

DECLASSIFIED BY OUSDP, DOS
DATE 3/30/2016
FOIA CASE # 12-F-0680

~~SECRET - SENSITIVE~~

Wednesday, May 19, 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

THROUGH: FRANK G. WISNER *FW* MAY 20 1993

FROM: JOHN A. GORDON *JG*

SUBJECT: Trip Report on Strobe Talbott's Mission to the
Former Soviet Union

Talbott's delegation departed May 8 on the first of three trips that will take him to each of the 12 new republics and the Baltic states. The overall message of the trip was the trip itself -- to show to the republics, all of them, the attention that will be paid by the new Administration to their democratic and reform goals.

In Ukraine, we elaborated a new policy that does not have as its sole objective the ratification of START and accession to the NPT. The stop in Ekaterinburg was to show that U.S. interest in reforms is not limited to Moscow. In Moscow, we held the first meeting of the Talbott-Mamedov group which we hope will be able to deal with the more sensitive security issues between Russia and the U.S. in informal discussions. In Yerevan and Baku, discussions focused on resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh war, in addition to economic and reform issues. And in Tallinn, we spoke mainly about the Russians, military and civilian, who still remain in Estonia. At all stops we discussed the possibility of Russian participation in peace-keeping operations in the CIS (an idea that was universally unpopular).

Ukraine

At every meeting, the delegation made the point that we came to Ukraine to do all that is possible to put the U.S.-Ukraine relationship back on track: Ukraine is a new country; America has a new Administration, and thus the stage is set for a new relationship and we are ready to turn a new leaf.

I gave the Defense Minister your letter, accepting an invitation to visit Kiev and extending an invitation to visit Washington. I told him that the U.S. wanted to begin a security dialogue with Ukraine at several levels and that

~~SECRET - SENSITIVE~~

JG

~~CLASSIFIED BY: MULTIPLE SOURCES~~
~~DECLASSIFY ON: OADR~~

SEC DEF CONTIN IN **X61664**

the minister-level meetings would be the kick-off of this dialogue. Your meetings could charter a Bilateral Working Group which in turn could lead to Joint Staff Talks, expanded military-to-military contacts, and an MOU (similar to that you will sign with Minister Grachev). I also suggested defense conversion discussions headed by Dr. Perry and reported on what the U.S. was already doing to expand the IMET program and to open an Office of Defense Conversion. We reported on the START eliminations made to date and encouraged Ukraine to receive Jim Goodby soon.

Morosov seemed genuinely pleased with these specific and concrete steps, wants to put the period of "lost opportunity" behind us, and is looking for ways to reverse the strong feeling in the Rada that President Kravchuk's policy toward the U.S. was a failure, and nuclear weapons should be retained. Morosov stated clearly that he would support START and NPT in the Rada, "even if it costs me my position." Strobe closed by offering U.S. good offices in helping resolve any issues between Ukraine and Russia.

The delegation met with the Foreign Minister and his deputy for several hours, the Economic Minister, and the President (Strobe only). Our message about a new relationship was well received; every member of the executive supported START and NPT, saying the problem was with the Rada. This would suggest that a more public approach to show our support of the Kravchuk policies and more explanations about why the treaties are in the interest of Ukraine may pay dividends. That said, the feelings in the Rada are deep and the prospects for START and NPT are not good.

Additional themes and points:

-- We suggested that the U.S. and Ukraine could develop a "charter" (as we have done with Russia) that would be a public explanation of the principles that underlie the U.S.-Ukraine relationship, to be signed "at the highest levels."

-- There was a perception in Ukraine that the Tokyo G-7 initiative was only for Russia. We tried to disabuse them of that idea.

-- There is some reluctance to inviting Jim Goodby back now -- there are still differences in details of the agreements, on taxes and diplomatic immunities and privileges, and the Ukrainians want these resolved first.

-- Ukraine will be trying to establish a Central and Eastern Europe Zone of Security, and asked for our support. Details are not clear, but they envisage a very loose coalition or network of Europeans with similar

concerns. They do not see this as competition with any of the formal security fora since it would not have a formal organizational structure -- but they intend to use it to demonstrate that Ukraine does not have interests that are similar to Russia.

-- Tarasyuk said that Ukraine had not been violating the sanctions to the Former Yugoslavia, that they were in fact the country who is injured the most by the sanctions, and therefore UNSC statements to the contrary, supported by the U.S., were an insult.

