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USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/02/07
TAGS: OVIP (ALBRIGHT, M.K.), PREL, OSCE, RS, FR, AJ, AM
SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MEETING ON NAGORNO-KARABAKH WITH

RUSSIAN FM PRIMAKOV, MAY 1, 1997, MFA GUEST HOUSE, MOSCOW

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY ALEX WOLFF, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, REASON 1.5 D.

2. (C) SUMAARY: AT A HASTILY SUMMONED MEETING OF MINSK PROCESS CO-CHAIRS DURING SECRETARY ALBRIGHT'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, RUSSIAN FM PRIMAKOV CALLED FOR WRITTEN U.S. AND FRENCH COMMENTS TO THE 21-POINT RUSSIAN PEACE PLAN FOR NAGORNO-KARABAKH. HE HOPED TO MAKE THE 21-POINT PLAN, HERETOFORE A STRICTLY RUSSIAN DOCUMENT, INTO A JOINT CO-CHAIR PLAN AND THE BASIS FOR THEIR APPROACH TO THE ARMENIANS AND AZERBAIJANIS, AND ASKED FOR FRENCH AND U.S. SUGGESTIONS. PRIMAKOV ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT THE CO-CHAIRS WILL HAVE TO APPLY PRESSURE TO THE PARTIES TO SECURE ACCEPTANCE OF ANY PEACE PLAN. THE SECRETARY SOUGHT FRENCH AND RUSSIAN COMMENTS ON THE RECENT U.S. PAPER ON NAGORNO KARABAKH. THE THREE CO-CHAIRS AGREED TO MEET AGAIN IN WASHINGTON AROUND THE MIDDLE OF MAY. THEY ALSO AGREED TO TREAT BOTH THE RUSSIAN PAPER AND THE U.S. INTERIM AGREEMENT

PROPOSAL ON AN EQUAL BASIS. THEY AGREED TO LOOK TOWARD A CO-CHAIRMANSHIP TRIP TO THE REGION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER REACHING AGREEMENT ON A TEXT. END SUMMARY.

3. (C) AT A MAY 1 MEETING AT THE MFA GUEST HOUSE IN
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MOSCOW, SECRETARY ALBRIGHT AND RUSSIAN FM PRIMAKOV DISCUSSED THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT AND STRATEGIES FOR THE OSCE MINSK GROUP TO RESOLVE IT. ALSO PRESENT WERE REPRESENTATIVES OF FRANCE, THE THIRD MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIR. THE U.S. DELEGATION WAS COMPRISED OF MINSK CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRMEN AND DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT, S/NI S SENIOR COORDINATOR COLLINS, SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE SECRETARY RUB IN, MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRMAN PRESEL, MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRMAN-DESIGNATE PASCOE, INTERPRETER, AND NOTETAKER. THE RUSSIAN DELEGATION INCLUDED FM PRIMAKOV, FIRST DEPUTY EM PASTUKHOV, AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. VORONTSOV, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE EM MARKARYAN, MINSK CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRMAN LOZINSKIY, MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRMAN YUKALOV AND INTERPRETER. THE FRENCH DELEGATION WAS COMPOSED OF QUAL POLITICAL DIRECTOR AND MINSK CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRMAN BLOT, MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRMAN VAUGIER, AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW DE VERDIER, INTERPRETER, AND NOTETAKER.

4. (C) PRIMAKOV EXPRESSED HIS CONFIDENCE THAT THE THREE CO-CHAIRS OF THE MINSK PROCESS COULD AGREE AT THE MEETING

ON CERTAIN PRINCIPLES AS THE BASIS OF THEIR COOPERATION. ALL DELIBERATIONS MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL, FOR ANY LEAK, AND THEY WERE LIKELY, COULD CAUSE GREAT HARM. THE CO-CHAIRS MUST COORDINATE THEIR ACTIONS; SEPARATE, UNCOORDINATED APPROACHES WOULD UNDERMINE THEIR JOINT EFFORTS. IN PARTICULAR, PRIMAKOV SAID THAT TRIPS TO THE CAUCASUS MUST BE COORDINATED BEFOREHAND, AND THAT INFORMATION GLEANED FROM CONTACTS WITH THE PARTIES SHOULD BE FULLY SHARED AFTERWARD. FINALLY, THERE OUGHT TO BE AN AGREED "DISTRIBUTION OF FUNCTIONS." FRANCE HAS SPECIAL INFLUENCE WITH THE ARMENIANS, HE SAID, WHILE THE U.S. CARRIES
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PARTICULAR WEIGHT WITH THE AZERBAIJANIS. RUSSIA, HE IMPLIED, IS WELL-PLACED TO WORK WITH ALL THE PARTIES.

