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Folder Title:

Chernomyrdin, [Viktor] / Ahtisaari, [Martti] / MTA [Military Technical Agreement] [5]

Staff Office-Individual:

Kosovo Office-Schulte, Gregory

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1709

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Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. memo	To [Madeleine] Albright, [Sandy] Berger, and [Leon] Fuerth from Strobe Talbott. Subject: Post-Dinner Update & Next Steps [Duplicate of vz6233_003, this case] (2 pages)	05/13/1999	P1/b(1)
002a. form	Fax Cover [partial] (1 page)	05/13/1999	b(7)(C), b(6)
002b. draft	Information Paper. Subject: Comments to the 14 May 99 Russian proposal. (3 pages)	05/13/1999	P1/b(1)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
 National Security Council
 Kosovo Office (Schulte, Gregory)
 OA/Box Number: 1709

FOLDER TITLE:

Chernomyrdin, [Viktor] / Ahtisaari, [Martti] / MTA [Military Technical Agreement] [5]

2008-0994-F

vz6234

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
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PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SITE

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'99 MAY 13 P3:42

Message No. 019091 Classification Conf. No. Pages Attached 5

From: State Ops for Dep Sec Talbott's Party in Geneva
(Officer name) (Office symbol) (Phone number) (Room number)

MESSAGE DESCRIPTION Mr. Hammer Dines w/ Mr. Anvil

<u>TO: (Agency)</u>	<u>DELIVER TO: (Person/Office)</u>	<u>Phone no.</u>	<u>Room no.</u>
<u>NSC</u>	<u>Berger</u>		
<u>OVP</u>	<u>Fuehth</u>		
	<u>Steinberg</u>		
	<u>Kerrick</u>		
	<u>RAJ(vn)</u>		
	<u>Schulte</u>		

FOR: CLEARANCE INFORMATION PER REQUEST COMMENT

REMARKS: _____

S/S Officer: _____

Thursday, May 13, 1999

MEMORANDUM TO SEC. ALBRIGHT, APNSA BERGER AND OVP FUERTH
FROM: STROBE TALBOTT (EN ROUTE, MOSCOW-GENEVA)
SUBJECT: MR. HAMMER DINES WITH MR. ANVIL

Chernomyrdin and Ahtisaari are having dinner tonight (Thursday) at the presidential residence in Helsinki. They are discussing a variant of the proposal that Cherno made to the Vice President, Secretary Albright and APNSA Berger in Washington last Tuesday morning: Cherno goes to Belgrade and hammers away at Milosevic to get his agreement to the general conditions that Russia has endorsed as necessary for peace in the Balkans, then Ahtisaari spells out and reinforces NATO's specific conditions. Only if Milosevic unambiguously commits himself to the entire package - and only if there is a verifiable beginning of Serbian withdrawals - will NATO suspend bombing, reserving the right to resume if Milosevic violates the agreement.

On the basis of my own dinner with Ahtisaari last night, and in follow-up conversations both directly with him by phone and via Eric Edelman, I believe that he is rock-solid. He understands, supports and is prepared to work assiduously (including in repeat trips to Belgrade) to get the outcome on which NATO insists.

Chernomyrdin is a more complicated matter. On the one hand, he's desperate to be the man of the hour who gets the bombing stopped (more on that below). On the other hand, he's acutely aware of the Russian domestic political liabilities both of failure and of appearing to climb aboard, even by default, the NATO war wagon. Even more worrisome to him is Milosevic, about whom he is scathing, and the extraordinary difficulty of getting Milosevic to agree to what, when all is said and done, is indeed a capitulation to NATO and acquiescence in the suspension of Belgrade's writ over Kosovo.

He seems agreeable about playing the role we've assigned to him in Belgrade, but he recognizes — and worries — that Ahtisaari could elicit a big no from Slobo, or a no disguised as a yes, which NATO then rejects. In which case, Cherno is stuck in the middle and the bombing goes on. Cherno took this worry off with him to Helsinki this afternoon, and we've forewarned Ahtisaari of what he'll be dealing with.

If Cherno does agree to play the endgame our way, it will be largely because, I suspect, Yeltsin has told him to do whatever it takes to get this

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problem solved — and because Yeltsin has absorbed the cold reality of NATO's resolve.

In the two hours of conversation we had today, Cherno first agreed to the hammer-and-anvil scenario, then lapsed back into a dogged attempt to get NATO to accept a "new" Russian proposal, which is essentially the old Russian proposal - pause-and-talk: Milosevic agrees to the G-8 principles; NATO pauses, and talks commence on the "details," such as the scope of withdrawals and the composition of KFOR. Only after Doc Foglesong and I reiterated our rejection of that approach and the reasons for it did Chernomyrdin go back to his agreement to proceed on the basis of our idea (which we kept stressing was in fact his idea!).

