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Prime Directive

Interesting. Schultz has new things to say, for a number of the US government, on the Middle East.

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SCHULTZ CONFIRMATION HEARINGS: THE MIDDLE EAST

1. IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT IN SENATE CONFIRMATION HEARINGS ON HIS APPOINTMENT ON 13 JULY, SHULTZ SAID THAT THE LEBANESE DESERVED A CHANCE TO GOVERN THEMSELVES, FREE FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY OR GROUP. THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON MUST EXTEND TO ALL ITS TERRITORY. WHAT WAS NOW GOING ON IN LEBANON MUST MARK THE END OF THIS CYCLE OF TERROR RATHER THAN SIMPLY THE LATEST IN A CONTINUING SERIES OF SENSELESS AND VIOLENT ACTS. THE LEBANESE CRISIS MADE PAINFULLY CLEAR ONE OF THE CENTRAL REALITIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST: THE LEGITIMATE NEEDS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE MUST BE ADDRESSED AND RESOLVED URGENTLY AND IN ALL THEIR DIMENSIONS. THE CAMP DAVID FRAMEWORK CALLED FOR TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FULL AUTONOMY FOR THE PALESTINIANS OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AND ALSO SPOKE ELOQUENTLY AND SIGNIFICANTLY OF A SOLUTION THAT MUST RECOGNISE THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. THE U.S. WOULD REMAIN A FULL PARTNER IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. IF THEY WERE TO SUCCEED, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PALESTINIANS MUST PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. THE BASIS MUST ALSO BE FOUND FOR OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION, IN ADDITION TO ISRAEL AND EGYPT, TO JOIN IN THE PEACE MAKING PROCESS. THE U.S. HAD VITAL INTEREST THROUGHOUT THE ARAB WORLD AND ITS FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE GREAT MAJORITY OF ARAB STATES HAD ASSISTED IT IN DEALING WITH THE LEBANESE CRISIS. WIDE AND EVER-STRENGTHENING TIES WITH THE ARABS WERE OF MANIFEST IMPORTANCE TO U.S. SECURITY: IT WAS FROM THE ARABS THAT THE WEST GOT MUCH OF ITS OIL AND WITH THEM THAT IT SHARED AN INTEREST AND MUST COOPERATE IN RESISTING SOVIET IMPERIALISM. SHULTZ ALSO REFERRED TO WHAT HE CALLED A FRESH DYNAMISM IN THE BRILLIANT ARAB HERITAGE OF SCIENCE, CULTURE AND THOUGHT. HE WOULD DO ALL IN HIS POWER TO SUSTAIN AND FURTHER U.S./ARAB RELATIONSHIPS.

2. REFERRING TO ISRAEL AS AMERICA'S CLOSEST FRIEND IN THE MIDDLE EAST, SHULTZ SAID THAT NO ONE SHOULD UNDERESTIMATE THE DEPTH AND DURABILITY OF AMERICA'S COMMITMENT TO THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL OR U.S. READINESS TO ENSURE THAT ISRAEL HAD THE NECESSARY MEANS TO DEFEND HERSELF. THE U.S. OWED IT TO ISRAEL, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, TO WORK WITH HER TO BRING ABOUT A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE, ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THE PARTIES INVOLVED, WHICH WAS THE ONLY SURE GUARANTEE OF SURE AND DURABLE SECURITY. HE DARED TO HOPE THAT THE U.S. COULD ARRIVE AT AN AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD SATISFY THE VITAL SECURITY OF INTERESTS OF ISRAEL AND THE POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS OF THE PALESTINIANS, WOULD MEET THE CONCERNS OF THE OTHER PARTIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED AND WIN THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, SHULTZ MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS.

