

through the
Commission. And I welcome your statements about it. It has been a
very useful
tool for building our partnership and accomplishing our mutual goals.
As I noted
in my recent message to you, I look forward to continuing this
cooperation with
you. I appreciate your affirmation of it this morning. Perhaps it would
be best
to have our staffs contact each other to review the current state of
Commission
business and to discuss the possibility of a future meeting. Who's
going to be
your personal representative we should deal with?

PRIME MINISTER STEPASHIN: Of course I think that first of all
we should maintain
contacts through the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Ivanov. With
regard to
financial issues, I will be helped by Mr. [Khristenko].

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: We will be in touch. Thanks for taking
my call. And
thanks for the role Russia has played in this process.

PRIME MINISTER STEPASHIN: Thank you. I think we'll soon have
the opportunity to
meet and discuss these matters. I wish you success.

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TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT

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DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: THE VICE PRESIDENT, LEON FUERTH,
SANDY BERGER,
STROBE TALBOTT, VIKTOR STEPANOVICH
CHERNOMYRDIN,
MIKHAIL TARASOV, AMBASSADOR YURI USHAKOV,
VLADIMIR

MARKOV, BORIS IVANOVSKY

LOCATION: DINING ROOM, VICE PRESIDENT'S RESIDENCE

NOTE TAKER: RICHARD BRODY

INTERPRETERS: PETER AFANASENKO [+ CHERNOMYRDIN'S
INTERPRETER]

DATE/TIME: 3 MAY 1999/2045-2245 EDT

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Our discussion in the Oval Office was productive and interesting. Maybe on some nuances we were talking past each other. But in the main, we have a good understanding. You have learned and understood our conditions. Certain methodological questions can benefit from discussion this evening. You asked certain questions of Strobe in Moscow and he told you we'd give you answers. We have completed a nonpaper for your use only to answer these questions. Peter will translate the document as Sandy reviews the five questions on which you sought greater clarity.

MR. BERGER: [Reading from nonpaper] First, the size, pace, and manner of withdrawal of FRY forces. There are two points: NATO is to suspend strikes once Belgrade has unequivocally accepted NATO conditions and demonstrably begun to withdraw forces according to a precise timetable; all Serb forces must be withdrawn within a specified number of days. It says seven, but that's not a magical number.

Second, how will withdrawal be verified and will Russia participate? It can take place under an international force; Russia is welcome to participate and verification mechanisms are to be developed. On the issue of an alternate mechanism for accurate verification - we can discuss this.

Third, the residual Serb military presence in Kosovo.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: We shared this document with NATO allies and it's therefore a joint product not easily changed without difficult consultations within NATO.

MR. BERGER: [on third point] All forces are to be withdrawn initially. A limited number might be allowed to return under agreed terms to protect Serb patrimony...

Fourth, the nature of an international military force. A chapter VII UNSCR, with U.S. forces under NATO, Russian forces under Grachev-Joulwan. We would expect other non-NATO countries to participate, particularly Ukraine and other orthodox countries

Fifth, the nature of the international protected area. It will be under the mandate of the UNSC.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: What is meant by a protected area?

MR. BERGER: What is status of Kosovo? It would remain within Yugoslavia but since there's no government or Serb administration, we would need some mechanism at least in the beginning for administration.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: To protect Serbs against violence by Kosovar Albanians and against Kosovar Albanians by Serbs.

MR. BERGER: As the President said, we believe Kosovo should stay part of Yugoslavia. But for a period at the start, Kosovars won't accept Yugoslav administration. So the UN would administer.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Under the sovereignty of Yugoslavia.

MR. BERGER: One last thing and I think it's a point President was making - the fundamental requirement is that Kosovar Albanians can return. That requirement carries two other necessities: they won't return unless Serb forces are out; and they won't return unless there is international security force to protect

them.

That's the mechanism by which Kosovo stays in Yugoslavia, we avoid civil war, and ironically the only way in which Milosevic can keep Kosovo.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: I'd like Strobe to elaborate on the international protected area.

MR. TALBOTT: I found in Moscow a particular concern on the Russian side about the phrase international protected area. In particular a concern that this is a disguise that would forever take Kosovo out of Yugoslavia.

[Interpreter asks to repeat word "disguise"]

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Disguise - like a beard and mustache.

