

Soltis, Marjorie A.**Heading:**STATE 60269 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PRIORITY

SUBJECT: TALBOTT'S MEETING WITH FRENCH POLDIR GERARD ERRERA

2000

1. (U) ENTIRE MESSAGE CLASSIFIED ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BY ACTING SECRETARY STROBE TALBOTT FOR REASONS 1.5 (B&D).

RELEASE IN FULL

2. ~~(C)~~ SUMMARY: DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT MET ON MARCH 16 WITH FRENCH MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR GERARD ERRERA TO DISCUSS NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE, NAGORNO-KARABAKH, BALKANS POLICY AND THE CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION. LIKE OTHER RECENT FRENCH OFFICIAL VISITORS, ERRERA REPEATED THE GOF'S DESIRE TO HOLD A FRANK DISCUSSION WITH THE UNITED STATES REGARDING CONCERNS OVER NMD DEPLOYMENT. HE DISCUSSED RECENT EVENTS IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH, CHRIS HILL AND JAMIE RUBIN'S TRIP TO THE BALKANS AND CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR OUR KOSOVO EFFORT. ON CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS, ERRERA SAID THAT THE EU WOULD REACH A CONSENSUS DECISION THAT WOULD PRECLUDE CO-SPONSORSHIP OF THE UNCHR RESOLUTION BUT ULTIMATELY FRANCE'S POSITION WOULD BE CLOSE TO THE UNITED STATES. END SUMMARY.

DECLASSIFIED

3. ~~(S)~~ FRENCH MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR GERARD ERRERA, IN WASHINGTON TO ATTEND A NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION CONFERENCE HOSTED BY THE CARNEGIE FOUNDATION, MET WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT ON MARCH 16 TO DISCUSS NMD, NAGORNO-KARABAKH, EVENTS IN THE BALKANS AND THE PENDING CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION. ERRERA WAS JOINED BY FRENCH AMBASSADOR FRANCOIS BUJON, DCM FRANCOIS BARRY DE LONGCHAMPS AND EMBOFF NOTETAKER PHILIPPE LEFORT. TALBOTT WAS JOINED BY SPECIAL S/NIS ADVISOR STEVE SESTANOVICH, S/NIS/RC SENIOR ADVISOR BRADY KIESLING, EUR PDAS TONY WAYNE, DRL'S STEVEN WAGENSEIL, D STAFFER KATHLEEN DOHERTY AND FRANCE DESK OFFICER DAVID VAN CLEVE, NOTETAKER.

NMD: REQUEST FOR POLITICAL, NOT ONLY EXPERT LEVEL, NEGOTIATIONS

4. ~~(C)~~ ERRERA ADMITTED THAT THE USG WAS WELL AWARE OF FRENCH MISGIVINGS ON NMD, BUT TOLD TALBOTT THAT HE WANTED TO MOVE THE DEBATE BEYOND THREATS TO STRATEGIC CONCERNS. ERRERA RECOMMENDED THAT BOTH COUNTRIES SIT DOWN QUIETLY IN A RESTRICTIVE FORMAT TO PUT THE ISSUES ON THE TABLE. HE ADDED THAT THE DEBATE SHOULD BE AT A POLITICAL, NOT ONLY EXPERT, LEVEL, AND THAT IT WAS TIME TO HOLD A NORMAL DIALOGUE ON THE ISSUE, BETWEEN ALLIES.

5. ~~(S)~~ TALBOTT AGREED TO THE CONCEPT, AND REPORTED MORE FULLY ON HIS MEETINGS WITH CHINESE LEADERS IN BEIJING ON NMD DEPLOYMENT. TALBOTT COMMENTED THAT THE CHINESE WERE LESS ALARMED BY NMD BECAUSE THEY WERE UNABASHEDLY PREOCCUPIED WITH TAIWAN AND THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS THERE. THE CHINESE DID NOT VOICE CONCERN THAT NMD MIGHT BLUNT CHINESE STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DETERRENCE, AS ANTICIPATED, BUT RATHER WERE CONCERNED THAT NMD MIGHT SOMEHOW BE EXTENDED TO PROTECT TAIWAN VIA TMD. TALBOTT DISCUSSED A PAPER BEING PREPARED ON CHINA AND PROMISED TO DISCUSS CHINESE THINKING ON NMD WITH THE FRENCH THEREAFTER.

