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Subject: Report of the Asia Oceania Working Group of 12 June 2002

Delegations will find attached the declassified version of the above document.

The text of this document is identical to the previous version.

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TRANSMISSION OF TEXT

from : Secretariat

Subject : Report of the Asia Oceania Working Group of 12 June 2002

Please find annexed the report of the Asia Oceania Working Group of 12 June 2002.

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ANNEX

BURMA/MYANMAR

1. The PSC is invited to endorse the future Presidency's intention to undertake a fourth EU Troika mission to Rangoon/Yangon in September 2002.
2. EU HOMs in Rangoon/Yangon are invited to take opportunities to underline to the regime the Union's welcome for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's (ASSK) release and its hope that the SPDC and NLD will now move towards substantive political dialogue.
3. EU HOMs are also invited to submit a further analysis of recent developments before the COASI meeting of 4 July, with particular emphasis on ASSK's freedom of movement, the NLD's freedom of action, progress towards substantive political dialogue and political prisoner releases.

VIETNAM (CENTRAL HIGHLANDS)

4. EU HOMs are invited to pursue the conclusions and recommendations of the EU delegation to the Central Highlands and also to encourage Vietnamese adherence to the Geneva Convention. The Commission is invited to pursue its complementary efforts, on the basis of the new Country Strategy Paper.

ASEAN PMC

5. The future Presidency is invited to suggest to Brunei the inclusion of an item on the WSSD at the PMC "10 plus 10" meeting on 1 August.

NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES IN CHINA

6. The Presidency will raise the issue of North Korean refugees with the North Korean authorities during the Troika Mission. It will also circulate terms of reference for a discreet Troika demarche upon the Chinese MFA on the same subject.

NEPAL

7. Delegations will exchange by Coreu information on the security arrangements for their missions and development projects in Nepal.

NEPAL-BHUTAN

8. The Presidency will circulate by Coreu the final version of the letter to both governments concerning the Bhutanese refugees.

SRI LANKA

9. The Presidency will circulate by Coreu a draft EU declaration on the peace process in Sri Lanka. HoMs in Colombo are invited to transmit the agreed declaration to the Government and to the LTTE, and to make arrangements for an early visit to the area under LTTE control.

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AFGHANISTAN

10. The Presidency will circulate by Coreu a draft reply to the letters that UNHCR Lubbers has addressed to several EU governments.

II. OTHER POINTS

INDIA-PAKISTAN

11. The Group discussed the ongoing conflict and the evolution on the ground, including the recent visits by Armitage and Rumsfeld. The Group agreed that the latest developments, and in particular the first de-escalatory steps announced by the Indian Government on 10 June, have been encouraging. However, the underlying issues have not been tackled and a new incident could lead to a fresh surge in tensions. The Group also stressed that the EU should continue to transmit the agreed messages to both parties, and to pursue concerted action with other international key players, and in particular with the US whose continued engagement remains crucial. Delegations finally underlined the need for an early visit by HR Solana to the region as a part of a more proactive EU contribution to finding a solution to the crisis.
12. The Presidency confirmed that GAC on 17 June would pursue the discussion and that updated Council Conclusions could be prepared by PSC the same day, if necessary.

SRI LANKA

13. UK and Sweden informed the Group on their recent visits to the country, pointing i.a. to the progress and problems of the ongoing peace-process, its broad popular support, and the interest of the GoSL in European experience with devolution. The LTTE had set up a de-facto autonomous administration in the areas under its control; however, harassment, extortion and the recruitment of child soldiers continued. The Commission pointed to the counter-productive political rivalry between the Sri Lankan President and the PM, and announced its intention to look into possibilities to support the peace process via the EC Rapid Reaction Mechanism.
14. The Group agreed on the utility of an EU declaration in support of the peace process, which would also address the EU's concerns, and encouraged an early HOMs visit to LTTE controlled areas which could be used to transmit the EU position to the LTTE.

AFGHANISTAN

15. The Group discussed the latest evolution in the country, and in particular the ongoing Emergency Loya Jirga (ELJ). Several delegations raised worries over the handling of conflictual issues before and during the ELJ, including the failure to fully implement the Bonn Agreement, the uncertain future role of the King, the power-balance between Tajiks and Pashtuns, the continuing influence of warlords and regional leaders, the weak position of the AIA/TA, etc. These problems would in all likelihood continue to haunt the Afghans and the international community. However, given Afghanistan's continuing dependence on foreign assistance, donors, and in particular the EU and the US, will have considerable possibilities to influence the further evolution.

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16. The Presidency recalled the its proposal to nominate Francesc Vendrell as successor to EUSR Klaiber. The proposal had been supported by PSC on 11 June and will be discussed at the GAC of 17 June.
17. The Group agreed on the utility of a joint reply to the letter, which UNHCR Lubbers had addressed to several delegations.