As we've all discussed, the most difficult and in some ways the pivotal issue is withdrawal of the Serbian armed presence from Kosovo and the need for it to be total. Doc and I have repeatedly stressed to the Russians that all Serb forces must come out of Kosovo; only then could we consider the re-introduction into Kosovo of Yugoslav personnel, for the purposes and under the carefully circumscribed conditions laid out in our interagency "elaboration" paper. We have used that feature of our position as an inducement for the Russians to go along with hammer-and-anvil, and we have assigned this all-important part of the task to Mr. Anvil — i.e., Ahtisaari. He gets it; he's prepared to do it. And he's going to use the dinner tonight to try to persuade Chernomyrdin to hammer Milosevic in the right direction - toward acceptance of total withdrawals.

If he succeeds, here's how it would work:

Think of them as a tag team, with Cherno pushing a slightly elaborate set of G-8 principles and Ahtisaari then jumping on Sloba from the ropes with the full NATO.

Cherno would undertake another trip to Belgrade (with or without Ahtisaari — that's one of many questions they'll be thrashing out tonight). In addition to the G-8 principles, Chernomyrdin would press for Milosevic's assent to a two-part obligation:

- The Belgrade authorities will withdraw from Kosovo the VJ, MUP and paramilitary forces currently deployed there.
- The Belgrade authorities will plan to maintain in Kosovo, after the cessation of hostilities, a limited number of personnel to perform four functions:
 1. liaison with the international security and civilian presences;
 2. marking and clearing of minefields;

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3. maintenance of an official Yugoslav presence at sites associated with the Serb patrimony;
4. maintenance of an official Yugoslav presence at key border crossings.

Thus Russia is adhering to its own bottom lines, while not transgressing any of NATO's. Enter Ahtisaari, either from his seat next to Cherno or in a trip of his own. He would press Milosevic for additional commitments ("elaborations" or "points of precision," as we put it with the Russians), concentrating on those issues that relate to the safety and effectiveness of the international security presence and to the achievement of the goal of encouraging the return of refugees.

Ahtisaari's objective would make clear that Milosevic's agreement to the package as a whole requires:

- complete withdrawal of the VJ, MUP and paramilitaries;
- a precise and rapid timetable for their withdrawal;
- strict and enforceable numerical limits on the official Yugoslav presence that returns;
- clear and restrictive terms of reference for their functional responsibilities;
- strict and enforceable limits on equipment associated with the official Yugoslav presence;
- precise timetable for the return of the agreed Yugoslav presence;
- clear delineation of its limited geographical areas of operation;
- clearly defined and enforceable rules governing its relationship to the commander of KFOR and the head of the IPA (return subject to agreement by KFOR commander and, once in Kosovo, activities subject to KFOR supervision).

We have briefed Ahtisaari at length and gotten his concurrence on the various points contained in our interagency paper. Both in Helsinki and in Moscow, we bore down particularly hard on the twin "out/back-in" issue above.

On other difficult questions concerning military implementation, Doc has been hard at work with Gen. Ivashov and a Russian military team. They made some tentative progress on an ad-ref paper laying out points of agreement and difference (you should have that separately, and we've kept Ahtisaari up to speed on those talks). Ivashov & Co. made clear that they'd gone as far as they can without political orders to go further, but that

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additional progress will depend on agreement on three overarching questions:

1. What does it take to stop the bombing?
2. What's the scope of required withdrawals (i.e., Topic A in my own talks)?
3. What's the composition and command structure of the international force, NATO or UN?

Doc and I and our colleagues all have the distinct impression that Question Number One is just that — it looms above all others in the Russians' minds. They are desperate to get the bombing stopped. They're trying everything: hoodwinking, wheedling, pleading, threatening with us and the Allies (Chirac got an earful on this from Yeltsin today). Now let's see if they're also prepared to try pulling out all the stops with Milosevic, since, as we keep telling them, he's the problem, and without his agreement to NATO's conditions, the bombing is going to continue.

By the way, we've answered Question Number One for them repeatedly: bombing will stop when Milosevic says yes to *all our* conditions (as opposed to the Russians' softballs) and we verify beginning of withdrawals. The Russians have cross-examined us enough on the latter condition for Doc and me to sense that they're looking for a way to ensure themselves (and Slobo) that we're not going to use our own definition of "beginning" or the stipulation of verifiability to keep bombing Yugoslavia even if Slobo complies. Remember, as I pointed out in an earlier memo, the Russians are still suspicious that we have an unstated sixth condition: Slobo's removal.

