

Soltis, Marjorie A.

Heading: ANKARA 11072 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ EXDIS ROUTINE
DECAPTIONED

SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN DEPUTY
-- SECRETARY TALBOTT AND TURKISH PRESIDENT DEMIREL

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RELEASE IN FULL

REF: ANKARA 10781

DECLASSIFIED

(U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MARK R. PARRIS, EMBASSY ANKARA.
REASONS: 1.5 (B) AND (D)

DECONTROLLED

1. ~~(C)~~ SUMMARY: DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT MET WITH PRESIDENT DEMIREL OCTOBER 27 TO BRIEF HIM ON HIS MEETINGS IN BAKU AND YEREVAN. THIS FOLLOWED ONLY BY HOURS THE TRAGIC EVENTS IN YEREVAN. AGAINST THIS SOBER BACKDROP, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY REVIEWED IN BROAD TERMS THE EFFORTS OF PRESIDENTS ALIYEV AND KOCHARIAN TO MOVE TOWARD PEACE. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY TOLD DEMIREL PRESIDENT ALIYEV IS MORE PREPARED TO MOVE AHEAD QUICKLY AT THIS POINT THAN PRESIDENT KOCHARIAN. IT WAS UNCLEAR WHAT IMPACT THE TRAGEDY IN YEREVAN WOULD HAVE, HOWEVER. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY EMPHASIZED THE CONCERN SHARED IN BOTH BAKU AND YEREVAN FOR CONFIDENTIALITY, AND OUR SUPPORT FOR THIS. DEMIREL ALSO AGREED. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY NOTED SOME AREAS WHERE KOCHARIAN THOUGHT TURKISH-ARMENIAN TIES MIGHT MAKE PROGRESS; DEMIREL RESPONDED, AGREEING THAT A MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS SHOULD TAKE PLACE AND SENDING A CONDOLENCE LETTER TO YEREVAN AT THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S URGING. DEMIREL SAID HE WOULD ENCOURAGE ALIYEV TO CONSIDER NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH ARMENIA AS PART OF A PEACE DEAL. DEMIREL ALSO UPDATED THE DEPUTY SECRETARY ON PROSPECTS FOR CLINCHING A BAKU-CEYHAN OIL PIPELINE DEAL IN TIME FOR SIGNING AT THE OSCE SUMMIT IN ISTANBUL. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) PARTICIPANTS:

TURKEY: PRESIDENT SULEYMAN DEMIREL
-- MFA SENIOR DEPUTY U/S FARUK LOGOGLU
-- PRESIDENCY CHIEF OF STAFF RAFET AKGUNAY
-- PRESIDENCY FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR MEHMET
-- ALI BAYAR
-- MFA CAUCASUS DEPARTMENT HEAD SERAP COSKUN
-- PRESIDENCY FOREIGN POLICY STAFFER MURAT
-- KARAGOZ

U.S.: DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT
-- AMBASSADOR MARK R. PARRIS
-- S/NIS AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE AND SPECIAL ADVISOR
-- STEPHEN SESTANOVICH
-- S/NIS/RC SPECIAL NEGOTIATOR CAREY CAVANAUGH
-- NSC DIRECTOR JOHN ELKIND
-- D EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT PHILLIP GOLDBERG
-- EMBASSY NOTETAKER

3. ~~(C)~~ THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID HE HAD COME TO ANKARA TO BRIEF DEMIREL ON HIS CURRENT TRIP. WITH RESPECT TO HIS JUST-CONCLUDED CONTACTS IN YEREVAN, HE TOLD DEMIREL THAT, IN HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KOCHARIAN, PRIME MINISTER SARKISIAN HAD FOR THE FIRST TIME HEARD SOME OF THE DETAILS OF THE KOCHARIAN-ALIYEV DISCUSSIONS. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY EXPRESSED HOPE THE VIOLENCE IN ARMENIA AND DEATH OF SARKISIAN AND OTHERS WOULD NOT TAKE WITH THEM THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE. DEMIREL AGREED EVENTS IN YEREVAN WERE "VERY UNFORTUNATE."

4. ~~(C)~~ THE DEPUTY SECRETARY NOTED THAT ON THIS TRIP HE HAD STOPPED IN GENEVA, BAKU, AND ARMENIA. IN GENEVA, HE MET WITH KNUT VOLLABECK TO ENLIST THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE OSCE CIO IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE PROCESS, SINCE HE COULD PLAY A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE. IN BAKU, HE HAD A HOPEFUL SESSION WITH PRESIDENT ALIYEV. THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF ALIYEV'S SERIOUSNESS OR THAT HE IS READY TO SEIZE THIS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY. IT HAD BEEN POSSIBLE TO HAVE A DETAILED CONVERSATION WITH ALIYEV ABOUT WHAT A SETTLEMENT MIGHT LOOK LIKE. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, A CAUTIONARY NOTE: ALIYEV WAS INSISTING ON A VIRTUAL "DIVORCE" FROM ARMENIA, IN THAT HE WOULD NOT EVEN ENTERTAIN A TIMETABLE FOR RESUMING NORMAL STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS. BASED ON HIS CONVERSATION IN BAKU, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID HE LEFT BAKU THINKING IT MIGHT EVEN BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE AN EVENT IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