6. ~~(S)~~ TALBOTT ALSO DISCUSSED HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE RUSSIANS IN ROME ON NMD. THE RUSSIANS' POSITION REMAINS UNCHANGED, BUT LIKE THE UNITED STATES, THE RUSSIANS DID NOT WANT THE DECISION OVER NMD DEPLOYMENT TO BE A STARK CHOICE,

EITHER NMD OR ABM. ERRERA ASKED IF THERE WAS A DIVERGENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN ACTING PRESIDENT PUTIN AND THE RUSSIAN MILITARY OVER NMD. TALBOTT SAID THAT NIKOLAY ZLENKO AND CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE GRU WERE CONCERNED THAT NMD, AS CONFIGURED AND LIMITED TO PHASE TWO, WOULD BLUNT RUSSIAN DETERRENCE. TALBOTT DESCRIBED AS PURE CHIMERA THE RUSSIAN CONCERN THAT NMD COULD RESULT IN THE UNITED STATES WIELDING

A FIRST STRIKE CAPABILITY OVER RUSSIA. TALBOTT SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GRU AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE RUSSIAN MILITARY. TALBOTT FURTHER SPECULATED THAT NEITHER PUTIN NOR THE MILITARY WOULD WANT TO HEAD INTO THE NEXT U.S. ADMINISTRATION WITH BOTH THEIR DEFENSIVE AND OFFENSIVE MILITARY STRATEGY IN A SHAMBLES. HE COMMENTED THAT MANY IN THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT WERE AFRAID FOR THEIR JOBS, AWAITING THE RESULTS OF THE RUSSIAN ELECTIONS. TALBOTT AND ERRERA AGREED TO DISCUSS NMD AT THEIR NEXT MEETING IN APRIL.

NAGORNO-KARABAKH

7. ~~(C)~~ ERRERA DESCRIBED THE AMBIVALENCE AND FRAGILITY OF THE PEACE PROCESS IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH AFTER A RECENT MEETING OF POLITICAL DIRECTORS IN LISBON. ERRERA SAID THAT FRANCE WAS ANXIOUS TO ENCOURAGE THE PEACE PROCESS, BUT NOT TO ANTICIPATE IT PRECIPITOUSLY, LEST THE MINSK GROUP BE SEEN AS IMPOSING AND FORCING AN AGREEMENT ON THE PARTIES. ERRERA ADDED THAT FRANCE WANTS TO EXPAND THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE PEACE PROCESS, INCLUDING THE OSCE. FRANCE THEREFORE AGREES THAT THE MINSK CO-CHAIRS SHOULD BRIEF THE AUSTRIAN CIO ON THE N-K PEACE PROCESS. TALBOTT WELCOMED THIS, AGREEING THAT THE CIO HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY.

8. ~~(C)~~ ON THE TOPIC OF A NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION TO THE REGION, ERRERA WANTED TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE RUSSIAN ELECTIONS, ADDING THAT FRANCE DID NOT HAVE A PROBLEM CONCEPTUALLY WITH THE MISSION. ERRERA ADDED THAT THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND WAS STILL BLOCKED. TALBOTT RESPONDED THAT THE SITUATION WAS NOT PERMANENTLY BLOCKED, BUT PALPABLE PROBLEMS REMAIN, ARISING FROM THE ASSASSINATIONS LAST OCTOBER. TALBOTT SAID THAT THE TWO PRESIDENTS WERE ANXIOUS TO HAVE THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCEED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, AND THAT THE USG AND FRANCE NEEDED TO CLOSE ANY GAP QUICKLY.

9. ~~(C)~~ TALBOTT AND ERRERA AGREED THAT THE DIPLOMATIC PROCESS NEEDED TO RESUME AFTER THE CIO BRIEFING IN VIENNA. STEVE SESTANOVICH URGED THAT THE CO-CHAIRS MEET IN GENEVA WITH THE RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FIRST WEEK OF APRIL TO PLAN AN ASSESSMENT MISSION TO ADDRESS POST-CONFLICT RESETTLEMENT AND RECONSTRUCTIONS NEEDS IN THE REGION. SESTANOVICH NOTED THAT KOCHARIAN PLAINLY WANTS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM, TO WHICH ERRERA RESPONDED THAT THE CURRENT DEAL SERVES HIS INTERESTS, OTHER THAN THE ISSUE OF ACCESS TO IRAN. SESTANOVICH RESPONDED THAT KOCHARIAN