Cherno and I did not discuss Question Number 3 — nature of the force and who's in charge. Doc reports that the Russian military is dug in on their requirement that the force has to be "UN-led" and can't involve NATO bombers in any force structure for Kosovo. They will need political guidance from on high — which is to say, being over-ruled — to get them to change. Eventually, Doc feels (and I agree) we'll have to circle back on this issue. Had we gone in for the kill on this issue this time, it would have blown the circuit boards. Clearly — we did indeed make it clear — we insist upon a NATO core and SACEUR running the operation. Ahtisaari will reinforce this imperative with Cherno tonight and would do so with Milosevic as well. But before this thing is over, we may have to be a bit imaginative about how we package this essential fact of life in order to increase the chances of bringing the Russians on board.

On the civilian-implementation side, we're doing better, in large measure because we don't have as many family jewels to protect. But there,

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too, the big question is: who runs the show? The Russians are pushing the UN, in part because the OSCE chairman-in-office is a NATO member and in part because of the Russians' overarching preference for a full-blown UN operation. We won't know for sure how much give there is on civilian nitty-gritty until we're much closer on the military issues.

While we await the outcome of the Chernomyrdin-Ahtisaari dinner, here's some speculation, informed by a day in Moscow, about the Russian domestic political backdrop to Cherno's diplomacy:

Yeltsin is furious and desperate about the on-going war. He's mostly mad at us (and that means us), but he's also mad at his own team for not fixing the problem. He's sick and tired of all his supposed friends in the West lecturing him on the need for NATO bombing. It has really thrown him that even Chirac has been so four-square. Even his old buddy Kohl called him from retirement. Yeltsin had been led to expect that the Alliance would fray long before Day 51. He didn't even want to receive Chirac today, and had to be sold on the notion that Chirac is "the leading dissident in NATO" (not entirely unfair and inaccurate).

So the boss has sent down word to the troops: stop this goddamn war — I don't care how, but stop it!

Primakov felt the heat, and Yeltsin even criticized him for being played for a sucker by Sloba back in early March and for turning his plane around mid-Atlantic (never mind that Primakov told the VP he'd cleared the 180-degree turn with his President). Ivanov is feeling the heat big-time, especially today. In my close-out one-on-one with Ivanov, he was in a mood unlike any I'd seen before: reflective, worried, melancholy, almost sentimental and deeply, deeply desperate ("Strobe, just tell me what we've got to do to end this war"; I walked him, yet again, through the key points).

Now, what about Cherno himself? There is what I'd call biased but well informed conjecture that he's a major player behind the scenes of the Primakov ouster; he's making a power bid of his own; and he's using the Kosovo issue to try to establish himself as statesman who can deliver.

Our way of dealing with this should continue to be simple: we'll let him deliver; we'll provide him with help in delivering; we'll give him credit for delivering; but he's got to deliver our basic package.

While Cherno and Ahtisaari are dining in Helsinki (and one thing I can guarantee: Cherno will get a good, if not politically correct, meal — we had moose steaks last night), I'll be dining with Kofi in Geneva. I'm going to try to bring him more fully on board the hammer-and-anvil strategy, if only so that he doesn't get in between the two instruments, since that would be exceedingly painful, including for whatever chance there is of peace any time soon.

* **URGENT** *

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Berger
Steinberg
Kernick
Pascual
Schulte
Fuerth

Trip of

Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbott

~~SECRET~~

Date/Time Sent: 13 2328Z MAY 99	Date/Time Received: 13 2328Z MAY 99
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Date: MAY 13, 1999

From: DEPSec TALBOTT - Deputy Secretary's Party

To: STATE OPS / WH SIT ROOM

Fax Number:

Message Description: TRIP MEMO * **URGENT** *

Number of Pages to Follow: 2
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Remarks: PLS. deliver ASAP TO RECIPIENTS - SEC. ALBRIGHT, APNSA BERGER, OVP FURTH. ASAP *

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2008-0994-F3

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001. memo	To [Madeleine] Albright, [Sandy] Berger, and [Leon] Fuerth from Strobe Talbott. Subject: Post-Dinner Update & Next Steps [Duplicate of vz6233_003, this case] (2 pages)	05/13/1999	P1/b(1)

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002a. form	Fax Cover [partial] (1 page)	05/13/1999	b(7)(C), b(6)

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National Security Council
Kosovo Office (Schulte, Gregory)
OA/Box Number: 1709

