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ACTION NODS-00

INFO LOG-00 CCOE-00 OASY-00 ADS-00 /000W
-----A83935 180730Z /38

O 172155Z FEB 95 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4838

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BELGRADE 000823

NODIS DECAPTIONED

FROM AMBASSADOR FRASURE

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, SR, HR, BK
SUBJECT: LUNCHEON WITH MILOSEVIC--HE DIDN'T SAY NO

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: ALONG WITH THE CHARGE, I HAD A THREE HOUR PRIVATE LUNCH WITH MILOSEVIC AT ONE OF TITO'S HUNTING LODGES WEST OF BELGRADE. THE SERBIAN PRESIDENT WAS ENERGETIC, AVUNCULAR, AND SELF CONFIDENT. AFTER HE WENT OVER SOME RECENT HISTORY, I OUTLINED THE LATEST CONTACT GROUP PLAN ON RECOGNITION/SANCTIONS SUSPENSION, TERMING IT PERHAPS A LAST CHANCE FOR PEACE. MILOSEVIC SHOWED VERY FEW CARDS, HAD SOME POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COMMENTS, AND DIDN'T SAY NO. I THINK HE WANTS TO NEGOTIATE, BUT IT WILL BE A VERY TOUGH NEGOTIATION BECAUSE, ASIDE FROM
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: MARTIN MCLEAN
DATE/CASE ID: 25 JUN 2010 200703885

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THE BURDEN OF SANCTIONS, HE FEELS HE IS OPERATING FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH. DESPITE THIS, IT MAY BE THAT "THERE IS A LOT OF POSSIBILITIES," AS MILOSEVIC CONCLUDED. END SUMMARY.

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3. I TOLD MILOSEVIC I THOUGHT WE ARE AT A FUNDAMENTAL FORK IN THE ROAD. ONE ROAD WILL TAKE US TO A RENEWED WAR THIS SPRING PROBABLY STARTING IN CROATIA AND THEN CONNECTING INTO BOSNIA. ASKED FOR HIS VIEWS, MILOSEVIC LAUNCHED INTO A FAIRLY FAMILIAR HISTORICAL EXEGESIS BLAMING THE GERMANS AND OTHERS FOR THE COLLAPSE OF YUGOSLAVIA.

4. I TOLD MILOSEVIC I HAD NOT COME TO NEGOTIATE BUT I KNEW HE WOULD BE SEEING KOZYREV LATER TODAY. IT MIGHT BE USEFUL IF I OUTLINED SOME OF THE KEY ASPECTS IN THE CONTACT GROUP APPROACH. MILOSEVIC LISTENED INTENTLY TO MY DESCRIPTION OF THE SANCTIONS SUSPENSION/RECOGNITION PACKAGE. I PARTICULARLY NOTED THE NEED FOR BORDER CLOSURE AND COVERED THE NECESSITY FOR HIM TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE CG PLAN FOR BOSNIA. I EXPLAINED OUR EVOLUTION FROM FULL Z-4 PLAN TO Z-4 PRINCIPLES. MILOSEVIC'S RESPONSES ARE NOTED BELOW.

CROATIA--"IF THE SERBS NEED HELP..."

5. INDICATING THAT HE SPOKE REGULARLY WITH TUDJMAN, MILOSEVIC MADE IT CLEAR HE FELT THE CROATIANS ARE OVERPLAYING THEIR CARDS. TUDJMAN HAD TOLD HIM HIS GENERALS BELIEVE THEY CAN TAKE THE UN SECTORS BACK IN
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FOUR DAYS. "I TOLD HIM NOT TO TRUST GENERALS -- I FIRED EIGHTY OF THEM." ACCORDING TO MILOSEVIC, THE CROATIAN ARMY HAS ONLY EIGHT GOOD BRIGADES; ONLY 10 PERCENT OF DRAFTEES SHOW UP FOR SERVICE. IN CONTRAST, KRAJINA SERBS HAVE 80,000 OF THE BEST FIGHTING MEN IN EUROPE. "KRAJINA SERBS WOULD RATHER FIGHT THAN WORK."