MR. TALBOTT: In fact, what we have in mind would have the opposite consequence - it would help keep Kosovo in Yugoslavia and with your permission I'd like to walk you through the logic. In the Oval Office you told the President and Vice President what you told me last week - that the core point the US and Russia agree on is the need to return all refugees: rank and file citizens who just want to go about their business peacefully. As we see it, there are only four options available to make this happen:

First: Belgrade authorities remain in charge in Kosovo. We believe Milosevic would like this. But it's impossible because with Belgrade in charge, the right kind of refugees won't come back. The only ones who will come back are UCK terrorists armed with Kalashnikovs bent on killing Serbs.

Second, Kosovar Albanians in charge. This would mean UCK because power flows from the barrel of a gun. It's unacceptable and would lead to a war of independence or secession.

Third, no one in charge. This would mean chaos, the breakup of Yugoslavia, and the spread of violence in the region.

Fourth, the only possible option. We - the international community - would take temporary charge. This could mean the UN and OSCE with details and structure to be worked out in conversations like this one.

What the international protected area doesn't mean is a NATO-led military governorship.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Pardon our long monologue, but I'd like Sandy to complete our answers.

MR. BERGER: These are the answers, but let me note where there is flexibility and where there's not. There's flexibility in the nature of the international force, recognizing we can't participate unless within the context of NATO. This is partially for domestic political reasons. So there has to be a NATO core - but these are words and can be discussed.

All Serbs must leave, but we can envision a face-saving way for Serb forces to be at special places of historical and cultural significance. But 10,000 Serb soldiers means refugees won't come back. KLA will come back and fight Serbs. This is gray zone that President spoke of.

So (we agree on the following) 1.....

2.....

3 We agree - Kosovars have to come back.

And there's flexibility in the design of the verification regime and the exact nature of the international presence. We don't need NATO flags. We can give on form if the substance is ok. And there's some flexibility in the timetable though we would say days and weeks, not months.

So on certain things related to getting the Kosovo refugees back - the practical realities - there [is less flexibility]. On the other things, there's more room for discussion.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: One other methodological question. I think it's easy to imagine an agreement to stop the bloodshed, stop the forced relocation of refugees, and stop the bombing. But it might be difficult for Milosevic to say yes if he was saying yes to the US or to NATO and maybe even to Russia. If there's some mechanism by which the UN can play role to give him a way to say yes but it doesn't put us at the mercy of Kofi Annan going off on his own adventure - we've had unpleasant experiences with him - then we're open to this kind of method. But otherwise bombing will continue, all 19 countries are united, our publics are horrified by the killings as I know Russians are whenever they see the evidence. And history is intertwined in this region, the Balkans are the Balkans... Yevtushenko wrote a piece recently saying that history is like a Raskolnikov - it always returns to the scene of the crime. Every once in a while, when he's sober, he comes up with a great line.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I have a few questions. The withdrawal of forces - how do you envision it? Who will be in control? Who will verify?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Russia can play a role in verification with us.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: While the bombs are falling?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: No. If withdrawal begins after agreement by Milosevic to a plan that envisions withdrawal, the bombing would stop.

MR. BERGER: Think about the following steps: Step 1 - agreement to a road map; Step 2 - Milosevic makes a down-payment, because he's violated many past agreements. It doesn't have to be measured in 10 days. As long as we see him pulling out. It would make no sense for us to continue bombing.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: What do you mean by down-payment?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: First steps.

MR. BERGER: If Milosevic would commit to pull out forces it would make no sense to continue bombing.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: That's not a down-payment. It's conditions. A down-payment is like when I put my watch down on the table.

MR. BERGER: We made an October agreement to withdraw and he didn't do it.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I'm not arguing.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Let me explain the phrase. In the U.S. if a family wants to buy a house, they sign a contract and agree to payments. But they start with a big payment - the down-payment - and are obligated to continue. It's almost like buying gas.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: [in jest] It's almost the same - but buying and selling gas are two different things. It's all clear. With Strobe in Moscow I discussed having protection for areas of Kosovo with patrimony - there are many monasteries, historical sites, etc. with history....More than 30,000 sites and 8000 protected already by international organizations like UNESCO. So we're talking of sacred places for every Serb. How can they be protected? How do you envision it?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Let me venture some answers. If you ask people of any country, what are your sacred sites, they'd have a list of sacred ones. But if you wanted to list every site, you'd name every cemetery, etc. So 8000 sounds too high. Let's say agreement to a reasonable number of important sites. We could imagine how impossible it would be for Serb police or guards to be stationed to protect so many. So we could name some important sites - for example, the center of Serb Orthodox church is in Pec, there's the Field of

Blackbirds, Kosovo Field.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I understand and agree. Let's say we named 500 sites - what would you have in mind? Would guards be armed?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: 500 is too much.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: OK

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Let's say 10. I think we could negotiate a force that could symbolize Serb sovereignty, protect against desecration, but not large enough to inspire fear of attack - so somewhere in between in terms of size.