(A) LEBANON

- (I) SHULTZ SAID HE FAVOURED THE USE OF U.S. FORCES IN BEIRUT IF THEY COULD BE USED PROPERLY AND SAFELY TO REMOVE THE PLO FIGHTING MEN FROM THE CITY. THE U.S. WOULD NEED TO WORK ALONGSIDE AT LEAST ONE OTHER COUNTRY AND SHULTZ STRONGLY IMPLIED THAT THE U.S. ROLE WOULD BE LIMITED TO EVACUATING THE PLO FIGHTERS. HE DISPUTED SENATOR GLENN'S CONTENTION THAT EITHER THE PLO WOULD LEAVE VOLUNTARILY (AVOIDING THE NEED FOR U.S. TROOPS) OR, IF THEY DID NOT, THAT THE U.S. WOULD BE INVOLVED IN A COMBAT SITUATION: THE PRESENCE OF U.S. TROOPS CAPABLE OF MAINTAINING THE PEACE WOULD MAKE THE OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE LESS LIKELY. ONE OF THE MAIN CURRENT PROBLEMS WAS THAT IT WAS NOT CERTAIN WHERE THE PLO WOULD GO. NO COUNTRY APPEARED WILLING TO RECEIVE THEM AND THAT FACT ALONE CONTAINED A MESSAGE. MANY COUNTRIES WOULD HESITATE TO ACCEPT A GROUP WHICH HAD A HISTORY OF ARMING THEMSELVES AND FORMING A GOVERNMENT WITHIN A GOVERNMENT.
- (II) QUESTIONED ABOUT THE ISRAELI INVASION OF THE LEBANON, SHULTZ SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD MADE CLEAR U.S. OPPOSITION TO THE MOVEMENT OF ISRAELI FORCES ACROSS THE BORDER AND THE U.S. HAD VOTED IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL FOR A CEASEFIRE AND WITHDRAWAL. HE HOPED THAT AN ISRAELI MOVE INTO WEST BEIRUT COULD BE AVOIDED. IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES CIVILIAN CASUALTIES WOULD MOUNT RAPIDLY. HE HIMSELF SHARED THE WIDESPREAD REACTION TO THE EXTENT OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN THE FIGHTING.

(B) ARAB/ISRAEL

- (I) SHULTZ SAID THAT EVENTS IN LEBANON MIGHT CREATE A CHANCE OF ACHIEVING A BREAKTHROUGH IN OTHER ASPECTS OF THE MIDDLE EAST. HE DID NOT HAVE A PLAN IN MIND BUT PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES MUST BE PART OF ANY NEGOTIATIONS. ASKED ABOUT TALKING TO THE PLO, SHULTZ SAID THAT IF THE PLO ACKNOWLEDGED ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AND ACCEPTED U N SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 348 THEN, AS THE PRESIDENT HAD INDICATED, THIS WOULD BE SOMETHING TO CONSIDER. ASKED WHETHER THE PLO WAS A TERRORIST GROUP, SHULTZ SAID THEY HAD MANY DIMENSIONS, INCLUDING TERRORISM. IF THE PLO COULD QUOTE GET OFF THIS GUERRILLA KICK UNQUOTE THEY WERE UNDOUBTEDLY A VOICE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. HE HATED TO SEE PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN ELECTED AS MAYORS REMOVED FROM OFFICE BECAUSE THOSE PEOPLE HAD SOME LEGITIMACY AND THEIR REMOVAL DID NOT SOLVE ANYTHING. ASKED ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW THAT ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS WERE LEGAL, SHULTZ SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD DESCRIBED THEM AS QUOTE NOT ILLEGAL UNQUOTE. HE HIMSELF COULD NOT FEEL THAT THESE SETTLEMENTS WERE CONSTRUCTIVE IN THE CONTEXT OF EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT SOME SENSE OF IDENTITY FOR THE PALESTINIANS. NOR WAS IT SIMPLY A QUESTION OF ISRAELI SETTLERS. 30 PERCENT OF THE LAND AND 40 PERCENT OF THE WATER IN THOSE AREAS WAS USED BY THE ISRAELIS. IF THE PROBLEMS OF THE PALESTINIANS WERE GOING TO BE MET THEN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA MUST BE QUOTE PART OF THE TERRAIN UNQUOTE.