6. MILOSEVIC DID NOT SAY HE WOULD RECOGNIZE CROATIA, BUT IT WAS CLEARLY LESS OF A PROBLEM THAN RECOGNIZING

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UNCLASSIFIED U.S. Department of State Case No. F-2007-03885 Doc No. C17799047 Date: 10/22/2013
BOSNIA. ASKED WHETHER SECTOR EAST COULD BE INCLUDED IN A DEAL, MILOSEVIC RESPONDED POSTIVELY BUT POINTED TO THE NEED FOR A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, PERHAPS TWO YEARS. HE WAS CONTEMPTUOUS OF THE Z-4 PLAN, ARGUING THAT A PHASED APPROACH BEGINNING WITH ECONOMIC MEASURES WAS PREFERABLE. IN THAT REGARD, OWEN IS RIGHT, MILOSEVIC REMARKED. THE SERBIAN PRESIDENT SAW MERIT IN OUR REVISED APPROACH OF ENDORSEMENT OF Z-4 PRINCIPLES, WITHOUT BUYING INTO IT. HE FLARED UP, HOWEVER, WHEN I SUGGESTED THAT ENDORSEMENT OF Z-4 PRINCIPLES WOULD PROTECT HIM FROM CHARGES OF SELLING OUT THE KRAJINA SERBS: "DON'T TRY TO PRESS MY EGO BUTTON!"

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7. ASKED DIRECTLY IF HE WOULD INTERVENE IN CROATIA IF HIS PREDICTIONS WERE WRONG AND THINGS GO BADLY FOR THE KRAJINA SERBS MILITARILY, MILOSEVIC IMMEDIATELY RESPONDED: "IF THEY NEED OUR HELP, THEY WILL GET IT." MILOSEVIC CONCLUDED HOWEVER, THAT WOULD NOT HAPPEN. "I WARNED TUDJMAN THEY WILL BE SHELLING YOUR BEACHES FOR YEARS, NO TOURISTS, " HE EXCLAIMED. "TUDJMAN WILL RENEW A DIFFERENT MANDATE."

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BOSNIA -- WAR WHEN THE SNOW MELTS

8. MILOSEVIC WAS CERTAIN THAT THE WAR WOULD BEGIN AGAIN THIS SPRING -- "THE MUSLIMS WILL START IT." HE FELT IT WOULD SOON TURN INTO A CROAT/MUSLIM CONFLICT. MILOSEVIC RECALLED THAT THE ONLY REASON TUDJMAN HAD AGREED TO THE FEDERATION WAS TO SAVE THE ISOLATED CROAT POCKETS UP IN CENTRAL BOSNIA. WOULD THE SERBS NEED OUTSIDE HELP? MILOSEVIC WHO SAID HE HAD MET YESTERDAY WITH MLADIC FELT THE BOSNIAN SERBS COULD HOLD THEIR OWN.

9. ON KARADZIC AND HIS SUPPORTERS -- "CRAZY, MIDDLE-AGED IGNORANTS" - MILOSEVIC REPEATED HIS EARLY PREDICTIONS THAT IN THE END HE WOULD OVERCOME

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THEM. MLADIC IS NOW LIKELY TO BE THE NEXT ELECTED
LEADER OF SERBIAN BOSNIA. THE WESTERN BOSNIAN
SERBS ARE WILLING TO GIVE UP SARAJEVO TO GET A
SETTLEMENT; KARADZIC IS NOT. THAT IS A KEY
WEAKNESS FOR HIM. MILOSEVIC SUGGESTED THAT THE
DIVISIONS WITHIN THE BOSNIAN GOVERNMENT ARE
WIDENING, NOTABLY THOSE BETWEEN IZETBEGOVIC AND
GANIC ON THE ONE HAND AND SILAJDZIC ("ONE TOUGH
GUY.") PREDICTING AN INCREASING ISLAMIC SOCIETY --
"BETTER NOT TO MAKE EXCURSION INTO THAT" --
MILOSEVIC NONETHELESS SUGGESTED THAT OVER YEARS THE
PARTS OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA WILL GROW BACK

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TOGETHER.

WILL THERE BE A NEGOTIATION?