MR. BERGER: From Milosevic's point of view, his worst option is an insufficient force in Kosovo. 2, 3, 4000 soldiers - he'd be in a guerrilla war.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: With whom? And if there were no Serb troops there would also be a guerrilla war - but on behalf of 250,000 Kosovar Serbs. Nationalist military forces would go into the country to fight Albanians.

MR. BERGER: That's why it's so important for you and us to be there.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I agree.

MR. BERGER: And other countries - with orthodox ones disproportionately in Serb areas to provide sense of safety.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Let's get to brass tacks and stop talking erratically. You've put forward a condition of complete withdrawal.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: But this was modified [to allow protection of patrimony]

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Second, you say some portion of Serb forces must be left to protect sites. Third, you say it doesn't make sense to leave an insufficient level of troops. We [both] want to avoid a guerrilla war. But who will protect the border?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Initially it would have to be an

international security
force, until conditions return to normal, until there is order, peace, and
confidence that would allow, over time, for that function to return to
Yugoslavia. But this would mean big trouble at the start because that's
the
ethnic cleansing began.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I acknowledge that ethnic cleansing did
take place - but
after the bombardment. NATO helped promote total.....

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: We disagree. I don't want to argue. But I
will note that
350,000 refugees were forced out before the bombing.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: It's now one million.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: That's IDPs and EDPs. Milosevic
speeded it up when the
bombing started.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: If it was 300,000, that's one thing. But now
it's one
million.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: And think about [the potential] elsewhere
- there are
350,000 Hungarians in Vojvodina.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Again - need to think about the historical
sites, borders,
some protection for municipal authorities. If there's a drunken street
fight
there must be someone to take care of it because troops won't do this.
There are
so many issues of life that a professional military can't handle.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: I see where you're headed but our trust in
Milosevic is
practically zero. If he said he wanted to have his police to protect
order that
would be enough to keep Kosovar Albanians away. But I agree this is
not a
military function. It doesn't take an army or ANTO to deal with
drunks. But
there's a way to train people whom Kosovar Albanians won't suspect
of ethnic
cleansing. If the general principle is accepted, there are ways for
NATO, OSCE,

and Russia to establish mechanisms to assure normal public functions. We have done this in Bosnia and it worked well.

MR. BERGER: Two more points. We would anticipate that one of the responsibilities of an international force would be to disarm the KLA.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: But you can't find them. Milosevic has gotten rid of them all.

MR. BERGER: Our information is that there are more KLA today than when Milosevic began in March, but they're in the mountains or in Albania.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: There's nobody to disarm, but that's not the issue. They'll return. I'm trying to grasp your logic. How will it be implemented in real life?

Now they'll have to withdraw all troops then maybe some troops can return.

Let's say I agree to 10-12,000 or 8000. We need to return Albanians - Muslims - gypsies, Serbs. There's not just Albanian refugees, there are others as well.

Also, by cluster of nationalities they need to be coordinated.

Albanians,

gypsies, Serbs. So why put hurdles in the way? Why remove their opportunity to

build their life? Also, you say that with a military force there, no one will

allow guerrillas or hostilities. But if there are 5, 7, or 10,000 troops to take

care of a huge region. International presence should be at least 27-30,000

troops. 32,000 troops to allow....

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: This depends on whether or not there's a genuine willingness

on both sides to resolve the issues peacefully. If so, I think fewer would

suffice. In Bosnia we have a total of 8-10,000.

[short gap in note-taking]

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I think 8-12,000 would be effective against guerrillas.

