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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date 5/26

To: *John Podesta*

From: The Staff Secretary

PLEASE ADVISE

Seal

Telephone call
taken care of
this morning

3998

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 26, 1999

SR

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

SAMUEL BERGER

STEPHANIE STREETT

SUBJECT:

Wiesel Mission to Albania and Macedonia

Purpose

Direct and approve actions relating to Elie Wiesel's travel to Albania and Macedonia during the week of May 31.

Background

As he and I discussed at his Millennium lecture, Elie Wiesel will travel to Albania and Macedonia from May 31 to June 4. He will meet with Kosovar refugees to hear first-hand their accounts of ethnic cleansing and atrocities in the FRY. Mr. Wiesel will also meet with representatives of international organizations and private human rights groups to obtain an overview of the human rights situation in Kosovo. We will be assisting Mr. Wiesel with his itinerary due to the inherent difficulties in traveling in the region. We expect that Mr. Wiesel's visit will highlight the moral necessity of NATO's opposition to ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

Issues for Decision

To facilitate Mr. Wiesel's travel to the region, it will be necessary for you to designate the trip as a "Presidential Mission." In addition, Mr. Wiesel has requested a letter from you asking that he undertake this mission. Finally, we believe a phone call with Mr. Wiesel prior to his departure would be desirable, and that a meeting with him upon his return (during which he would report his findings) would be critical.

cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That you designate this trip a Presidential Mission.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

2. That you sign the letter at Tab A.

3. That you call Mr. Wiesel before he leaves on May 31 for the region (memo and talking points attached at Tab B).

4. That you agree to meet with Mr. Wiesel upon his return.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

Attachments

Tab A Letter to Mr. Wiesel

Tab B Memo and Talking Points for Phone Call

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

RECOMMENDED TELEPHONE CALL

TO: Elie Wiesel (212) 371-7018 or
(212) 371-7029

DATE: May 25-28

RECOMMENDED BY: SAMUEL R. BERGER 

PURPOSE: Discuss proposed Presidential Mission to Albania and Macedonia.

BACKGROUND: At your request, Elie Wiesel will travel to Albania and Macedonia from June 1 to June 4. He will meet with Kosovar refugees to hear first-hand their accounts of ethnic cleansing and atrocities in the FRY. Mr. Wiesel will also meet with representatives of international organizations and private human rights groups to obtain an overview of the human rights situation in Kosovo. Mr. Wiesel's visit to the region will highlight the moral necessity of NATO's opposition to ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Mr. Wiesel has asked to speak with you before he departs on May 31.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION Suggested topics of discussion include: expression of appreciation for Mr. Wiesel's willingness to undertake this trip; the importance of highlighting the moral

dimension of what is happening in Kosovo; and the role this trip will play in furthering the objectives of ending ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and securing the right of Kosovo's population to return home in safety and with their human rights protected.

CONTACT PERSON AND
TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

David Wippman 6-9149

DATE OF SUBMISSION:

Attachment
Points to be Made

POINTS TO BE MADE FOR
TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH
ELIE WIESEL

- Understand you have just returned from Israel. Hope you had a productive trip.
- Appreciate your willingness to travel to Albania and Macedonia.
- Cannot overstate the importance of conveying, to the American people and to the world, the moral dimensions of the situation in Kosovo.
- No one could be better qualified than you are to understand and to explain the importance of opposing ethnic cleansing and the terrible crimes associated with it.
- You will help us all understand the plight of Kosovo's ethnic Albanian population, and the need to restore them safely to their homes and to ensure respect for their fundamental human rights.
- Your trip comes at a particularly sensitive time in terms of our efforts to arrive at a diplomatic solution. To ensure that the rights of the Kosovars are protected, it is vital that we focus attention on what they have already suffered, and on what they would face if they returned to Kosovo without adequate guarantees for their safety and human rights.
- Look forward to meeting with you in person upon your return, to discuss the situation in Kosovo and to hear from you your perspective, findings and suggestions.