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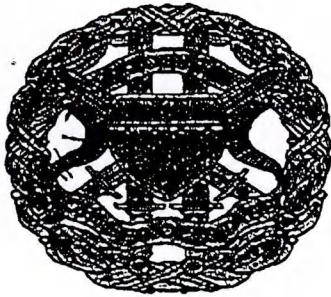
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FAX COVER SHEET

THE JOINT STAFF

J-5, Strategic Plans & Policy
Russia, Ukraine, Eurasia Division

DATE: 13 May 1999 COVER PLUS³ PAGES

FROM: Lt Col Vince Wisniewski Telephone: (b)(6), (b)(7)c

DSN: 224-xxxx

Secure Fax #1: (b)(6), (b)(7)c / DSN 223-xxxx

Clear Fax #1: (b)(6), (b)(7)c / DSN (b)(7)c

ADDRESS TO:

Organization	Office	Name	Phone No.	Fax No.
	NSC	Greg Shulte	202-456-9101	X9150

REMARKS:

Sir, **Revision #2*****
 Here are JS, OSD/BTF, Amb Pardew and DEPSECDEF Slocomb comments on the Russian proposal all combined
 VR
 LtCol Vince Wisniewski

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 OF CLASSIFIED ATTACHMENTS
 Initials: VR Date: 2/24/2024
 2008-0994-F.3

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OSD Comments on Draft UNSCR on Kosovo

We have written some specific comments (in circles) on the attached draft. In addition we have the following comments:

- Consistent with the inter-agency position, we believe that now is not the time to push a UNSCR; the political process should be allowed to run its course for a bit, and its subsequent results should shape an eventual UNSCR. 
- We recognize that para 1 reflects the G-8 communique, but we would nonetheless like 1.b to refer to the withdrawal of ALL forces. 
- Except for para 1, which reiterates the G-8 communique, we believe that rather than refer to "international civil and security presence" we should refer throughout to an "international civilian mission" and an "international security force". The term "presence" is too vague for to describe what we mean by a military force. 
- We do not believe that this UNSCR should seek to establish the civilian mission and military force, as inserts B, and C seek to do. We had understood that this resolution would follow the G-8 communique, but precede Milosevic's capitulation. It does not make sense to establish the missions prior to his capitulation. If it is necessary to include inserts B, and C, then a timing element ought to be added along the following:

Authorizes the establishment of an international security force, once the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has fulfilled the conditions of paragraph 4, under unified command...

- In the case of insert B, the para should explicitly invite NATO to establish the force; as it is drafted now, any country or group could act on the authorization. 
- In sub-para 6.b, but nowhere else, there is a reference to "transitional administration" which is a better choice than "provisional". Logically, "transitional administration" would refer to the international civilian mission, and "provisional institutions" would refer to the local Kosovar institutions established pending a political settlement. In any case the terms should be consistent throughout, and "provisional" should not refer to both the international and the Kosovar efforts. 
- Sub-para 7.b (new, hand-written version): suggest: "organizing provisional local institutions that would assist in the administration of Kosovo, and would transition to democratic and autonomous self-governing institutions through the conduct of elections;" in any case, "pending a political settlement" should not appear in this sub-para, as it is referred to in a different sense in 7.e. 
- We wonder whether the new hand-written sub-para of para 7 giving the international mission responsibility for oversight of the political process is a good idea. Do we really want either the UN or the OSCE to have that authority? We can always give it to them later, but such negotiations are going to be extremely sensitive, and we might want to hold onto responsibility ourselves.
- Sub-para 7-f: do we really want the international mission to have responsibility for maintaining law and order, given that it implies executive authority for the international police? Further, the current language implies the international police will go away once local police are established. Perhaps make para read:

“contributing to the provision of law and order, including through the deployment of an international police force that will assist in the establishment of, and will supervise and monitor, local police forces.”

- There is no mention in the UNSCR of administration of justice, or of a penal system. These functions could perhaps come under “civil administration” (sub-para 7.a), but the nature of the civilian mission’s responsibility in these areas will at some point need to be stipulated; they are of course closely linked to police issues. It is, for instance, not feasible to give international police executive/arrest authority, but not have a judicial system in place (i.e. give the mission responsibility for AOJ). The international police will need to have a judge before whom they can present someone who has been arrested in order to justify that person’s detention – otherwise the police will arrest someone, then simply set them free.
- Para 11: As per 2 bullets above, we do not think that we should delegate to the international civilian mission responsibility for deciding anything regarding a political settlement; recommend deletion of the phrase “and at a time to be agreed by the international civilian presence”.
- Para 12: Agree with the add-on language, but please replace “upon” with “following”. We want the FRY forces to withdraw immediately, whereas we recognize that it will take some time to demilitarize the KLA. “Upon” suggests immediately thereafter, and will not be a standard we can meet, thus setting us up for criticism.