MR. BERGER: This is why I disagree. We need to demilitarize

Kosovo except for
an international military presence. Otherwise there will be civil war.
With
8000 Serb soldiers - and the hatred in the region - there's natural
combustion
with tens of thousands of Kosovars who were driven from their
homes, angry and
seeking revenge. If I were a Serb soldier, I wouldn't want to be
stationed on
the Albanian border.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I understand the point. But don't think
Albanians will form
guerrilla units and will wage guerrilla war only because of Serbs. The
Serbs
will form guerrilla units. [They're the best guerrilla fighters in the
world.]
Hitler fought them for four years and couldn't do anything. The
Albanians are
not born guerrillas. But the Serbs are. Then this 32,000-man force will
have
its hands full. It's not for me to decide.... Why insist on complete
withdrawal?
A guerrilla war will be waged by Serbs - you'll need 100,000 troops.
Milosevic
would be ready to order this.

Would you allow him 8-10,000 troops? We can make the calculations
to allow him
forces to protect the border and historical sites - as many as are
necessary.
Why withdraw the forces to create a problem and send them back in to
solve it?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Well, we do differ.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Let's minimize our differences.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: After what Serb troops and paramilitaries
have done, I
don't see how they can keep thousands of troops in Kosovo and have
the refugees
back.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Now, no. Not with 100,000 of his troops
there. He should
withdraw some. He is prepared for a big war, ground operations, so to
wage war
against 100,000 Serbs, NATO needs at least 200,000. And Milosevic
agreed to cut

some forces. What's the purpose of pushing him to zero? We can count forces and agree to tell him the number he needs. If he kept [8000?] there'd be no guerrilla war. Kosovo is similar to Chechnya. I can show you [brings out map]. Look. There's just this one road to Pristina, the other to the border, the rest is woods...

MR. BERGER: Why does he need 8000 troops?

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: To protect historic sites.

MR. BERGER: 8000?

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I don't know. It's necessary [to assess] his needs. We can ask how many for sites - let's say 500, then for police ____, then for the border let's say 2000 for a total of 2500-3000 in all. We haven't discussed the issue. I don't know the situation. I don't know what he needs. First you said all the troops must go then some must return. Then you say Kosovo is part of Yugoslavia. At the same time you cut his presence out while the international community oversees it.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Somehow the international community has to play a role or there will be bloodshed without end.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I agree.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Let's be frank. History has distorted the idea of the nation where Serbia is concerned. In the U.S. we have the story of Ripp Van Winkle. He left his village and lay down in the woods and slept for 100 years. When he woke up everything looked the same. But when he returned to his village everything was different. Serbia is like Ripp Van Winkle. As a nation they had their greatest glory in the 14th century. Then the Ottoman Turks came and Serb nationality went to sleep for 500 years. Then it woke up in 1914-15 and some

things looked the same, like the Fields of Black Birds, but 90% of the people living there were Albanians. But there would be a greater injustice. Just because the Serbs have woken from national slumber doesn't give them the right to kill, rape, and maim. But the national heart is there [in Kosovo]. So what is a just outcome? Justice means two things to me: alleviation of national suffering [burning, rape, etc.]; but in justice to the Serbs and their suffering, some protection for their rights and sovereignty is necessary. Especially for important historical/cultural sites. So the essence is how to reconcile the dream from 600 years ago [and from Tito's time also], their nationhood, with compassion for the people who live there. If we get locked into the word "nation" - we can't solve the problem. So the only way to solve it is with international protection of some kind to build confidence that violence won't be used by one side against the other. So we are sensitive to Serb dreams but also to innocent people and the demands of justice...So that's what it's all about. We can argue over formulas, but we have to find a way to stop the bloodshed.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I agree. I'm not satisfied with arguments that are more shape and form and no substance.

AMBASSADOR USHAKOV: What does the U.S. expect from Chernomyrdin as a mediator? What result he is supposed to leave Washington with?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: We want Viktor Stepanovich to speak in his own name and in that capacity explain to Milosevic his understanding of the NATO position and what flexibility he might be able to see in positions here. I know you know you can't solve these difficult problems in just one trip. Because we trust you so much and can speak candidly to you, you're in a unique position to describe what you see and hear without getting into negotiations with Milosevic. We're also

willing to hear your ideas about an OSCE or UN presence. Sandy will describe our ideas.