JAPAN

- Information on the EU-Japan Summit in Tokyo (8 July)

18. The Danish delegation distributed a draft agenda of the Summit that was under discussion with the Japanese side. The draft of the Press Communiqué of the Summit was also being discussed and would be circulated later.
19. The Presidency indicated that the EU-Japan Ministerial Troika (rescheduled for Whistler in Canada on the margin of the G8 Meeting) had again been postponed and would not take place during the Spanish presidency.

ASEM

- Results of the SOM (4-5 June), Madrid and FMM IV (6-7 June, Madrid)

20. The Group reviewed the results of the FMM on the basis of the Chair's Statement (Doc. 102/02) and a Secretariat report on the Ministerial Dialogue. The Group welcomed the positive results of the meeting, particularly the fact that the new ASEM working methods had worked well, the SOM exercising a stronger, more positive role in arriving at agreements on many important items which the Ministers then endorsed without debate. This included in particular the two political declarations on India/Pakistan and the Middle East, as well as the decision regarding how to handle enlargement. Some delegations welcomed the fact that concrete discussions with ASEM had been possible with the Asian side on some difficult issues where there were divergent views.
21. The Presidency recalled that the Asian side at Madrid had expressed concerns at the level of European Ministerial participation at the FMM. It suggested that discussion in COASI should take place on how to ensure greater participation. The Commission indicated that UNICE had expressed concerns on the participation and hoped that the participation at the Economic Ministers' Meeting in Copenhagen in September would be greater. In an exchange of views, delegations noted that there were difficulties in ensuring appropriate Ministerial level attendance at FMM meetings held annually, but there were different views on how to address this problem. Some delegations were open to the suggestion to consider holding the FMM every second year. The question of the possible impact of ASEM on EU-ASEAN relations was

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also raised and the need to take account of ASEM. Some delegations also noted the increasing role of China in ASEM, especially given the present low profile of Japan.

BURMA/MYANMAR

22. The UNSG's Special Envoy, Tan Sri Razali Ismail briefed the Group. He underlined the need for close EU-UN co-ordination, especially in humanitarian assistance. The EU, along with the US, had real leverage with the regime. He explained his short-term priorities (the identification and release of remaining political prisoners, the emergence of other political parties and greater freedom of movement for existing political parties). He hoped to visit again from 9 July. The proposed co-ordination mechanism for humanitarian assistance could play a vital role, but it remained a sensitive issue for the SPDC. It needed to be kept at a technical level for the moment. ASSK should become involved in a political dialogue with the SPDC. The EU should encourage ASEAN Ambassadors to make contact with ASSK. Some had already done so. He noted the difficulties that both the SPDC and ASSK seemed to have in including the ethnic nationalities in the political process for the moment. Razali also said that he would welcome an easing of travel restrictions on SPDC figures, where this could help foster national reconciliation, and higher level EU visits to Burma/Myanmar.

23. The Group later discussed these observations and the proposals made by HOMs. It too underlined the need for close EU-UN co-ordination. The Group agreed to revert to the issue on 4 July. It would consider whether, in the light of a further HOMs' report on the evolution of the situation, the time had come to amend the Common Position by, for example:

- Permitting higher level bilateral visits to Burma/Myanmar;
- Allowing certain individuals, currently subject to the EU visa ban, to visit the EU where such visits helped the process of national reconciliation;
- Also allowing the export of certain presently prohibited goods, which could be of use in, for example, de-mining. The Presidency said it would welcome more detailed UK thoughts on this point.

EU-DPRK

- Regional Directors' Troika mission to Pyongyang (15-18 June 2002)

24. A discussion took place at lunch in the presence of Ambassador Jack Pritchard, US Special Envoy for negotiations with the DPRK, who outlined in detail the position of the United States and responded to questions.

RESTREINT UE

25. With regard to the Troika Regional Directors' mission to the DPRK from 15 to 18 June, the Presidency indicated that it was optimistic that the Troika would have a meeting with Party members, it was still asking for a meeting with the army, this was more difficult however.
26. The Presidency welcomed the provision by the Council Secretariat of a human rights expert to take part in the Troika, despite the budgetary problems that this had posed to the Secretariat.

A.O.B.

a) NEPAL

27. The UK recalled the worrying security situation and the increasing attacks of Maoist insurgents. The UK announced its intention to hold an informal seminar on 19/20 June in London that will bring together Nepal experts to discuss a comprehensive approach to move a peace process forward.
28. The Commission pointed to the intention of the Nepalese Government to call parliamentary elections in November 2002. At present, Nepal is not included in the Commission's list of possible election monitoring missions. The Commission suggested to discuss this issue, including the security aspects of such a mission, at the London seminar.

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