

Item Subject: OFFICIAL INFORMAL

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RELEASE IN PART
B1,1.4(B),1.4(D)

FOR D - ERIC EDELMAN

DECLASSIFIED

SUBJECT: OFFICIAL INFORMAL

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR ROBERT E. HUNTER. REASON 1.5(D).

2. (U) BELOW IS THE DRAFT REPORTING CABLE ON THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S MARCH 22 BRIEFING TO THE NAC. WE WILL SEND IT TO NATO POSTS AND MOSCOW EXDIS WHEN WE RECEIVE YOUR CLEARANCE.

SUMMARY

2. ~~(C)~~ DEPUTY SECRETARY STROBE TALBOTT BRIEFED THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL MARCH 22 ON THE CLINTON-YELTSIN SUMMIT IN HELSINKI. TALBOTT SAID THE U.S. HAD ACHIEVED ITS GOALS IN NEGOTIATING THE BILATERAL STATEMENT ON EUROPEAN SECURITY. ALTHOUGH THE RUSSIANS SOUGHT TO DRAW A CLEAR LINE EXCLUDING FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS FROM NATO MEMBERSHIP, PRESIDENT CLINTON HAD CLEARLY EXPLAINED WHY SUCH A POSITION IS WRONG FOR RUSSIA AS WELL AS WRONG FOR THE ALLIANCE. TALBOTT SAID THAT YELTSIN HAD ISSUED THREE WARNING SIGNALS AT THE HELSINKI PRESS CONFERENCE AND THAT MUCH WORK REMAINED TO BE DONE IN THE SOLANA-PRIMAKOV CHANNEL, IN BILATERAL CHANNELS, AND IN CFE. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT YELTSIN WAS CLEAR ABOUT HIS DESIRE TO SIGN A CHARTER WELL BEFORE MADRID. END SUMMARY.

THE WEEK BEFORE THE SUMMIT

3. ~~(C)~~ DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE STROBE TALBOTT TOLD THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL MARCH 22 THAT PRESIDENT CLINTON AND SECRETARY ALBRIGHT ASKED HIM TO DELIVER THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE BRIEFING TO THE NAC AND SOLICIT THE VIEWS OF ALLIED PERMREPS. HE NOTED THAT HE HAD BRIEFED ALLIED AMBASSADORS IN WASHINGTON ON MARCH 18, AFTER RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER PRIMAKOV HAD LEFT FOR MOSCOW.

4. ~~(C)~~ TALBOTT SAID THE "PRIMAKOV WEEKEND" IN WASHINGTON (MARCH 15-17) HAD HAD ELEMENTS OF SUSPENSE. ON THE FIRST DAY, PRIMAKOV WAS EXTREMELY NEGATIVE, BUT LATE ON MARCH 16 AND ON MARCH 17, BOTH SIDES HAD MADE PROGRESS ON THE DRAFT STATEMENT ON EUROPEAN SECURITY ISSUES THAT WAS AGREED AND RELEASED AT THE SUMMIT. AFTER PRIMAKOV TOOK

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THE STATEMENT BACK TO MOSCOW, HOWEVER, THE RUSSIANS WANTED TO MAKE CHANGES. IN PARTICULAR, THEY WERE ADAMANT ABOUT REMOVING ANY "POSITIVE REFERENCE" TO ENLARGEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE RUSSIANS DID NOT WANT THE REFERENCE TO THE "THREE NUCLEAR NO'S" TO INCLUDE MENTION OF "NEW MEMBERS," AS THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A "POSITIVE" REFERENCE TO ENLARGEMENT.

 SUMMIT: THE BILATERAL STATEMENT

5. ~~(c)~~ TALBOTT SAID THE UNITED STATES HAD FIVE PRIMARY GOALS IN PURSUING THE JOINT STATEMENT EUROPEAN SECURITY:

-- ON A GENERAL LEVEL, TO HELP MOVE THE RUSSIANS FROM "HARPING ON THE PROBLEM" TO "SOLVING THE PROBLEM" OF NATO-RUSSIA RELATIONS;

-- ON THE JURIDICAL STATUS OF THE NATO-RUSSIA CHARTER, TO BEAT BACK RUSSIAN INSISTENCE ON A RATIFIABLE, "LEGALLY BINDING" AGREEMENT;