MR. BERGER: There's one other dimension. The Vice President suggested that you digest our points and explain them to Milosevic. But there's a second dimension. The President and Vice President have tried to explain the logic of our

position. For Kosovars to return, there must be a departure of the vast bulk of Serb forces and the insertion of an international military force. What you can do is not just convey positions, but also the logic. We are convinced that the only way Milosevic can keep Kosovo is for him to accept the international military force. Otherwise it's his Afghanistan or Vietnam. The President explained how it's in Milosevic's own interests: the only way Kosovo stays in Yugoslavia; the international community can work to rebuild the Balkans; and the air campaign will end, instead of going on and on.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: We'd also be pleased if you'd tell him we're at a fork in the road. [Vice President draws on paper] This first way lies bombing,

continued and accelerated. We understand it carries risks for the region. But NATO is united. One or two countries might be nervous. And here in the U.S. you can see that some people are unsure, like in Congress. But we will continue....and his war materiel will be completely destroyed. If he takes the second fork, he could keep Kosovo. It also involves an international effort to rebuild Serbia, integrate Serbia and Montenegro into the European economic sphere and with Russia. This will help Russia as well. The future of this other path is a return to prosperity. NATO has already agreed to massive aid. It's one [fork] or another for him.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I'm convinced Milosevic fully understands this. He's a sick man, but not to the extent that he can't understand what's going on.

You recall
his actions when you started the bombing.. He didn't want any
progress. He was
preparing for something on a larger scale - ground operations. And I
told Strobe
that those were my first impressions. Because his country is bombed,
factories
destroyed, people are dying. That's what I thought he would be - like a
normal
person. [?]

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: This is how we see him too.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: He's waiting for a ground operation. He
wants it.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: He won't get it.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: He planned it all in advance. He got rid of
the opposition.
Now he's a national hero. He consolidated the nation around him. He
couldn't
have done this in the past. He now realizes there's wiggle room. I told
him:
you'll have 3-4 months and Yugoslavia will be flattened like a disk.
He said
people would support their country and not give in. You see he's a
sick person
and his nation doesn't know what's happening. Like Germany under
Hitler. Only
later Germany realized what Hitler got them into. Meanwhile, his
country is
being destroyed. People are unemployed. You talk of the return of
refugees -
but to where? Pristina? There's nothing left. They won't return. There's
no
home to return to. Milosevic understands it all. I'm not such a
simpleton to
tell him you will be cursed by your own people and should stop what
you're doing.
I'm not a diplomat. I'm not there for small talk. In my second meeting
we came
to terms. When he agreed to reduce and withdraw forces, support an
international
presence with NATO there. No one says only Russia will be part of
the force.
The only thing he says is give me an umbrella [a hat]. I don't want to
surrender
either to Russia or NATO, but to the UN. That's why I brought up
Kofi Annan. I

asked him if he thought Annan would solve it - that it wouldn't be up to him because he has no mandate and the U.S. would be the main country [calling the shots]. He said "I understand, but give me a chance." Let's sit down at the negotiating table and dictate our conditions to him. And then the refugees will return and the military presence will be reduced. And no one will ask him whether he approves or not.

Russia is not a participant. We want to be guarantors. But if we send Russian troops, do you think we'll just stay and watch you? We won't send people to get shot and killed. Milosevic said he and NATO would withdraw forces from the border. I asked how? The numbers have to be decided in negotiations. We can work it out. He agreed to a protectorate. Today he agrees, He's at the negotiating table. But we need to make headway. In my conversation, I used harsher words. But he agreed to the five items. So we need to launch serious negotiations and all will be resolved.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Thank you. This is not easy for you. We agree he's a sick person and appreciate your candor. We know his history - his mother and father committed suicide. His wife brought out the worst in him. The tragedy is that the Serb people are cursed with a demagogue that brings out the worst

ultranationalist hatred of people who are different. It's a tragedy that he found a way to unlock this well of hatred. So we see the tragedy in similar ways. I agree with you there are dangers.

First, let me say that Kofi Annan is untrustworthy. I say this in confidence. We cannot rely on him. The feeling is so strong we are not willing to have him in charge of the negotiations. But it may be possible for the U.S. and Russia behind the scenes - us consulting with NATO and you with Milosevic - to draft a chapter VII UNSCR embodying the conditions we are discussing and

using it as
basis for further diplomatic action. If we could find countries seen as
neutral
to lead the drafting of the document we prepare, it could serve as the
fig leaf
Milosevic needs and solve our lack of trust in Annan. We're open to
other
suggestions. We're open to that.

Second point. For all the progress you've made on your journeys,
there are still
wide differences between what Milosevic and NATO find acceptable:
the presence of
Serb police around sensitive sites; protection of borders; simultaneity
and
length of withdrawal - sequencing of withdrawal and stopping
bombing. These are
gaps that can be narrowed. That is the role you could play. Or a
different one.
You be the judge.