-- Tarasyuk expressed great displeasure about the HEU negotiations with Russia. He reported that Ukraine had tried to upgrade the level of the negotiations to the prime minister level, but Russia had not responded. He stated that the issue turned on the question of ownership. Ukraine did not want to control the weapons, but in an economic sense the weapons are the property of Ukraine, and that had to be acknowledged by Russia. "Instead, Russia charges the atmosphere by accusing us of nuclear ambitions." Russia has also refused to acknowledge Ukraine's claim on the economic value of the tactical weapons that have already been withdrawn.

-- On use of Russian peacekeepers in states of the former Soviet Union, all with whom we spoke were adamantly opposed, under any conditions. They argued that it lends legitimacy to the CIS which they will neither join nor support and is only useful in extending Russian presence and influence outside the borders of Russia.

In summary, we were effective in "turning the page" or "showing a little ankle" of what the future U.S.-Ukraine relationship could be, and offering some specific proposals for expanded dialogue, possibly leading to expanded military contacts. The Russia-Ukraine relationship seems to be deteriorating, centering primarily on the questions of nuclear weapons and the Black Sea fleet. Our offer of good offices was heard, but nothing specific was suggested. Our tasks will be to follow through on the military contact arena, draft a charter for discussion in the political arena, and find ways to provide more ammunition for use with the Rada.

I suspect Morosov will accept your invitation for July. On the margins I made it clear that a convenient date for your visit would be immediately following Garmish.

Ekaterinburg

The half day spent here was primarily to "show the flag" outside of Moscow and support the opening of a consulate there later this year. We met with several American groups who are supporting privatization, visited a "supermarket," toured the Uralmass factory, and met with the Oblast governor. Uralmass is making an effort at privatization -- they are now a joint stock company, but don't know what to do with that. The facilities are falling down, employment is cut from 55,000 to less than 30,000, and that level is far too large for the orders that are on the books. One of the products they have made in the past are the oil drilling rigs for much of the USSR. Now orders are way down and they believe that the new U.S. deal in Kazakhstan and U.S. and UK deals in Baku will keep them from recovering. Defense conversion has them building washing machines and wheelbarrows -- at about three percent of capacity.

Moscow

The main event was the opening round of the Talbott-Mamedov group. The meetings were too short, but a positive tone was set. Both Nikolayev and Ladygin were there along with a number of their generals. The number two from the security service was there along with a number of staff -- all were identified by name and position. It seemed that the Russian goal was to use this visit to establish a Russian interagency group with Mamedov in control. Mamedov did most of the talking, setting the ground rules that this was not a formal negotiating channel but rather an informal group to explore solutions to mutual problems.

After Mamedov's stage setting, we broke into three subgroups, one on peacekeeping chaired by Toby Gati from the NSC, one on non-proliferation chaired by Admiral Studeman, and one on strategic issues that I chaired. The Russians in my group included Nikolayev, Berdennikov and Ambassador Dubynin. Nikolayev repeated his lines from the Joint Staff Talks on several issues but most of the time was devoted to nuclear weapons in Ukraine. His main points were:

-- Global Defenses. These are worth working on, but there is no common opinion between the U.S. and Russia. We should establish a common system for exchanging early warning information, but this must be done in strict compliance with the ABM Treaty.

-- Nuclear Testing. Russia will not be the first to breach the testing moratorium, but we understand that the Americans may have some

testing to do. If we knew your plans, we could further refine our approach. I can tell you that any Russian tests would be only for safety or reliability, not modernization. Berdennikov subsequently made the point that whatever negotiations we do, together we must find a way to involve the CD or the multilateral community will never accept the results negotiated bilaterally or among the five nuclear powers.

-- CFE Flanks. Nikolayev reported that this was a particularly difficult issue for the Russians to raise, but that since the situation in Europe had changed, it was in the interest of all nations that changing threats be taken into account. However, this issue should be discussed in Geneva, not here.

-- Troop Withdrawal. In all places save Latvia and Estonia, Russian troops were being withdrawn with dignity. Russia expects U.S. assistance with these countries to help the troops depart with dignity, and to protect the rights of the citizens who stay to live in these countries.

-- Ukraine. Ukraine has assumed obligations which must be carried out. They now have 600 weapons effectively under their control -- they are a defacto nuclear weapons state. We (Russia) want to establish good relations with Ukraine, but the way they are behaving makes that impossible. We have offered them assistance to eliminate delivery vehicles, but since March 3 we have had no response from them. They will not discuss the matter. Plus, they are talking to Kazakhstan, trying to get them to hold onto their weapons. When asked what the U.S. could do to help, Berdennikov said the U.S. we should not hold up the HEU agreement for we have effectively given them a veto. We asked to see what they had proposed to the Ukrainians and Dubynin passed over the draft agreement with Ukraine (being translated). Lunch with the entire group returned to and stayed with the nuclear weapon issue with the Russians arguing that the Ukrainians will soon have operational control.

