS ISSUE WEIGHS HEAVILY ON THE MINDS OF EVERYONE AROUND THIS TABLE. ALTHOUGH IRAQ LIES OUTSIDE OF THE OSCE AREA, MR. LUBBERS IS CORRECT IN NOTING THAT ITS SITUATION AFFECTS MANY OSCE COUNTRIES, NOT LEAST BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF IRAQIS ALREADY SEEKING ASYLUM IN EUROPE.

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THE UNITED STATES FEELS DEEP CONCERN FOR THE HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS OF THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ AND HAS LONG BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS THAT THEY HAVE LONG

SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF SADDAM HUSSEIN'S REGIME, THE VERY SITUATION WHICH FORCED MANY OF THEM TO SEEK ASYLUM. AS PRESIDENT BUSH HAS SAID, ONE GOAL OF THE COALITION'S MILITARY ACTION WILL BE TO ALLOW THE IRAQI PEOPLE TO BUILD A REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT BASED ON FREEDOM.

AS MR. LUBBERS NOTES, THE EVENTS IN IRAQ DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE RESULTED YET IN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDP) OR REFUGEES. INDEED, THE IDP SITUATION IN THE NORTH IS STABILIZING, WITH RECENT REPORTS OF PEOPLE RETURNING TO THEIR HOMES.

OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS, THE UNITED STATES HAS TAKEN UNPRECEDENTED STEPS TO LIMIT THE ADVERSE HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES OF A CONFLICT WITH IRAQ AND TO PROVIDE RELIEF AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE TO THE IRAQI PEOPLE. WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY IN THIS REGARD WITH THE UNITED NATIONS, WHICH HAS A LEAD ROLE IN COORDINATING AND PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.

WE HAVE ALSO PRE-POSITIONED STOCKPILES OF EMERGENCY SUPPLIES, INCLUDING FOOD, MEDICAL KITS, BLANKETS AND SHELTER MATERIALS -- THE LARGEST SUCH RELIEF PREPARATIONS WE HAVE EVER UNDERTAKEN.

THE UNITED STATES IS MAKING AVAILABLE FOR THIS PURPOSE 670,000 METRIC TONS OF FOOD WITH A TOTAL VALUE OF \$549 MILLION. TO PUT THIS INTO CONTEXT, THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM POSITIONED 132,000 METRIC TONS OF FOOD IN THE REGION, WHICH WILL FEED 2.2 MILLION IRAQIS FOR ABOUT FOUR MONTHS.

IN ADDITION, THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS DONATING \$246 MILLION IN NON-FOOD AID, INCLUDING \$74.5 MILLION FOR EMERGENCY SUPPLIES AND PROGRAMS, \$110 MILLION FOR RECONSTRUCTION, \$3.9 MILLION FOR TRANSITION INITIATIVES AND \$60 MILLION FOR WORLD FOOD PROGRAM CONTINGENCY PLANNING.

OF THE FUNDS PROVIDED BY USAID AND THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT'S BUREAU FOR POPULATION, REFUGEES AND MIGRATION, ALMOST \$125 MILLION IS GOING TO THE UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ADDRESS THE HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE, OF WHICH UNHCR WILL RECEIVE \$21 MILLION.

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WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT SOME DELEGATIONS MAY HAVE QUESTIONS REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR. BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND IRAQ ARE PARTIES TO THE 1949 GENEVA CONVENTION RELATIVE TO THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR (POWS). THE UNITED STATES IS ABIDING, AND WILL CONTINUE TO ABIDE, TO ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE GENEVA CONVENTION, AND EXPECTS IRAQ TO DO THE SAME. THE ICRC BEGAN VISITING POWS HELD BY COALITION FORCES ON MARCH 31, AS SOON AS THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND MADE IT POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF ICRC PERSONNEL.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE IRAQIS SHOW NO SIGNS OF ABIDING BY THEIR COMMITMENTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW. IN ADDITION TO CONDUCTING MILITARY OPERATIONS AND PLACING MILITARY EQUIPMENT NEAR RELIGIOUS SITES, SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS, IRAQI SOLDIERS HAVE DRESSED AS CIVILIANS, USED CIVILIANS - INCLUDING CHILDREN - AS SHIELDS, AND RAISED FALSE FLAGS OF SURRENDER IN ORDER TO ATTACK COALITION FORCES. IRAQI FORCES HAVE FIRED ON CIVILIANS ATTEMPTING TO FLEE AREAS OF CONFLICT. WE HAVE ALSO SEEN, ON IRAQI STATE TELEVISION, THE EVIDENCE OF IRAQ'S MISTREATMENT OF COALITION POWS. TO THIS DAY, THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ HAS REJECTED ICRC'S REQUESTS TO VISIT POWS.