PLACES GREAT IMPORTANCE ON THE RUSSIAN ELECTIONS, AND WILL WANT TO MOVE FORWARD ONLY AFTER PUTIN'S THEN PRESUMED ELECTION. SESTANOVICH ADDED THAT TIME IS A PROBLEM FOR ALIYEV. WITH UPCOMING PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN AZERBAIJAN, AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS FOLLOWING THEREAFTER, ALIYEV WANTS PROGRESS IN THE PEACE PROCESS TO BLUNT POSSIBLE CRITICISM. ERRERA COMMENTED THAT THE RUSSIANS WANT STABILITY, AND THAT A WORKABLE SOLUTION FOR KOCHARIAN AND ALIYEV IS ENOUGH.

10. ~~(C)~~ SESTANOVICH SAID THAT PUTIN WANTS TO REVERSE THE PERCEPTION THAT RUSSIA LOSES IN ANY PEACE PROCESS FRAMED BY THE MINSK GROUP. SESTANOVICH ADDED THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE NO REAL CONFLICT IN THE REGION. RELATIONS WITH ARMENIA ARE SATISFACTORY, AND THERE ARE NEW OPENINGS WITH AZERBAIJAN. PUTIN'S GOAL IS TO SHOW THAT RUSSIA IS THE DOMINANT PLAYER IN THE MINSK GROUP. TALBOTT AGREED, COMMENTING THAT PUTIN TRAVELED TO THE SOUTH CAUCASUS IN OCTOBER, AND CONVENED A MEETING MORE RECENTLY WITH THE ACTORS IN MOSCOW.

11. ~~(C)~~ TALBOTT ADDED THAT IRAN HAS BEEN A FACTOR IN THE REGION SINCE 1993 OR 1994. TALBOTT SPECULATED THAT THE RUSSIANS MIGHT TRY TO PATCH UP THEIR TATTERED RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAN IN ORDER TO BALANCE THE ROLE TURKEY POTENTIALLY MAY PLAY IN THE REGION. ERRERA RETURNED TO THE ISSUE OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, CONCLUDING THAT THERE WAS NO ISSUE OF PRINCIPLE, ONLY ONE OF OPTIMAL SCHEDULING.

BALKANS

12. ~~(C)~~ ERRERA DESCRIBED GOOD MEETINGS IN LISBON AND BRUSSELS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN KOSOVO, SAYING THAT THE EU REACHED A MEETING OF THE MINDS ON BASIC POLICY, NOT JUST ON HOW TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM AREAS, LIKE MITROVICA. ERRERA SAID THAT THE WESTERN AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS ARE NARROWING PRIVATE DIFFERENCES ON HOW BEST TO PROCEED. ERRERA REPORTED THAT KOFI ANNAN'S RECENT MEETINGS IN PARIS REFLECTED THE EMERGING CONSENSUS NOT TO PUSH FOR CLARIFICATION OF FINAL STATUS OF KOSOVO. PUSHING CLARIFICATION, ERRERA WARNED, COULD LEAD TO FURTHER AGGRAVATION OF THE TENSE STANDOFF IN MITROVICA. ANY AGREEMENT ON SUBSTANTIAL AUTONOMY WILL BOLSTER THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN KOSOVO, AND RATTLE THE SERBS, WHO ARE CONVINCED THAT NATO IS ACTING AS A COVER FOR THOSE WHO FAVOR INDEPENDENCE FOR KOSOVO. TALBOTT AGREED THAT WE MUST RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO FORCE THE ISSUE, LEST WE CREATE A STARK SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO INDEPENDENCE FOR KOSOVO. ERRERA ADDED THAT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ARE VERY IMPORTANT

AND AN ENTIRELY SEPARATE SUBJECT. HE URGED STRONG QUINT COORDINATION ON PREPARING FOR ELECTIONS IN THE FALL.