10. I TOLD MILOSEVIC THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK WE
ARE ON A FOOL'S ERRAND, TRYING TO ARRANGE A DEAL
BASED ON THE SANCTIONS RELIEF/RECOGNITION PACKAGE.
ARE THEY CORRECT? MILOSEVIC SAID HE IS FAVORABLE
TO THE CONFERENCE IDEA SO LONG AS THERE IS EQUAL
TREATMENT. WE MUST BE TREATED FAIRLY. BUT HE MUST
GET FULL SANCTIONS RELIEF, NOT JUST SUSPENSION. I
TOLD HIM THAT POSSIBILITY SIMPLY DOESN'T EXIST. HE
RETORTED BITTERLY THAT HE HAD BEEN "TRICKED" ON THE
GAS ISSUE. KOZYREV HAD SHOWN HIM A LETTER IN
NOVEMBER FROM CHRISTOPHER THAT PROMISED IT. THE
CONTACT GROUP HAD SAID IT WOULD HAPPEN. "NOW
WINTER IS ALMOST OVER." I TOLD HIM I DIDN'T COME
TO ARGUE OVER GAS. BUT PERHAPS THE EPISODE SHOWED
THAT FULL SUSPENSION OF ALL SANCTIONS WAS THE WAY
FORWARD. THEN WE WOULDN'T ARGUE OVER EACH DETAIL.
US REFUSAL TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE GAS PROMISE
SHOWED "AN ABSENCE OF STYLE," MILOSEVIC SNEERED.

11. I TOLD MILOSEVIC THAT PART OF THE DEAL WOULD
HAVE TO BE A SIGNIFICANT TIGHTENING UP OF THE
BORDER WITH BOSNIA. THE HELICOPTER CAPER RAISED
PRETTY SERIOUS QUESTIONS. MILOSEVIC SAID IT WAS

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WHAT HAD HAPPENED. I CONTINUED THAT, IF A PACKAGE
COULD BE PUT TOGETHER, IT WOULD MEAN SENDING
SEVERAL HUNDRED MORE MONITORS TO THE BORDER PLUS
RADAR TO MONITOR IT. COULD HE LIVE WITH THAT? "OF
COURSE. YES. IF YOU LIFT SANCTIONS, YOU CAN SEND
U.S. OFFICERS TO THE BORDERS. BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO
PAY FOR THEM."

12. I CONCLUDED BY ASKING AGAIN WHETHER THERE IS
ANY POINT IN US PURSUING A NEGOTIATION AT THIS
TIME? WHAT YOU ARE TELLING ME IS THAT WE ARE NOT
JUST WASTING OUR TIME? NO, REPLIED MILOSEVIC, YOU
ARE NOT. BUT IT MUST BE A PHASED PROGRESSION, AN
EVOLUTION. HE CONCLUDED: "THERE IS A LOT OF
POSSIBILITIES."

KOSOVO

13. AT THE END WE ASKED BRIEFLY ABOUT KOSOVO.
MILOSEVIC WAS ESPECIALLY COCKY, CLAIMING THAT THE
SITUATION IS QUIET AND NORMAL. DENYING THAT HE IS
A SERB NATIONALIST, MILOSEVIC SAID THAT ALBANIANS
IN KOSOVO WHO SEE THEMSELVES AS CITIZENS OF SERBIA
HAVE NO PROBLEMS, COMPARING THEM TO HISPANICS IN
TEXAS. MILOSEVIC STRESSED SERB DOMINANCE IN THE
REGION, BUT THERE IS A NEED FOR REINTEGRATION AND
ECONOMIC COOPERATION. (THROUGHOUT THE SESSION, WE
FOUND OURSELVES DEALING WITH THE "NEW" MILOSEVIC --
A MODERATE, A MAN WHO REJECTS RABID NATIONALISM AND
SUPPORTS INTEGRATION OF THE REGION INTO EUROPE.)

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A COMMENT ON RUSSIA

14. THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION, MILOSEVIC
REPEATEDLY REMARKED, "DON'T KEEP PUSHING US INTO THE
ARMS OF THE RUSSIANS." ON THE WAY OUT, HE SAID HE
WAS ON HIS WAY TO MEET KOZYREV, A MAN WITH A LOT OF
PROBLEMS. I TOLD HIM CHECHNYA IS A CANCER IN THEIR
SYSTEM IN MY VIEW. MILOSEVIC DREW ME ASIDE AND
CONSPIRATORIALLY REMARKED THAT THE SOLUTION FOR THE
CHECHEN PROBLEM WILL BE CHECHEN INDEPENDENC
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