5. (C) PRIMAKOV FOLLOWED WITH A PITCH TO MAKE THE RUSSIAN 21-POINT PLAN THE BASIS FOR THE CO-CHAIRS' APPROACH TO THE PARTIES. HE NOTED THE RUSSIANS HAD ALREADY SHARED THE PAPER WITH THE U.S. AND THE FRENCH. HE ASKED THE U.S. AND FRANCE TO PROVIDE THEIR WRITTEN COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS TO THE 21 POINTS PRIOR TO THE MEETING OF THE MINSK CONFERENCE

CO-CHAIRS, TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR 0/A MAY 14. HE NOTED THAT IT HAD ALSO BEEN GIVEN TO THE PARTIES WHO HAD HAD VARIOUS REACTIONS. THE PAPER DID NOT HAVE A MONOPOLY OF TRUTH, BUT IT FORMED A GOOD BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. PRIMAKOV WAS RATHER DISMISSIVE OF THE RECENT U.S. PAPER, SAYING THAT IT WAS BASED ON IDEAS THAT HAVE BEEN KICKING AROUND, WITH NO TANGIBLE RESULT, FOR YEARS. IT WAS A STEP BACKWARD. HE CONCLUDED SAYING THAT WHILE THE RUSSIAN CO-CHAIRMANSHIP HAD A SPECIAL POSITION, ALL THREE CO-CHAIRS HAD THEIR SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO MAKE.

6. (C) THE SECRETARY WELCOMED THE CHANCE TO DISCUSS NAGORNO-KARABAKH. SHE WELCOMED THE PRESENCE OF THE FRENCH AT THE MEETING. THE SECRETARY AGREED ON THE NEED FOR THE CO-CHAIRS TO WORK CLOSELY AND TO MAINTAIN A COMMON APPROACH. SHE REJECTED THE NOTION THAT SOME CO-CHAIRS OUGHT TO LIMIT THEMSELVES TO WORKING WITH ONE OR ANOTHER PARTY TO THE CONFLICT. EACH HAD INFLUENCE WITH ALL PARTIES. THAT WAS PART OF COOPERATION. A POINT PRIMAKOV ACCEPTED. CALLING THE RUSSIAN 21 POINTS USEFUL, SHE ADDED THAT THE U.S. DID HAVE SOME PROBLEMS WITH IT. SHE PLEDGED
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A RAPID SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE TO THEM FROM THE U.S. SIDE. ARGUING THE MERITS OF THE U.S. PAPER AS WELL, THE SECRETARY ASKED THE RUSSIANS AND FRENCH TO PROVIDE THEIR SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON IT. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT THE U.S. PAPER, PRESENTED IN PARIS, WAS DESIGNED TO OFFER A COMMON APPROACH AND AVOID GIVING THE PARTIES OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY THE CO-CHAIRMEN AGAINST EACH OTHER. THE PAPER STARTED FROM THE BASIS THAT THE STATUS QUESTION HAD HITHERTO BEEN INTRACTABLE AND SHOULD BE HANDLED, AT THE RIGHT MOMENT, BILATERALLY. THE SECRETARY ADDED THAT GETTING AN INTERIM AGREEMENT WOULD TRANSFORM THE REGIONAL POLITICAL SITUATION. SHE NOTED THAT THE TALKS IN PARIS HAD BEEN USEFUL, BUT THAT THE U.S. PAPER WOULD NEED MORE WORK AND INVITED THE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRS TO MEET IN WASHINGTON BEGINNING MAY 6 TO PREPARE A MINSK CONFERENCE MEETING ON MAY 13.

7. (C) IN A BRIEF INTERVENTION, BLOT CHIMED IN ON THE NEED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY, COHERENCE AND COOPERATION AMONG THE CO-CHAIRS. HE UNDERSCORED THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING STEPANAKERT FULLY ENGAGED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, SAYING THIS HAD BECOME A SERIOUS PROBLEM. HE ARGUED THAT THE U.S. PAPER USEFULLY DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN THE TASKS FOR THE MINSK GROUP AND THE ROLE THAT DIRECT ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI

CONTACTS SHOULD PLAY. HE ADDED THAT MAY 13 OR 14 MIGHT CONFLICT WITH A WEU MEETING.

8. (C) SAYING THAT HE DID NOT INTEND TO DENIGRATE THE U.S. PAPER, PRIMAKOV NEVERTHELESS ARGUED AGAINST SEEKING AN INTERIM AGREEMENT. "WITHOUT THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF AZERBAIJAN AND A DETERMINATION OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH'S
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STATUS, WE WILL NOT GET ANY AGREEMENT," HE ASSERTED. PRIMAKOV URGED THE CO-CHAIRS TO COME TO CLOSURE ON THE OUTLINES OF A SETTLEMENT AND ON THEIR APPROACH TO THE PARTIES. PRIMAKOV SAID THE CO-CHAIRS SHOULD STOP REFERRING TO AN "AMERICAN" AND A "RUSSIAN" PLAN. THEY BOTH NEEDED TO BE JOINT. IT IS IMPORTANT TO ARRANGE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE A TRIP TO THE CAUCASUS BY THE CO-CHAIRS TO PRESENT A PLAN, AND IMPOSE IT. THE CEASE-FIRE, PARADOXICALLY, HAS CAUSED THE ARMENIANS AND AZERIS TO BE COMPLACENT AND INCREASINGLY