OSD/BTF
703-614-0661
13 May 99

UNCLASSIFIED



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Special Advisor
to the President and Secretary of State
for Kosovo and Dayton Implementation

Department of State * Room 6219 * Washington, DC 20520

Fax Cover Sheet

MAY 13, 99

DATE:

NSC Schulte

TIME:

TO:

JCS LTC Wisniewski

FAX: (703) 697-0180

OVP Davidson

FROM:

Phone 703-697-0180

PHONE: [1] (202) 647-0924

FAX: [1] (202) 647-0939

RE:

Number of pages including cover sheet:

Message:

State comments to the
military paper attached.

Pardee

UNCLASSIFIED

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THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 1999

MEMORANDUM TO APNSA BERGER

FROM STROBE TALBOTT (ST)

SUBJECT: RUSSIA AND KOSOVO

Sandy, Tom Pickering is heading to Dresden for a G-8 political directors meeting, at which he will be meeting with Mamedov. Here is a memo that I've just sent him. It conveys my sense of where we are in our attempt to keep alive diplomatic creativity (tempered with military determination and political realism).

I'm leaving Brussels now for SHAPE to see Wes, then heading home; I've got commo on the plane if you need to talk.

I spoke with Javier just a few minutes ago to bring him up to speed on the diplomacy. He was appreciative and supportive – but mighty annoyed that no one else had bothered to put him in the picture. I think it would be good if you were to give him a call and check in with him at some point during the day.

Regards,

Stro

Tom, since you'll be seeing Georgi Enverovich tomorrow morning, I thought it might be useful if I were to give you a few impressions on where we stand with the Russians on Kosovo.

They are driven by two imperatives: a halt to the bombing and a resumption of diplomacy, with Russia in a key role. They want them both, and our challenge is to convince them that they can only get both if they cooperate with us on pressing our demands, rather than trying to make a halt, or pause, in the bombing a precondition for their serious re-engagement via the CG, G-8 or UN. Our best chance – and theirs – is to close ranks around the German draft UNSC resolution, which presses our demands on Milosevic but also offers a halt to the bombing if he complies, and thus embraces what the Russians so desperately want to see.

For the Russians to sign up to this approach means that they would have to live with the bombing while the Security Council gets its act together; even harder, it means that, in effect, the Russians have to sanction a continuation – or even an escalation – of the bombing if, as is very likely (and as the Russians think is certain), Milosevic holds out.

The other big question is whether the Russians really accept the proposition that they've paid lip service to (including again with me yesterday), which is that a settlement must provide for a safe and secure environment for the return of refugees. They say they're prepared to "discuss" what we see as an inescapable

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and self-evident corollary to that proposition: the only way to ensure such an environment is to deploy immediately on cessation of hostilities an international security force. The exact designation, composition, tie-in to the UN and/or OSCE and, of course, the role of Russia are all discussible, but our team has left no doubt that NATO has to be at the core and in the lead of a KFOR.

Once again, the Russians will buy into this scheme only if they are convinced that there's no alternative — that it's the only way to get a deal and to get back into the play.

My sense from a day with Avdeyev is that we *might* be able to work this outcome in an MKA-Ivanov meeting, but only if the Russians are convinced that the Alliance is holding together on the bottom lines and that Milosevic's various ploys to tease a pause out of us aren't working.

The Russians are still hoping against hope that a combination of factors — the Alliance cracking, the Front-Line States pleading with us to stop the bombing, an Easter pause that stretches out, Milosevic conceding just enough to look reasonable, Rugova's emergence as a not-too-flagrant Quisling — will permit an outcome very different from the one we want: a half-a-loaf compromise, with Milosevic maintaining de facto as well as de jure control of Kosovo, perhaps with the deployment of a toothless, Potemkin KVM-type — or, more to the point, UNPROFOR-type — mission.

One reason the Russians are pushing for that end state is that they think it's the best and the most that Milosevic would tolerate. That, of course, is a key difference between us and them: they're letting themselves be bound by what Milosevic wants and hates, what he will and will not accept; while for our part, we're prepared to subordinate his acquiescence to our coercion.