(11) ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD ADOPT A TOUGH POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL, SHULTZ SAID THAT HIS EFFORTS MUST REFLECT THE SUPPORT THEY COULD COMMAND IN CONGRESS AND IN THE COUNTRY. HE WAS VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE DESIRE FOR PEACE IN BOTH ISRAEL AND IN THE ARAB WORLD AND DESCRIBED WITH EVIDENT EMOTION SOME OF HIS OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES EG THE DEATH IN THE 1967 WAR OF A JEWISH STUDENT WHO HAD BEEN ONE OF HIS MOST BRILLIANT PUPILS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO AND THE UPSURGE OF OPTIMISM FOLLOWING SADAT'S FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM. HE REGRETTED THAT ISRAEL HAD CROSSED THE LEBANESE BORDER BECAUSE THAT ACTION HAD PUT PAID TO THE CEASEFIRE WHICH HAD MORE OR LESS HELD UNTIL THEN. BUT THE ISSUE WHICH UNDERLAY CURRENT EVENTS WAS A TOTAL LACK OF PROGRESS IN DOING ANYTHING ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. LAST YEAR'S CEASEFIRE HAD PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO COME TO GRIPS WITH PALESTINIAN ISSUES, BUT NO ONE HAD GOT TO GRIPS WITH THEM. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CURRENT APPALLING BLOODSHED IT WAS NOW NECESSARY TO ASK IN WHAT WAYS PROGRESS COULD BE MADE. A GREATER SENSE OF URGENCY WAS NEEDED. HE REPEATED THAT THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD HAVE THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. ASKED WHETHER THE PLO MUST RECOGNISE ISRAEL AS A CONDITION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, SHOULD THE PALESTINIANS CHOOSE THEM AS THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, SHULTZ SAID THAT THE U.S. SHOULD STICK TO ITS CURRENT POSITION ON THE ISSUE. THE VERY ACT OF NEGOTIATING IMPLIED SOME KIND OF RECOGNITION OF THE PEOPLE YOU WERE NEGOTIATING WITH.

(C) IRAN/IRAQ

AN IRANIAN INVASION OF IRAQ WOULD BE JUST AS UNFORTUNATE AS THE IRAQI INVASION OF IRAN HAD BEEN. THE U.S. MUST CONTINUE TO STAND FOR THE SANCTITY OF INTERNATIONAL BORDERS. HE RECOGNISED THE GREAT CONCERN OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE GULF OVER WHAT WAS HAPPENING. THIS WAS A REMINDER THAT THERE WERE MANY GRAVE PROBLEMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST OTHER THAN THE ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE. THE U.S. DID NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH IRAQ OR IRAN AND WAS NOT THEREFORE VERY INFLUENTIAL WITH EITHER COUNTRY.

(D) BECHTEL CORPORATION

(1) IF CONFIRMED AS SECRETARY OF STATE SHULTZ SAID HE WOULD HAVE NO RELATIONSHIP WITH BECHTEL AND WOULD EXECUTE A STATEMENT REMOVING HIMSELF FROM CONSIDERATION OF ANY PARTICULAR MATTER INVOLVING BECHTEL WHICH MIGHT COME UP DURING HIS TERM OF OFFICE. HE CONFIRMED THAT IN 1975 BECHTEL HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF AN ANTI-TRUST SUIT BECAUSE THE LANGUAGE OF SOME OF ITS CONTRACTS REFLECTED THE TERMS OF THE ARAB BOYCOTT, AS DID THE CONTRACTS OF A NUMBER OF OTHER U.S. FIRMS AT THAT TIME. BECHTEL HAD ALTERED ITS PROCEDURES AND SUBSEQUENTLY, AS A LEADING MEMBER OF THE BUSINESS ROUND TABLE, HAD NEGOTIATED, WITH A GROUP OF AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANISATIONS, LANGUAGE WHICH HAD SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN INCORPORATED IN THE EXPORT ADMINISTRATION ACT. BECHTEL HAD FULLY COMPLIED WITH THAT ACT AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO.

(11) SHULTZ ACKNOWLEDGED THAT BECHTEL HAD WRITTEN TO ALL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN 1981 SUPPORTING THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO SELL AWACS AIRCRAFT TO SAUDI ARABIA. IT WAS RIGHT AND PROPER TO HAVE DONE SO AND HE HIMSELF HAD MADE NO SECRET OF HIS SUPPORT FOR THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY. HE DENIED THAT BECHTEL HAD APPLIED STRONG-ARM TACTICS TO PERSUADE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO SUPPORT THE AWACS DEAL.

HENDERSON

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ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE

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