5. ~~(C)~~ THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID PRESIDENT KOCHARIAN HAD BEEN MORE CAUTIOUS THAN ALIYEV BECAUSE HIS SITUATION IS MORE COMPLEX. EVEN BEFORE THE TRAGEDY IN YEREVAN, KOCHARIAN HAD CAUTIONED THE DEPUTY SECRETARY AGAINST PUSHING TOO HARD. BASED ON THIS CONVERSATION, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY TOLD DEMIREL HE WAS NOT AS OPTIMISTIC AS HE HAD BEEN ABOUT ORGANIZING A MAJOR ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN EVENT AT THE OSCE SUMMIT IN ISTANBUL. NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID HE HAS TOLD

PRESIDENT CLINTON AND SECRETARY ALBRIGHT TO KEEP OPEN A SPOT FOR SUCH AN EVENT, JUST IN CASE.

6. ~~(C)~~ THE DEPUTY SECRETARY EXPLAINED THAT PART OF KOCHARIAN'S WARINESS WAS BASED ON HIS CONCERN THAT THE RUSSIANS MAY NOT BE FULLY INFORMED ABOUT THE PROGRESS MADE IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH ALIYEV. KOCHARIAN WOULD SEE PRESIDENT YELTSIN AT SOCHI ON NOVEMBER 5 AND TALK TO HIM. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID KOCHARIAN WAS CONCERNED LEST MOSCOW BELIEVE HE WAS GOING BEHIND ITS BACK -- OR THAT THE AMERICANS WERE DOING SO.

7. ~~(C)~~ BOTH KOCHARIAN AND ALIYEV ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY EXPLAINED IT WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR ALL OF US TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THESE CONCERNS. DEMIREL SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FULLY. TURKEY COULD BE DEPENDED ON TO KEEP WHAT IT LEARNS TO ITSELF. LATER IN THE CONVERSATION, WHEN DISCUSSING HOW TO CHARACTERIZE THEIR MEETING TO THE MEDIA, DEMIREL AND THE DEPUTY SECRETARY AGREED THEY WOULD NOTE HAVING DISCUSSED THE BAKU-CEYHAN OIL PIPELINE AND THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S BRIEFING THE PRESIDENT ON HIS CURRENT TRIP.

8. ~~(C)~~ KOCHARIAN NOTED OTHER CONCERNS. HE TOLD THE DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMENIA WANTED TO MAINTAIN ITS GEOGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL CONNECTIONS WITH IRAN. KOCHARIAN SAID HE WANTED TO FIND SOME WAY VIA DIALOGUE WITH AZERBAIJAN AND/OR TURKEY TO ENSURE HIS IMPORTANT TRADE LINKS WITH IRAN. DEMIREL AGREED THERE SHOULD BE WAYS FOR AZERBAIJAN TO ADDRESS THIS ARMENIAN CONCERN. "WE'LL TELL ALIYEV ARMENIA SHOULD NOT BE CUT OFF FROM IRAN," DEMIREL SAID.

9. ~~(C)~~ KOCHARIAN ALSO PRESSED HARD FOR U.S. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN CONNECTION WITH A SETTLEMENT. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID HE EXPLAINED CURRENT BUDGET UNCERTAINTIES IN THE U.S. WHICH MADE IT DIFFICULT TO BE SPECIFIC. HOWEVER, HE TOLD KOCHARIAN THE U.S. WOULD SEEK ADDITIONAL HELP FOR BOTH ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN SHOULD THERE BE A SETTLEMENT.

10. ~~(C)~~ REGARDING TURKEY AND ARMENIA, KOCHARIAN SAID HE WANTS A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ANKARA AND HOPES TURKEY, ARMENIA, AND THE U.S. WILL DO ALL THEY CAN TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN. KOCHARIAN:

-- SAID FONMIN OSKANIAN WANTED TO MEET WITH FONMIN CEM IN

THE NEXT FEW DAYS. HE WOULD MEET ANYWHERE IT MIGHT BE CONVENIENT.

-- RAISED THE PROSPECT OF A "SHARED HISTORY" PROJECT AS A WAY TO ADDRESS THE GENOCIDE ISSUE.

-- SPOKE OF POSSIBLE BORDER ADJUSTMENTS WITH TURKEY IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN SETTLEMENT.

11. (C) THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID THAT IN RESPONSE, HE ASSURED KOCHARIAN THE U.S. FULLY SUPPORTED THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS AND WAS PREPARED TO SUPPORT WHAT THEY AGREED. HE MADE CLEAR TO KOCHARIAN, HOWEVER, THAT WE OPPOSED AND WOULD NOT BE A PARTY TO AN ATTEMPT BY ARMENIA TO LINK AN ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN DEAL WITH ARMENIA-TURKEY RELATIONS. THIS WAS THE WRONG PATH.