The goal of frank conversation was clearly met, and we should expect to hear more from the Russians about the weapons in Ukraine. They clearly see the situation deteriorating and leading to operational control by Ukraine in a matter of some months. Strobe extended an invitation to Mamedov to bring his group to Washington this summer.

Yerevan

The discussions in Armenia (and Azerbaijan) focused on the war. The economic situation is quite desperate across Armenia, largely as a result of

Baku's blockade of energy and other trade. There was no heat in Yerevan the past two winters -- U.S. embassy staff apartments were as cold as 10 degrees Fahrenheit over the winter. Electricity is on for at most two hours a day; there is no hot water. What was not long ago a major industrial center now produces, for all practical purposes, nothing. Yet they continue to support the war, continue to say they have no political influence over Nagorno-Karabakh, and keep tensions high on the borders.

We were told that the national budget is 229 billion rubles this year, with 50 billion going in direct aid to the Karabakhis, not counting the military support in to the Karabakhis. They deny sending regular troops to the conflict, but admit to logistical and other military support.

That said, the President told Strobe in private that he recognized that there would never be an independent Nagorno-Karabakh and that it could never be a part of Armenia. Thus he would be willing to find a way that would settle the war quickly and leave the Karabakhis with a degree of political and cultural independence. At the President's request, we passed this message to the President in Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, Nagorno-Karabakh is not an issue likely to be resolved soon.

Like every other stop we made, the Armenians wanted nothing to do with Russian peacekeepers there or anywhere else. (They still have Russians present, however, on the borders with Turkey and Iran.)

Baku

In Baku we were told that the Azeris would never give up control of Nagorno-Karabakh. They had, however, already signed the Tripartite agreement which promises a cease-fire and withdrawal from some of the contested areas. I am not sure how they took the message Strobe carried from Yerevan -- we will have to wait to see how Jack Maresca's negotiations play out. It is clear, however, that they have not really mobilized to fight and that if they set their mind to it they could mount a considerable military effort. They believe that there is direct Armenian troop involvement in Nagorno-Karabach and that the Russians are themselves trying to keep the situation unstable to entice both countries into the CIS. They report the capture of several Russian advisors at the front, including a Major Lukin, a relative of the Ambassador.

The Russians are leaving the country with astonishing speed -- only about 2,000 paratroopers are left from one division and the operators at the early warning radar. The Azeri's take some pride in the fact that the

Russian presence is much less than in any of the former republics. The only remaining presence will be at the LPAR -- they made several jokes about privatizing the radar and offering it to us.

The Azeris seem relatively unconcerned about the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. They argue that their people are not particularly religious and lean much more to the Turks than to the Iranians -- except for going there to shop.

I was approached several times about developing a real military relationship, especially the opening of a training facility. Clearly we cannot do much while the war is going on and we never may want to do much, but it seems that we could learn quite a bit by offering a small team visit for a week or two. We may learn much more about what is going on, especially along the Iranian border, and some signal of U.S. interest could help cement the oil deals that are pending with AMOCO and Pennzoil.

Tallinn

This was by far the most pleasant stop -- the city is much more northern Europe than anywhere else we visited and the economic reforms are moving ahead briskly. The two issues are the remaining Russian troops and the integration of ethnic Russians into society.

Although there are only about 5,000 of the original 45,000 troops left in Estonia and only about 2,000 are combat troops, that is not moving fast enough for Estonia. The local commander has just run a command post exercise to retake strategic positions in Estonia, and has invited local Russians to join his division at very high wages. Not surprisingly, this does not sit well with President Meri, or any one else.

Ethnic Russians are not treated badly, but the citizenship and language laws will make it hard for them to become full-members of society. This transition will not go entirely smoothly, but we all left with the impression that it would be resolved satisfactorily over time. The biggest problem is in the industrial areas on the border with Russia that are almost entirely ethnic Russian and largely out of work because of the changes in market. This makes unemployment seem to be ethnically focused. Meri recognizes this and asked for investment assistance targeted to this area.

Meri was no more in favor of Russian peacekeepers than anyone else. His major argument is that you just cannot control the actions of the individual Russian troops. He says he is speaking from experience. Meri, however, is

~~SECRET - SENSITIVE~~

8

also the most anti-Russian we met on the trip. He argues that Yeltsin is not a democrat or a reformer -- its just that was the only path left open to him to survive politically.

Attachments:

Tab A: Reporting Cables

Tab B: Talking Points as used with Morosov

Tab C: Aspin letter to Morosov

Tab D: JCS Trip summary

cc:

Graham Allison

Ash Carter

Tony Williams

~~SECRET - SENSITIVE~~