Third point. What happens with more bombing? I understand your
point that
Milosevic gains strength and unifies people. But only up to a point.
We're
seeing massive desertions. Serb police are going door-to-door in
Belgrade
rounding up young men for the army before they can run out the back
door. I've
seen reports that the VJ is ceasing in areas to exist as an entity due to
the
damage we've caused. So he will pass the point of strengthening him
to one that
weakens him.

To conclude: we see a two-stage strategy: a stage-managed UNSCR to
give Milosevic
a fig leaf; and you work on your interpretations of our positions to talk
with
Milosevic. And it may be that we have to do this first, that the
differences
have to be narrowed to get to a UNSCR.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: If Milosevic agrees to all the conditions,
who will deal with
him? We are mediators, acting on the instructions of President
Yeltsin. We can
make five more visits, but if Milosevic agrees, who will deal with
him?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Two points. First, decisions on our part are taken by NATO.
If not for fig leaf demands, that would be the contact. For the second, I'd like to turn to Sandy.

MR. BERGER: Assuming you could narrow the differences we could work up a UNSCR to embody this. Milosevic would then accept a UN mandate. He's surrendering to the UN, not Kofi Annan. But the preliminary step to maximize that chance that will happen is to narrow the differences. He might not like all..... Then he's acceding to the rule of the UN, not US, Russia, or NATO.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: If it's a resolution, it needs to be passed by the UNSC.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: It would be written behind the scenes by the US and Russia.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Yes. China would need to be persuaded. But it still rests with UN. Not Kofi Annan - he's not fit. But we're still talking about the UN.
Someone has to make a decision to agree to the resolution....

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Maybe and maybe not. The Security Council can act without a single member negotiating with Milosevic. It could act on its own in a statement of principles. This has happened elsewhere. The patrons refer to the UNSC as the basis. If the purpose is to give a fig leaf, then this suffices. Your role is getting Milosevic's interpretation of meaning of resolution.

MR. BERGER: It's also possible that a UNSCR would then provide for some sort of representative like in Bosnia - with administrative responsibilities, like in OSCE. A civilian administrator that Milosevic accepted under UN would provide machinery.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Let's say he agrees to all of this and a UNSCR passed. And Milosevic and NATO agree. There needs to be someone to declare a willingness

that they've agreed.

MR. BERGER: If NATO and Milosevic and UN agree there would be civilian and military component, with the civilian appointed by the UN or OSCE.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: These are nuances. Someone - an agency - must be able to take the decisions: Yugoslavia agrees, Milosevic agrees.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: I think there's a difference in views. We've talked of a UNSCR that Milosevic or NATO accepts. But putting the UN in charge of negotiations is a problem for us. We don't trust Annan and don't know of another appropriate person. If it were a UNSCR that Milosevic accepted, at some point the NATO command would have to meet with VJ command to work out how an international force would be inserted to keep peace. Just as in Bosnia when Yugoslav forces agreed with Russia, Ukraine, and NATO.

MR. TALBOTT: But it was called IFOR - a new thing.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: It could be a new entity. Not NATO or UN. But authorized by the UN with participation by NATO and Russia. A new entity with which Belgrade negotiated final details.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: This can't be. Kosovo is part of Yugoslavia. Russia is not taking part in the conflict. We won't sign anything. We want Milosevic to surrender either now or when he has nothing left. We drove him to surrender through his actions. His whole industry was destroyed... [??]

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: We don't agree.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Let me finish. I can convey points. He knows about the five points. It was made part of the package I signed with him and we need to launch negotiations. So if you don't trust Annan, find someone else. There's no point trying to make us play this part. We want to end this but we can't do it in such

a simplified manner. He agreed to all the conditions. So either proceed this way or bomb to the end. He can surrender either today or 3-4 months later. He has no other option. By the way, I have no information on desertions. The VJ is not suffering losses, only the civilians. So he can surrender either today or 3-4 months from now. But we can sit down and negotiate today. He's agreed to everything. Or you can wait 3-4 months. Russia can't take responsibility to solve it for him... We don't support or justify Milosevic. We're talking matters of substance. It's only a matter of a final proposal. So let's put Lavrov, or Petrov, or someone else in Annan's place. Milosevic wants to be civilized. But we are driving him into a dead end. But that's not possible. He's ready to spend days and nights at the negotiating table. What did he write to the President?