-- TO REITERATE STANDARD OSCE LANGUAGE ON STATES' RIGHT "TO CHOOSE THE MEANS TO ENSURE THEIR OWN SECURITY"; IN THE STATEMENT, REFERENCE TO CHOOSING ALLIANCES WAS NOT INCLUDED, BUT THE PRINCIPLE WAS CLEARLY REAFFIRMED;

-- ON STATIONED FORCES, THE U.S. WAS PREPARED TO REITERATE NATO'S UNILATERAL STATEMENT OF MARCH 14 AND THE RELEVANT PORTIONS OF THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO CONGRESS ON NATO ENLARGEMENT. THE TWO SIDES, TALBOTT SAID, AGREED TO TAKE A SIMPLER TACK. RUSSIA CITES ITS "CONCERN THAT NATO ENLARGEMENT WILL LEAD TO A POTENTIALLY THREATENING BUILD-UP OF PERMANENTLY STATIONED COMBAT FORCES OF NATO NEAR TO RUSSIA." THE STATEMENT THEN NOTES THAT "THE ALLIANCE CONTEMPLATES NOTHING OF THE KIND."

-- THE STATEMENT THEN NOTES RUSSIAN RECIPROCITY ON THIS ISSUE, DECLARING THAT RUSSIA "WOULD EXERCISE SIMILAR RESTRAINT" IN CONVENTIONAL FORCE DEPLOYMENTS.

 RUSSIANS DRAW THE LINE AT BALTICS, UKRAINE

6. ~~(c)~~ THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH YELTSIN HAD BEEN KEEPING UP A DRUMBEAT OF NEGATIVE COMMENTS BEFORE THE SUMMIT, THE MOOD IN HELSINKI WAS WORKMANLIKE, CONSTRUCTIVE, AND NON-POLEMICAL. ONE ISSUE LOOMED OVER ALL THE OTHERS, THOUGH. ALTHOUGH THE RUSSIANS HAD

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"RETREATED" ON THE QUESTION OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN MEMBERSHIP IN NATO, THEY "OCCUPIED THE HIGH GROUND" BY STAKING OUT THEIR REFUSAL TO ADMIT THE POSSIBILITY OF "ONE SQUARE INCH" OF FORMER SOVIET TERRITORY IN NATO. SPECIFICALLY, THEY HAD IN MIND THE BALTIC STATES AND UKRAINE. IN ADDITION, THEY COMPLAINED ABOUT "SEA BREEZE" -- AN "IN THE SPIRIT OF PFP" EXERCISE IN THE BLACK SEA -- AND ABOUT ACTIVITIES OF THE U.S. CONGRESS WITH RESPECT TO UKRAINE.

7. ~~(C)~~ THE PRESIDENT, TALBOTT SAID, WAS "TERRIFIC." HE DID NOT JUST "SAY NO" TO RUSSIAN OPPOSITION TO EVENTUAL BALTIC OR UKRAINIAN MEMBERSHIP IN NATO; HE EXPLAINED WHY "NO" IS THE ONLY RIGHT ANSWER, EVEN FROM THE RUSSIAN POINT OF VIEW. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT IF RUSSIA AND NATO AGREED THAT NO FORMER SOVIET REPUBLIC (OR STATES THAT RUSSIA VIEWED AS FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS) COULD JOIN NATO, THAT WOULD SEND TWO BAD SIGNALS. FIRST, IT WOULD SEND THE SIGNAL THE NATO IS STILL ANTI-RUSSIAN -- THAT NATO IS STILL THE OLD ALLIANCE AND THAT ITS TARGET IS STILL THE FORMER SOVIET UNION.

8. ~~(C)~~ MOREOVER, SUCH A DIVIDING LINE WOULD ALSO SEND THE SIGNAL THAT RUSSIA IS STILL AN EMPIRE, ALBEIT SMALLER, AND THAT IT STILL SEEKS TO DOMINATE AND CONTROL ITS NEIGHBORS. IF NATO IS NOT PERMITTED TO ADMIT THE BALTIC STATES OR UKRAINE, THEREFORE, THE APPEARANCE WOULD BE OF A LARGER, ANTI-RUSSIA NATO, AND A SMALLER RUSSIA THAT IS STILL AN UNDEMOCRATIC EMPIRE. BY INSISTING ON THESE DIVIDING LINES, THEN, RUSSIA IS STILL "FRIGHTENING" AND "DRIVING INTO THE ARMS OF THE WEST" ITS SMALLER NEIGHBORS.

