

Exchange Mail

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TO Saunders, Richard M.

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THIS IS LATEST/BEST VERSION OF MEMCON (WITH
CARLOS' INPUT INCLUDED)

TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT memcon -- vp cherno kosovo call april 29.doc
DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: THE VICE PRESIDENT
VIKTOR STEPANOVICH CHERNOMYRDIN

LOCATION: WEST WING OFFICE

NOTE TAKER: RICHARD BRODY

INTERPRETER: YURIY SHKEYROV

DATE/TIME: 29 APRIL 1999/1029-1052 EDT

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Hello. Victor Chernomyrdin here. I am
listening.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Hello, Viktor Stepanovich?

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: How are you doing?

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Everything is okay. I am here in Bonn now

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Viktor Stepanovich, I'm glad I was able to catch you during your travels. As you pursue your discussions, I wanted to update you briefly on our thinking. Thanks for receiving Strobe. He gave me a full account of his meetings with you and of the issues that you and your team have asked us to elaborate more fully. As I understand it, these issues include: terms for withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo (including schedule and verification means); the nature of an international security presence for Kosovo; the nature of an interim, provisional administration for Kosovo; and NATO's conditions to suspend airstrikes against Yugoslavia.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I understand. We discussed these conditions with Mr. Talbott. Everything is clear, but in order to achieve all that one has to start from something. I am proceeding based on the telephone conversation between our two presidents, President Clinton and President Yeltsin. In this conversation, Clinton said that if Milosevic starts withdrawing his troops from Kosovo and if simultaneously we create conditions for the safe return of refugees to Kosovo, and if we determine the conditions for an international contingent which has to enter, then the rockets and bomb strikes can end, and later we can discuss other issues like the extent to which he has to withdraw his military forces and the special police and everything that is in Kosovo. The question is whether we are talking about full withdrawal of forces or if some forces have to stay. Because people have to be living in Kosovo and someone has to ensure normal life in Kosovo, especially taking into account that Kosovo remains a part of Yugoslavia.

Then one has to discuss the configuration of the international presence. We

understand there has to be civil and military components of that presence. The civil component is those people who help organize a normal life in Kosovo and ensure that there is autonomy for Kosovo and in general ensure that people are living normally in Kosovo. And the military people have to ensure the safe return of refugees and those who decide on continuing to live in Kosovo and it takes time to do all that. I think those are possibilities and I will talk with Milosevic and will try to convince him of that.

But we need to do something now to stop these processes, because blood is being spilled in Kosovo, civilians are being killed. The bombing has to be temporarily suspended in order to pursue this. Something has to be done. Otherwise we cannot assure the return of refugees or assure the movement of international forces into Kosovo and the problem meanwhile is getting more complicated. The more blood that gets spilled, the more difficult the solution to this problem will be. And today I believe it is possible to hold talks with Milosevic but in the future if it goes on further there will be no one to talk to because Serbia is being destroyed and people are getting killed. Russia then has to decide [indecipherable]. And one cannot allow that.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: I understand we're far apart and I agree with you that implementing NATO's conditions in these areas will require careful work. So I want to assure you that we are working seriously to answer your questions. We promise to follow up with you soon. Let me just mention two points for now. On the international security presence, as I noted in our earlier call, there are many possible models for this force. But, NATO must be at its core. On the question of a UN role, I want to reiterate that we would welcome a UN mandate, although we cannot accept UN command and control. As we saw in Somalia and in the early days of Bosnia, that just does not work. Certainly both the

UN and
OSCE would be directly involved in implementing civilian aspect of
any
settlement. In the meantime, I hope you are having good and
productive meetings
with Schroeder and D'Alema. I also understand that you will travel to
Belgrade
tomorrow to see Milosevic. I would be interested in your thinking as
you get
ready to go. I wish you well in your efforts.

I also wanted to say, Viktor Stepanovich, that we appreciated the
cautious way
you handled the press after your last trip. Sometimes the less said in
public
the better. Such a strategy certainly reduces the chances that Milosevic
will
contradict what you say - and it avoids inadvertently locking your
Government
into an untenable position. In fact, I strongly advise, if you will permit
me,
that you try to avoid committing in public to a position you have
reason to
believe cannot be reconciled with ours. This is precisely what we need
to be
talking about before we go public. Let's keep this line of
communication wide
open. I look forward to talking to you when you return, so good luck
my friend.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Thank you very much. I would like to tell
you I am a
convinced supporter of what has been discussed with President
Yeltsin and our
government. We have to find a solution through political ways
because the
military way is not the right way to do this. That is why I will talk to
Mr.
Milosevic. I understand this is the main question and I will try to
convince him
about safe return of refugees and I will insist on a civilian and military
mission. It must also include NATO countries and I will try to
convince him of
just that. I will also try to convince him that this has to be done under
the
auspices of the UN with participation of OSCE and EU. One has to
understand his
position. I had a discussion today with Kofi Annan and I don't

understand his position. He has the desire only he doesn't have anything else; that is why the gigantic effort is required to ensure all this.

I absolutely agree with you, and it is my position as well it is not necessary to comment publicly, it is necessary to try to achieve results. Once again I will today be in Rome and tomorrow in Belgrade and it is without doubt we will find the possibility to talk to again. But I also would like to ask another question about whether we could meet somewhere in Europe. Today I had a telephone call from Mr. Blair as well. My main thing is find a possibility to meet with you somewhere in Europe provided it is possible.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Viktor Stepanovich, let's wait until your trip to Belgrade has concluded then assess whether progress has been made and compare notes before making a decision on that. We have to know if there is a basis for genuine progress, significant progress, before we schedule a meeting of that sort. We have to do more work behind the scenes to prepare the ground but let's wait until your visit has concluded. And let's talk perhaps on a secure line when you return to Moscow. And then we will make an assessment on that. Does that sound ok to you?

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: I agree completely. Only after my trips to Bonn, Rome and Belgrade can we agree on some future actions.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Very good. Good luck in your travels. My prayers are with you and I look forward to talking to you after this phase of your journey.

MR. CHERNOMYRDIN: Thank you very much. As soon as I finish all these matters I will immediately give you a call. Best to your home.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Do svedeniia and best to your home.

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