MR. BERGER: He went backward. He said he believes in peace and international presence, but....

MR. TALBOTT: He named four things he's willing to support, but only at a high level of generality and there's nothing about withdrawal.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: That's my mission. I told him don't drive me into a dead end or it's my last visit...

AMBASSADOR USHAKOV: We wanted to clarify what Milosevic's message was. Now we know.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: It wasn't meaningful. We appreciate what you've done, Viktor. If you decide you can do no more, you've made a good effort, played an honorable role, people would understand. We've told you what we'd like you to do. We respect your response that it's impossible to do. But we disagree that what we're saying is a demand to surrender. But there's no disagreement over the

fig leaf. But we'll need more than a fig leaf to change our position from Rambouillet to say we support independence for Kosovo. But if this continues, that may change. Also, an international force doesn't have to be NATO, it can be under... but led by NATO. Also, if Milosevic starts withdrawal and has accepted the plan, the bombing will stop immediately. [You have helped move the process] Because of you we've agreed to reintroduce forces to protect Serb patrimony. All of these are tangible changes in NATO's position out of respect for your understanding and our evolving understanding. If we coupled it to a UNSCR that means he doesn't have to accept NATO and can then sit down with a brand new entity, with NATO participation. But what we're hearing is horrible - the refugee stories, it's like humanity has regressed 1000 years...such brutality as we enter the 21st century...[bloodshed, children killed, etc.] Viktor Stepanovich, I respect you, your heart beats like mine. If you think it might be useful to pursue these the ideas we've discussed, you may be in a unique position. You're the only person with the respect of Washington and Belgrade capable of advancing the process. I leave it to you and what you decide.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Thank you...This will never grow tiresome for me. As a human being, I cannot stand injustice and evil. I think we're on the threshold of war and can slip into it very easily. You're right that genocide is genocide., but we don't see these instances in Russia. Our mass media doesn't cover it.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Gusinsky's station shows it, the others don't.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: No, I don't think so. Those atrocities - all agree NTV is the most unbiased station, but it doesn't mention thousands killed. Even Europe doesn't see it. We asked for proof and were told that all we can show is

satellite images.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: I'll ask my colleagues to provide reports to you to show the reality. We'll endeavor to get evidence to you so you can see it with your own eyes. We'll give you our best evidence.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I raised the point because I told Milosevic about it. He said he didn't allow it, but there were some instances and he has arrested 200 people. Since there's no capital punishment, some people are now serving prison terms. But he said there are not mass instances. I said just look - 600,000 refugees. He says yes, but the KLA caused the destruction.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Milosevic learned from Hitler about telling the big lie.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I agree. Maybe we should show such evidence [to the Russian people] in case they're not aware.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: When do you leave tomorrow? I want to give you as much material as I can before you leave for New York.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: 9:00 a.m.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: We'll have it to you by 8:30.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: We'll do our best to find solutions. But [the crisis] can be resolved only with movement on both sides. We've made good progress. Milosevic has shifted. We could make headway if we can sit at the negotiating table. We must work out a formula, so we propose that there must be an official international agency to carry out this work. We will participate. Our position is one of principle.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Two final things. Here are the written answers to the questions that Sandy reviewed earlier [passes document to Chernomyrdin]. We need to be especially careful with the press. One thing to avoid: neither of us

should say the other side has moved. This would hurt us. And we won't say the Russians or Milosevic have moved either.

MR. BERGER: We should say that we're in engaged in a process of better understanding each other's positions.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Yes, I will say that negotiations or discussions are underway. I've come under criticism, it's all I hear now. "Chernomyrdin's on his way to Belgrade to resolve all the problems." I'm ready to give it to someone else.

[Farewells]

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TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT

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DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: THE VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY OF STATE, LEON FUERTH, SANDY BERGER, STROBE TALBOTT, VIKTOR STEPANOVICH CHERNOMYRDIN, MIKHAIL TARASOV, AMBASSADOR YURI USHAKOV, VLADIMIR MARKOV, BORIS IVANOVSKY

LOCATION: DINING ROOM, VICE PRESIDENT'S RESIDENCE

NOTE TAKER: RICHARD BRODY

INTERPRETERS: PETER AFANASENKO [+ CHERNOMYRDIN'S INTERPRETER]

DATE/TIME: 4 MAY 1999/0900-0945 EDT

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: I'm glad you called and I'm eager to hear what you have to