9. ~~(C)~~ THE PRESIDENT, TALBOTT SAID, USED FINLAND AS AN EXAMPLE. IN MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON ON MARCH 20, FINNISH PRESIDENT AHTISAARI SAID HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR NATO'S POSITION ON FINNISH MEMBERSHIP; "AS LONG AS NO ONE TELLS US WE CAN'T JOIN, THEN WE DON'T NEED TO PRESS THE ISSUE." PRESIDENT CLINTON TOLD PRESIDENT YELTSIN AND FOREIGN MINISTER PRIMAKOV THAT HE HOPED THEY WOULD PONDER THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT TELLING ANY STATE THAT IT CANNOT JOIN NATO.

NEXT STEPS

10. ~~(C)~~ TALBOTT SAID THAT THE RUSSIANS AGREED ON THE DESIRABILITY OF A SIGNING EVENT, AT 17, IN LATE MAY. HE SAID THAT, BETWEEN NOW AND THEN, THE EMPHASIS WOULD BE ON, AND THE "ACTION" WOULD BE IN, THE SOLANA-PRIMAKOV CHANNEL, SUPPORTED BY NUMEROUS BILATERAL CHANNELS TO

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MOSCOW AND BY PROGRESS IN THE CFE CHANNEL. ON CFE, THE U.S. SIDE HAD DETECTED A GOOD DEAL OF UNCERTAINTY ON THE RUSSIAN SIDE ABOUT HOW TO RESPOND TO THE LATEST NATO PROPOSAL. HE SAID THE U.S. HAD RECEIVED A "HINT" IN WASHINGTON THE PREVIOUS WEEK THAT RUSSIA WOULD DROP ITS "OBNOXIOUS" THREE-ZONE PROPOSAL, BUT WOULD PROBABLY SEEK TO PLACE PERCENTAGE SUB-CEILINGS ON FOREIGN FORCES.

11. ~~(C)~~ TALBOTT SAID THAT, SINCE HIS PRESENTATION HAD BEEN LARGELY POSITIVE, IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR HIM TO NOTE THREE TROUBLESOME "WARNINGS" THAT SURFACED IN THE CLINTON-YELTSIN PRESS CONFERENCE ON MARCH 21.

-- YELTSIN VOWED TO SEND THE SIGNED NATO-RUSSIA CHARTER TO THE DUMA FOR RATIFICATION. TALBOTT SAID THIS COULD BE A PROBLEM FOR SOME PARLIAMENTS, INCLUDING THE U.S. SENATE.

-- YELTSIN SAID THAT THERE WAS AGREEMENT THAT NATO WOULD NOT MAKE USE OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES. THERE WAS NO SUCH AGREEMENT, TALBOTT STRESSED, AND U.S. BRIEFERS QUICKLY MADE THIS CLEAR. ALTHOUGH YELTSIN'S OWN PEOPLE CONFIRMED THAT THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT, HARD-LINERS IN RUSSIA WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE USE OF THIS PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT. THE U.S. SAID PUBLICLY THAT THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT ON THIS ISSUE, AND THEY ASSUME THAT YELTSIN WAS SIMPLY REFERRING TO HIS LONG-STANDING CONCERN.