I had to remind Avdeyev several times yesterday that we were not involved in a negotiation between the U.S. (or NATO) and Russia over the terms of a truce or a peace between ourselves. Rather, we are trying to find common ground on what we, together, will demand of Milosevic. Perhaps in part because they have had so little success in influencing Milosevic themselves and because they know his kind (having once been of that same species themselves), they simply think that we're demanding something that is utterly impossible unless we wage all-out war against Serbia — a prospect that from Moscow's standpoint is almost too horrible to contemplate (and insofar as they do contemplate it, leads them to think about pretty horrible consequences for them and their domestic politics).

We must convince them that if they were to join us in the kind of UNSC we're talking about, that development on the diplomatic front, combined with continuing (and if necessary, mounting) military pressure, can bring Belgrade to accept an outcome *that leaves Kosovo constitutionally inside the FRY while taking it administratively out from under Belgrade's control and puts it under the*

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protection of the UN or some other mechanism in which the Russians themselves will be involved.

We can use to our advantage two primal fears the Russians have:

1. **The dismemberment of Yugoslavia – i.e., the success of violent, ethnic-based secessionism by a Moslem minority.** (“We have many Kosovos,” as Ivanov told MKA.) We’ve got to keep hammering away at the paradoxical truth that NATO is actually bombing Yugoslavia to keep it together, while if Milosevicism “succeeds,” the place will definitely come apart and there will either be an independent Kosovo or a Greater Albania or the first will lead to the latter.
2. **An Islamic jihad within a Slavic-dominated state.** (Again: “We have many Kosovos” – only one of which is called Chechnya.) Here, too, we can argue credibly that the kind of outcome we’re pushing for will permit, over time, the de-radicalization of the Kosovo Albanians and re-marginalization of the UCK. By contrast, the outcome Milosevic is going for – and that the Russians are prepared to tolerate – would have precisely the consequence that the Russians at least most fear: the Kosovars as Palestinians, the UCK as the PLO (or Hammas), with suicide bombers blowing themselves up in Yugoslav village squares.

One more point that can be used to some effect with the Russians: we’re already thinking about a post-crisis (unstated: post-Milosevic) vision for the Balkans that includes redemption and reintegration for Serbia, and we’re prepared to involve the Russians in that effort.

By the way, be prepared for some of the most unrelenting guilt-tripping you’ve ever been treated to by masters of that art form. The Russians have struck the following posture in dealing with us (some of this is verbatim from Avdeyev and Mayorsky yesterday, and I’ll be interested in hearing how Mamedov improvises on these themes):

You crazy, arrogant, short-sighted Americans have done it again. This is a new Vietnam. It’s your Afghanistan. You don’t have an exit strategy. We told you this was going to happen. You’ve created exactly what you said you wanted to deter. You’ve also acted in shameless disregard for Russia. You didn’t take seriously our warnings that your bombing the Serbs would stir up the ugliest and most dangerous passions inside Russia. Now in addition to having to worry about your military rampaging in the skies over Belgrade, we have to worry about our military going crazy and Zhirinovskiy recruiting volunteers to go fight for our brother Slavs. U.S.-Russian relations, to say nothing of NATO-Russian relations, will never be the same. But we are as wise and forbearing and foresighted as you are foolish and impetuous and shortsighted; we are prepared to help you save face,

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to show you a way out of the dead-end where you've gotten yourselves stuck, and to bring you back into the fold of law-abiding nations.

They're not much interested in the counter-arguments (the one I used, to no great effect: do you Russians really want to pit yourselves against the West and be Milosevic's defenders? Is that the best way to integrate yourselves into the new Europe?). But they are *very, very* interested in cutting a deal with us. That, in a way, was the most interesting thing about yesterday: they're going bilateral; they've all but given up on the CG and the G-8. To wit, Avdeyev's refusal even to attend the CG meeting, along with the fact that his answer to our position in a private meeting with me was "yes, but" while Mayorsky's answer to the CG political directors was "hell, no!" This does not mean, however, that they've given up on the UNSC. Quite the contrary. That, I believe, for them is still the multilateral forum of choice. After all, they, in their Soviet guise, were founding members; they want it to be the Board of Directors of the World; unlike in the CG and the G-8, they're not quite so much the odd-man-out, surrounded by the U.S. and its Allies. All of which is to say, the most promising path forward here is an MKA-Ivanov bilateral to establish the basis for a UNSC resolution along the lines of what we're looking at as of yesterday.

Obviously, even if this long-shot succeeds, it carries with it risks and dangers, including that of appearing to subordinate NATO to the UN. Both for reasons for keeping the pressure on the Russians and for reasons of maintaining the sovereignty and integrity of the Alliance, we've got to make clear to the Russians that we'd like and welcome a UNSCR that we work with them, but we don't need it.