12. (C) THANKING THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR HIS BRIEFING, PRESIDENT DEMIREL SAID THE PICTURE HE PRESENTED WAS SIMILAR TO THE ONE HE HAS FROM HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH ALIYEV. HE AGREED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ARMENIA'S AVOIDING LINKING PROGRESS WITH AZERBAIJAN AND ITS RELATIONS WITH TURKEY. WE CAN SUPPORT THE TWO LEADERS' EFFORTS, DEMIREL SAID. AND ONCE A PEACE HAS BEEN AGREED, WE CAN OPEN BORDERS, OPEN RAIL LINES, OPEN AIRPORTS, AND ALLOW ISTANBUL TO BECOME ARMENIA'S COMMERCIAL HUB -- BUT NOT UNTIL THERE IS PEACE. DEMIREL ALSO RECALLED WARNING ARMENIAN PRESIDENT TER-PETROSSIAN AGAINST ANCHORING ITS POLICY TOWARD TURKEY IN THE PAST.

13. (C) DEMIREL SAID HE HAS EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL CONCERN TO ALIYEV ABOUT A "KOCHARIAN-ALIYEV PEACE DEAL." HE WORRIED THAT SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THE TWO LEADERS TO SELL IN THEIR CAPITALS. DEMIREL SAID HE HAD COUNSELED ALIYEV TO LET THE MINSK GROUP PUT THE LEADERS' PROPOSAL FORWARD SO THE TWO PARLIAMENTS COULD WEIGH IT AS A "MINSK GROUP DEAL."

14. (C) CONCERNING ALIYEV, DEMIREL SAID TURKEY SHARES THE AMERICAN VIEW THAT HE IS THE ONLY AZERI WHO CAN SELL A DEAL. HE HAS THE POLITICAL SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE TO DO SO. HE IS A SURVIVOR. BUT, DEMIREL CONTINUED, TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.

"I WORRY ABOUT HIS HEALTH." IF ALIYEV IS OUT OF THE PICTURE, I WORRY ABOUT AZERBAIJAN'S ABILITY TO MAKE PEACE, HE SAID.

15. (C) THE DEPUTY SECRETARY AGREED THE MINSK GROUP HAD AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY. AT THIS POINT, THE U.S. KNOWS MORE THAN ITS PARTNERS ABOUT THE DEAL. HE TOLD DEMIREL HE WOULD BRIEF HIS RUSSIAN AND FRENCH PARTNERS, AND THEN WE WILL APPLY OURSELVES TO DEVELOPING A MINSK GROUP APPROACH CONSISTENT WITH THE AZERI AND ARMENIAN LEADERS' TALKS.

16. (C) RETURNING TO THE QUESTION OF WHAT TURKEY COULD DO, PRESIDENT DEMIREL AGREED FOREIGN MINISTER CEM SHOULD TRY TO ACCOMMODATE HIS ARMENIAN COUNTERPART'S DESIRE FOR A MEETING. MFA D/U/S LOGOGLU SAID THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WOULD FOLLOW UP. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY ALSO WONDERED WHETHER DEMIREL MIGHT MAKE A STATEMENT OF CONDOLENCES IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAGIC EVENTS IN YEREVAN. DEMIREL RESPONDED, "I'LL DO IT TODAY." (NOTE: AND HE DID. SEE REFTEL.)

17. (C) THE DEPUTY SECRETARY ASKED WHETHER DEMIREL MIGHT ENCOURAGE ALIYEV TO MAKE QUICK ESTABLISHMENT OF NORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS PART OF A PEACE DEAL. THIS WOULD PERMIT ALIYEV TO GET THE CREDIT HE WOULD DESERVE IN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION. "I WILL TRY TO CONVINCE HIM," DEMIREL PROMISED. DEMIREL EXPLAINED ALIYEV WOULD VISIT TURKEY OCTOBER 31 TO NOVEMBER 2 TO RECEIVE THE ATATURK PEACE PRIZE, WHICH DEMIREL HALF-JOKED WAS A DOWNPAYMENT FOR THE WORK THAT IS YET TO BE DONE. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY ASKED

WHETHER KOCHARIAN MIGHT BE ELIGIBLE NEXT YEAR AND DEMIREL QUIPPED, "WHY NOT."

18. ~~(C)~~ THE DEPUTY SECRETARY AND PRESIDENT DEMIREL BRIEFLY DISCUSSED THE EAST-WEST ENERGY CORRIDOR. DEMIREL EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON A BAKU-CEYHAN OIL PIPELINE WOULD SUCCEED. OUR PEOPLE AND ALIYEV'S PEOPLE TELL ME EVERYTHING SHOULD BE READY TO SIGN BY ISTANBUL, DEMIREL SAID. AMBASSADOR PARRIS NOTED THAT CBED AMBASSADOR WOLF WOULD BE IN TURKEY THE ENTIRE FIRST WEEK OF NOVEMBER TO HELP BRING THIS ABOUT. ONCE BAKU-CEYHAN IS IN PLACE, DEMIREL CONTINUED, "THEN OUR GOAL IS THE TRANS-CASPIAN GAS PIPELINE."

PARRIS

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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