MR. CHAIRMAN, EVEN AS WE FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON ALLEVIATING THE NEEDS OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE, THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT LOSE SIGHT OF OTHER, JUST AS URGENT, HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS IN THE OSCE REGION.

THE OSCE DECISION TO GRANT PARTNER STATUS TO AFGHANISTAN IS A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE OSCE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS TO HELP CONTRIBUTE TO THE SECURITY, STABILITY, AND ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION THAT ARE NEEDED TO ENCOURAGE THE SAFE AND DIGNIFIED RETURN OF DISPLACED AFGHAN CITIZENS.

WE ARE ALSO ENGAGED ACTIVELY IN FACILITATING THE RETURN OF DISPLACED PERSONS IN THE BALKANS. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN MUCH PROGRESS IN THAT REGION, OVER 1 MILLION REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE STILL AWAIT A DURABLE SOLUTION FOR THEIR PLIGHT, THE LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF DISPLACED PERSONS BEING HOSTED BY SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO, AND BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA.

ACCORDING TO UNHCR DATA, OVER 200,000 PERSONS ARE AWAITING RETURN TO CROATIA, WITH APPROXIMATELY THE SAME NUMBER

AWAITING RETURN TO KOSOVO. ANOTHER 100,000 SHOULD BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN TO BOSNIA.

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THIS REGIONAL ASPECT OF RETURNS ONLY FURTHERS OUR BELIEF THAT A TOP PRIORITY ISSUE FOR THE OSCE MISSIONS IN THAT REGION IS THE WORK TO FURTHER ENCOURAGE REGIONAL RETURNS AND INTEGRATION, EVEN MORE SO AS UNHCR SCALES BACK ITS PROGRAMS THERE.

THE UNITED STATES ALSO HAS SERIOUS CONCERNS OVER THE SITUATION OF DISPLACED PERSONS IN CHECHNYA AND INGUSHETIA.

WE BELIEVE THE OSCE HAS A VALUABLE AND CONTINUING ROLE TO PLAY IN ASSISTING DISPLACED PERSONS THERE. ONE POSSIBLE FUTURE JOINT PROJECT WITH UNHCR WOULD BE TO PROVIDE THE IDPS WITH THE NECESSARY LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO UNDERSTAND THEIR RIGHTS AND OBTAIN THE BENEFITS TO WHICH THEY ARE ENTITLED.

IN CLOSING MR. CHAIRMAN, I WOULD LIKE TO COMPLIMENT MR. LUBBERS ON THE VERY USEFUL AND INFORMATIVE INFORMAL BRIEFING ON STATELESSNESS THAT THE UNHCR LIAISON OFFICE PROVIDED TO US HERE LAST YEAR. MAY I SUGGEST THAT IT COULD BE SIMILARLY PRODUCTIVE FOR UNHCR TO ORGANIZE ANOTHER SUCH BRIEFING, PERHAPS FOCUSING ON ITS VIEWS OF THE ROLE OF OSCE IN ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES AND IDPS. ONCE AGAIN, THE UNITED STATES APPRECIATES GREATLY THE HARD WORK OF YOUR STAFF HERE IN VIENNA AND WORKING WITH THE OSCE IN THE FIELD. THEY CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TO THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO ORGANIZATIONS.

IN THIS SAME VEIN, WE WELCOME UNHCR PARTICIPATION AT THE UPCOMING CONFERENCE ON ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE CONFERENCE ON RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION, WHICH YOU MENTIONED IN YOUR REMARKS. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS MUCH TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEBATE.

THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN.  
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