To the extent that the Russians believe that, they may go along with us, but they're going to fight us every inch of the way on the particulars.

Last point, our Allies, especially (*naturallement*) the French, are semi-freaked out about us going bilateral with the Russians again. Gerard Errera was dyspeptic in the extreme over my going off for tête-a-têtes with Avdeyev yesterday. All we can do in this regard is consult with the Allies as much as possible, knowing that it will never be enough and that everything we tell them we might as well post on the Internet.

Good luck — and I'll try to give you a call from the plane later in the day.

Friday, April 30, 1999

TO SEC. ALBRIGHT, APNSA BERGER, OVP FUERTH
FROM STROBE TALBOTT (EN ROUTE, LONDON-DC)

SUBJECT: THE KOFI SYNDROME AND THE MATRYOSHKA DOLL

As we wend our way home, my superb traveling companions — Jim Swigert, Andrew Weiss, Phil Goldberg and John Bass — are working on a variety of papers that will help push the process forward. You've got the essence of my analysis and recommendations in the three memos I sent you earlier in the week. I have only two related thoughts — and a historical bonus — to inflict on the three of you, at least today.

First, I'd like to offer my diagnosis of, and prescription for, what I'm going to call the "Kofi Syndrome." Here's the symptomology, based on my house call on the patient at the Heathrow Hilton last night:

After his day in Moscow, seeing the same cast of characters I'd seen earlier in the week, plus Yeltsin, Kofi professes to be holding firm; he says he will not advocate a bombing pause until Belgrade agrees to our five demands and begins withdrawals in a way we can verify. However, much else that he said, and the body English with which he said it, suggests that in fact he's infected with an insidious and contagious form of fatalism: at the end of the day — which Kofi, like others, prays will come sooner rather than later — NATO will have to yield on some key points and make substantive concessions to Milosevic. Why? *Because Milosevic is meaner and tougher than NATO; he's more stubborn; he's more willing to inflict death and destruction on his own citizens and soldiers — not to mention on his enemies, on the Kosovo Albanians and on his neighbors — than we are.*

"And therefore, Kofi?"

He doesn't quite say, but he implies the ultimate wrong answer: *We'll have to reconsider and adjust our conditions.* In other words, fatalism leads to defeatism.

When it comes straight from the Russians, the advice that we should let them cut a deal on our behalf that lets Milosevic off the hook often includes the condescending comment: "We Russians know Milosevic, and you don't." Translation: *we know Communist dictators who couldn't care less about the lives of their people and who can therefore maintain escalation dominance over enemies who may be stronger in terms of high-tech weapons but who are in fact weaker because they have more scruples.*

Coming from Kofi, it has a different spin, and in some ways it's more dangerous. Not only is he determined to insert himself into the diplomacy in

a way that will have direct implications for our ability to conduct the military operation, but some (most?) of our Allies want him to insert himself. So as we try to manage the Russian factor, we must keep warily in mind the sympathetic vibrations between Chernomyrdin and Kofi. And that means remembering that the Secretary General of the United Nations is representative of a tendency on the part of good, conscientious citizens of the world to accept the Russians' advice, which is to adjust our demands downward and define "success" in terms acceptable to Belgrade (by which definition, the outcome becomes failure for NATO and success for Milosevic).

In one respect, Kofi's motivation here has a touch of institutional and personal self-interest: the sooner "peace" comes, the greater Kofi's role will be in brokering, then implementing that peace.*

But I think he also honestly believes the Russian analysis: he fears that Milosevic has got us at a permanent and in the final analysis decisive advantage in the ruthlessness department; or, as the Russians keep saying, "Milosevic has got nothing to lose" — therefore, in their view, he *won't* lose, at least not in the way that we're now insisting.

Here's the come back, as I see it — and it's one we need to use directly with Kofi, who, for better or for worse, is going to be an important player, if only because of our Allies' desire to UN-ize this operation as quickly as possible.

First, there's the obvious overall point that we simply can't lose; we can't accept any outcome that is perceived as a victory for Milosevic.