DISINCLINED TO COMPROMISE. THE PARTIES, PRIMAKOV EMPHASIZED, MUST BE SHOWN THAT THEIR STUBBORNNNESS WILL PRODUCE UNWELCOME CONSEQUENCES. WHILE ESCHEWING THE USE OF FORCE, PRIMAKOV INSISTED THAT ONLY REAL PRESSURE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS WILL SECURE THE PARTIES' ACCEPTANCE OF A PEACE PLAN. AGREEING WITH THE UTILITY OF A CO-CHAIR TRIP TO THE REGION, THE SECRETARY NEVERTHELESS CAUTIONED THAT THE NECESSARY GROUNDWORK MUST FIRST BE LAID TO ENSURE THE MAXIMUM RECEPTIVENESS OF THE PARTIES TO ANY PEACE PLAN. COMMENTING ON THE 21-POINT PAPER, PRIMAKOV SAID THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN TO THE KARABAKH ARMENIANS. THE CO-CHAIRS SHOULD WORK WITH NAGORNO-KRAABAKH THROUGH YEREVAN.

9. (C) WONDERING HOW THE CO-CHAIRS MIGHT FIND A FORMULA TO JOLT THE PARTIES OUT OF THEIR SATISFACTION WITH THE STATUS QUO, COLLINS SUGGESTED THREE THEMES TO DEVELOP. FIRST, THE CO-CHAIRS ARE ALL IMPORTANT COUNTRIES WITH REAL INTEREST AND INFLUENCE IN THE CAUCASUS, WHICH OUGHT TO GIVE THEM SOME LEVERAGE WITH THE PARTIES. SECOND, THE CO-CHAIRS NEED TO THINK THROUGH CONCRETE INDUCEMENTS AND CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES TO APPEAL TO THE PARTIES' OWN SELF-INTEREST. THIRD, THE CO-CHAIRS SHOULD ENGAGE OTHER

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COUNTRIES IN THE PEACE PROCESS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE THAT CAN BE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE PARTIES.

10. (C) ASKED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF ROBERT KOCHARIAN'S APPOINTMENT AS ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER, PRIMAKOV QUOTED ARMENIAN PRESIDENT TER-PETROSYAN AS SAYING THAT THE

APPOINTMENT WAS MADE TO BUTTRESS THE ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT IN ITS DIFFICULT DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION. FAILURE TO DO SO COULD HAVE LED TO A SITUATION LIKE THAT OF ALBANIA. TER-PETROSYAN ALSO CLAIMED THAT KOCHARIAN' S EVENTUAL REPLACEMENT IN STEPANAKERT MIGHT PROVE MORE FLEXIBLE, SAID PRIMAKOV, ADDING "BUT I DOUBT IT." BLOT OBSERVED THAT TER PETROSYAN'S REASON FOR CHOOSING KOCHARYAN IS OBVIOUS ENOUGH; WHAT IS NOT CLEAR, HOWEVER, IS KOCHARIAN' S REASON FOR ACCEPTING. THE LATTER'S MOVE FROM STEPANAKERT TO YEREVAN LEAVES NAGORNO-KARABAKH WITHOUT A STRONG LEADER.

11. (C) TALBOTT ASKED HOW THE NAMING OF KOCHARIAN WOULD AFFECT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THERE WERE REALLY TWO ARMENIAN PARTIES. WOULD THERE NOW BE ONLY ONE? BLOT REPORTED THAT KOCHARIAN HAD TOLD HIM THAT HE WAS NOT IN CHARGE OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH. THERE WAS A NEW LEADERSHIP AND

A SEPARATION OF POWERS. THE CO-CHAIRS WOULD NEED TO CONTINUE TO MEET WITH BOTH THE YEREVAN AND THE STEPANAKERT AUTHORITIES.

12. PRIMAKOV NOTED THAT TIME WAS WORKING AGAINST YEREVAN. WHILE IT STAGNATED, AZERBAIJAN WAS BECOMING RICH. HE ADDED THAT HE DID NOT THINK THE WAR WOULD BEGIN AGAIN.

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PARADOXICALLY THIS MADE THE PARTIES LESS EAGER FOR COMPROMISE. PRIMAKOV OBSERVED THAT HE HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP IN THE CAUCASUS AND KNEW THEIR PEOPLES. PRESSURE WAS NEEDED.

13. THE PARTICIPANTS AGREED THEY WOULD EXCHANGE WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE TWO PAPERS WITHIN A WEEK. THE DOCUMENTS WOULD NO LONGER BEAR NATIONAL NAMES. BLOT SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FRENCH PAPER. THE MINSK CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRMEN WOULD MEET, IN WASHINGTON, AROUND MAY 14.
TALBOTT

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