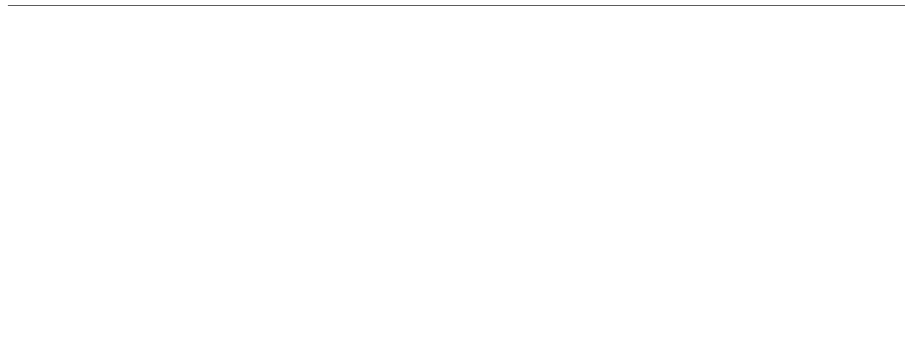
-- ON THE CONSULTATION MECHANISM, YELTSIN SAID THAT NATO AND RUSSIA HAD AGREED TO "OPERATE BY CONSENSUS." UNLESS LISTENERS WERE AWARE THAT YELTSIN WAS REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO THE JOINT NATO-RUSSIA COUNCIL, THEY MIGHT THINK HE WAS ASSERTING THAT ALL OF NATO'S DECISIONS AND OPERATIONS WOULD INVOLVE RUSSIA. PRESIDENT CLINTON CORRECTED THIS ASSERTION AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE BY NOTING THAT RUSSIA WOULD HAVE A VOICE, BUT NOT A VETO, AT NATO.

12. ~~(C)~~ AS A FINAL NOTE, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID IT WAS CRITICAL TO REMAIN ENGAGED WITH RUSSIA ON THE MILITARY-TO-MILITARY LEVEL. FACTS AND TRUTH, HE SAID, ARE THE BEST AMMUNITION TO USE WITH THE RUSSIANS. THE BRIEFING FOR PRIMAKOV BY THE U.S. JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF MARCH 16 WAS EXTREMELY HELPFUL IN ADDRESSING RUSSIA'S WORST FEARS ABOUT NATO. CONTINUED TRANSPARENCY WILL HELP IN ALLEVIATING THOSE RUSSIAN CONCERNS THAT ARE ROOTED IN RATIONALITY. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID HE WANTED TO PLEAD THAT NATO NOT LOSE THE MOMENTUM." ALTHOUGH EASTER BREAK IS NEARLY UPON US, WE SHOULD FOLLOW UP IMMEDIATELY AND NOT ALLOW RUSSIA TO LAPSE INTO THE BAD HABITS AND SLOW PACE THAT HAVE BEDEVILED THIS PROCESS FOR THE PAST

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SEVERAL YEARS.

PERMREPS ASK ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE AND CHARTER



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14. (C) THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID THAT YELTSIN HAD MADE UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR THAT HE WANTS TO SIGN THE CHARTER WELL BEFORE MADRID. YELTSIN "APPEALED IN ALMOST A PLEADING WAY" NOT TO HAVE TO COME TO MADRID TO SIGN THE DOCUMENT. BOTH SIDES TALKED ABOUT A LATE-MAY SIGNING. TALBOTT SAID THAT THE U.S. POSITION IS THAT WE ARE "VERY TENTATIVELY CONSIDERING" A NATO-RUSSIA EVENT IN EUROPE, JUST BEFORE THE U.S.-EU SUMMIT IN THE HAGUE. OF COURSE, IT DEPENDS ON PROGRESS ON THE DOCUMENT ITSELF. AS FOR THE SIGNATURE, THE ONLY FORMAT DISCUSSED WAS "AT 17 OR PERHAPS AT 17-PLUS-1," TO INCLUDE THE SECRETARY GENERAL. IT WAS CONTEMPLATED, BUT NOT AGREED, THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL WOULD SIGN. TALBOTT CAUTIONED THAT THE SIGNATURES "CANNOT BECOME A PETARD ON WHICH WE WILL BE HOIST." THE CHARTER CANNOT BE RENEGOTIATED WHEN NEW MEMBERS JOIN; PERHAPS THE SYG'S SIGNATURE WOULD HELP COVER THAT POSSIBILITY.

15. (C) THE DEPUTY SECRETARY, GENERAL MYERS, AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT EDELMAN SAID THEY HAD NOT HEARD OF A SPECIFIC RUSSIAN CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET-BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE.

16. (C) SYG SOLANA CLOSED THE MEETING, [REDACTED]

HUNTER

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FOR D - ERIC EDELMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/24/07

TAGS: NATO, PREL, RS, OVIP (TALBOTT, STROBE)

[Faded teletype text, including a signature block and numbered list items 15 and 16.]

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