But beyond that imperative, which is as true and compelling as it is dogmatic, there's the following consideration about the Serbs, which Jim Swigert has helped me develop: Fall for the Kofi Syndrome, and you buy into a notion of Serbia that misses the target by more than just one international border. Evil as Milosevic's regime is, it is not the autocratic, totalitarian rule of, say, Saddam. Sloba's control relies on manipulation and a classic fascist mix of government-business-mafia. Repression against Serbs is a rarity. To paint Milosevic as both willing and capable of driving the Serbs into the abyss with him is to stereotype and misread the Serbs as a people; it's not only to give up on them unfairly — it's to give up on our own effort. One can say a lot of harsh things about modern-day Serbs — passive, short-sighted, stubborn, paranoid, and delusional, for sure — but

* On a related point, Kofi is using his trip to Moscow to argue for his appointment of a pair of special envoys. The argument goes like this: the Russians, he says, "are good negotiators but bad intermediaries" because they are "hiding behind Belgrade" and they're too worried about the precedents of a peace-implementation plan applying to Chechnya, etc. Therefore, we need *good* intermediaries — i.e., Kofi's. He's decided on Kukan already, and now that the U.S. and UK have blackballed Bildt and the Russians have blackballed Vranitzky, he's leaning toward Cotti.

they're not collectively suicidal; nor are they thrilled at being the outcasts of Europe. In their history, overthrowing the despot is an heroic act. We (okay, I) may have overdone the 1389 Prince Lazar myth for the insights it gives us into current and prospective behavior. To assume that Serbs will follow Sloba to catastrophe is to legitimize a mythology that many Serbs profess to honor, but that only a few would be fanatic enough to practice.

Believer in the better angels of human nature that he is, Kofi should give the Serbs some credit, and not lump them all together (as Milosevic wants us to do).

Finally, we need to remind Kofi that his own experience in Croatia and Bosnia disproved another myth: Serbian invincibility. Croatian and Bosnians are big on pointing out that in their wars, the Serbs were more adept at razing villages than at winning battles. That recent history is at least a partial antidote to the cliché about the Yugoslavs holding down four Nazi divisions half a century ago.

We should expect Serbs to be as tough as anyone in defending their homes, but we shouldn't forget that most of the homes in Kosovo are (or were, until recent months) overwhelmingly Albanian.

I'm unloading these thoughts in part because we — especially you, Madeleine — will be spending a lot of time with Kofi in the coming phase.

As for the Russians' part in that phase, that brings me to the Matryoshka doll. That's my image for what the Russians *may* be up to, and it's what we should try to induce them to do. With each encounter, each diplomatic initiative, unilateral or multilateral, the Russians may go from a bigger hollow doll to a smaller one until they get down to one solid one at the center: an international military force with NATO at its core, with a UN umbrella, that moves in to fill the vacuum left by the withdrawal of all Serb forces except for some unarmed token personnel in Yugoslav uniforms stationed, under well armed adult supervision, at historical sites — and maybe in a windowless bunker at one border checkpoint.

So far, the difference between Chernomyrdin's trips to Belgrade and Primakov's is, in this respect, crucial and potentially useful: Primakov associated Russia with Yugoslav positions that were flagrantly unacceptable from our standpoint; Chernom, by contrast, has associated Russia, by and large, with generalities *that may or may not subsume what we're insisting on*. When we get the readout on his current trip, it may establish Russia as sponsoring — and even claiming to have Belgrade's acquiescence in — an international military force under UN auspices and the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo. It's a long way from there to where we must get, but at least it's in the right direction, and what we need to do is keeping pushing. That means working on Chernom and Ivanov to make sure they don't publicly identify Russia with Yugoslav demands or prohibitions that we can only reject, and keep nudging the Russians privately in

the direction of our own bottom-line position. This week has seen some movement in that direction, and next week, with the G-8 poldirs' meeting and ministerial, could do more of the same.

Now for your historical bonus: I've been reading Noel Malcolm's history of Kosovo, and I want to share with you one passage, about a conflict 120 years ago, when the Serbs went berserk:

By the end of 1878 Western officials were reporting that there were 60,000 families of Muslim refugees in Macedonia, 'in a state of extreme destitution,' 60-70,000 Albanian refugees [from Kosovo] scattered [around the region].... Albanian merchants who tried to stay on ... were subjected to a campaign of murders, and the property of those who left was sold off at one per cent of its value. In a petition of 1879 a group of Albanian refugees from Leskovac area complained that their houses, mills and mosques had been demolished, and that 'the material arising from these demolitions, such as masonry and wood, has been sold, so that if we go back to our hearths we shall find no shelter.'

This was not, it should be said, a matter of spontaneous hostility by local Serbs. Even one of the Serbian Army commanders had been reluctant to expel the Albanians from Vranje, on the grounds that they were a quiet and peaceful people. But the orders came from the highest levels in Belgrade: it was Serbian state policy to create an ethnically 'clean' territory. And in an act of breath-taking cynicism, Ivan Yastrebov, the vice-consul in Kosovo of Serbia's protector-power, Russia, advised the governor of the region not to allow the refugees to return to Serbia, on the grounds that their presence would usefully strengthen the Muslim population.