13. ~~(C)~~ ERRERA RAISED THREE FURTHER ISSUES WITH RESPECT TO KOSOVO: LEVEL OF ARMED FORCES, POLICE AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT. ERRERA SAID THAT THE GOF WAS CONCERNED ABOUT ONGOING CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE KOSOVO EFFORT, FUELED IN PART BY BERNARD KOUCHNER'S WIDELY PUBLICIZED FRUSTRATION AT THE SLOWNESS OF EU FUNDING MECHANISMS. TALBOTT RESPONDED THAT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE COHEN WAS TRYING TO SECURE CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT, BUT THAT WE NEEDED REAL EVIDENCE THAT THE EUROPEANS WERE INTENSIFYING THEIR OWN EFFORTS TO GET FUNDS TO THE REGION. THE BOTTOM LINE, TALBOTT POINTED OUT, WAS TO PROTECT OUR PEOPLE NOT JUST THE CONCEPT. ERRERA AGREED THAT IT IS CRITICAL TO GET THE FUNDING FIGURES AND THE TROOP LEVEL ISSUES WORKED OUT RIGHT. ERRERA SAID THESE ISSUES WERE ADDRESSED IN FRENCH DEFMIN ALAIN RICHARD'S RECENT VISITS TO WASHINGTON, BRUSSELS AND EU CAPITALS.

14. ~~(C)~~ ERRERA COMMENDED AMBASSADOR CHRIS HILL AND SPOKESPERSON JAMIE RUBIN'S RECENT TRIP TO THE REGION, SAYING AS LONG AS THE UCK FELT THEY HAD UNFETTERED SUPPORT FROM THE UNITED STATES AND NATO WE WERE ALL HEADED FOR TROUBLE. IT WAS CRITICAL, HE ADDED, TO DELIVER THE MESSAGE TO THE KOSOVAR ALBANIANS THAT WE WOULD NOT BE DRAWN INTO THEIR ADVENTURE, AND HE EXPECTED OUR ONGOING GOOD COOPERATION AND COORDINATION ON KOSOVO POLICY TO CONTINUE.

TALBOTT AGREED, SAYING THAT THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS WERE PARTICULARLY CRITICAL. TALBOTT ADDED THAT MAINSTREAM ALBANIANS ARE NOT SWAYED BY THOSE FEW HOT HEADS THAT ARE ANXIOUS TO EXPAND THE CONFLICT.

15. (C) ERRERA AND TALBOTT AGREED THAT MORE FUNDING MUST BE FOUND FOR JAILS AND JUDGES. TALBOTT ADDED THAT MONTENEGRO'S NEEDS MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN IN THE RESOURCE DEBATE, SAYING THAT THE SECRETARY RECENTLY RAISED THIS ISSUE WITH FRENCH FM VEDRINE.

CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION

16. (C) CITING CHINA'S POOR TRACK RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TALBOTT RAISED THE ISSUE OF EU SUPPORT FOR THE CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION BEFORE THE UNCHR. TONY WAYNE URGED THE FRENCH TO SEND A CLEAR MESSAGE. ERRERA, HOWEVER, DEMURRED, SAYING THAT THE FRENCH POSITION WOULD BE PART OF AN EU CONSENSUS, AND THAT DESPITE SOME GERMAN HESITANCY, WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED TO CONFLICT BETWEEN SCHROEDER AND FM

URGED THE FRENCH TO SEND A CLEAR MESSAGE. ERRERA, HOWEVER, DEMURRED, SAYING THAT THE FRENCH POSITION WOULD BE PART OF AN EU CONSENSUS, AND THAT DESPITE SOME GERMAN HESITANCY, WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED TO CONFLICT BETWEEN SCHROEDER AND FM FISCHER, THAT THE EU WOULD NOT COSPONSOR THE RESOLUTION. ERRERA REPEATED THIS THREE TIMES, EXPLAINING THAT TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE END, THE EU MUST ACT COHESIVELY AT THE START, BUT THAT THE EU POSITION WOULD NOT BE FAR APART FROM THE UNITED STATES. ERRERA DEFENDED THE EU'S DIFFERENT APPROACH BY SAYING THAT CRITICAL DIALOGUE WITH THE CHINESE AND FURTHER ENGAGEMENT ARE BETTER THAN EMBARRASSING THE CHINESE WITH RESOLUTIONS. TONY WAYNE POINTED OUT THAT CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT HAD DONE LITTLE TO INFLUENCE CHINA'S HORRIBLE BEHAVIOR ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE LAST YEAR.
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