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INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	SMEC-00	OASY-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00
	EB-00	ED-01	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	SNIS-00	NISC-00	PMB-00	PRM-10
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DRAFTED BY: EUR/SCE : JWSWIGERT : JWS
APPROVED BY: S:THE SECRETARY
EUR: RPERINA S/S: MRLINO
S/S-O: CJOHNSON

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P R 151540Z MAY 96
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TIRANA PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY SKOPJE
AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USEU BRUSSELS
SECDEF WASHDC 0000
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AMEMBASSY BONN

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E.O. 12958: 05/08/01
TAGS: PREL, PHUM, SR, AL
SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH ALBANIAN FM SERREQI

1. (U) ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ -- CLASSIFIED BY EUR SENIOR DEPUTY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY RUDOLF V. PERINA. REASON: 1.5(D).

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2. (C) THE SECRETARY MET WITH ALBANIAN FM SERREQI AT THE DEPARTMENT ON MAY 8. SERREQI DESCRIBED PREPARATIONS FOR UPCOMING PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND GAVE ASSURANCES THAT THEY WOULD BE FREE AND FAIR. HE VOICED CONCERN ABOUT RECENT VIOLENCE IN KOSOVO AND OPPOSITION TO KOSOVAR ALBANIAN LEADER IBRAHIM RUGOVA. THE SECRETARY STRESSED THAT A POLICY OF NON-VIOLENCE WAS A FUNDAMENTAL CONDITION FOR CONTINUED U.S. AND WEST EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR THE KOSOVAR ALBANIAN LEADERSHIP. HE REASSURED SERREQI THAT THE EU DECISION TO ALLOW RECOGNITION OF SERBIA-MONTENEGRO WOULD NOT ALTER THE U.S. POSITION: "OUTER WALL" SANCTIONS MUST REMAIN IN PLACE UNTIL PROGRESS WAS MADE TOWARD RESTORING HUMAN AND POLITICAL RIGHTS IN KOSOVO.
END SUMMARY

3. (C) THE SECRETARY MET MAY 8 WITH ALBANIAN EM ALFRED SERREQI. LEONARD DEMI, MFA DIRECTOR FOR THE AMERICAS,

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FERIT HOXHA, MFA DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND AMBASSADOR LUBLIN DILJA ACCOMPANIED THE MINISTER. EUR SENIOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY PERINA AND EUR/SCE DIRECTOR JAMES SWIGERT (NOTETAKER) ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE 40 MINUTE MEETING. SERREQI WAS IN THE U.S. ON A BRIEF VISIT FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT, AND DEPARTED FOR ALBANIA FOLLOWING THE MEETING.

4. (U) THE SECRETARY OPENED THE DISCUSSION BY NOTING THAT THE WHITE HOUSE HAD NOMINATED DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MARISA LINO AS THE NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR IN TIRANA. MS. LINO HAD WORKED CLOSELY WITH HIM AND THE SECRETARY HAD THE HIGHEST REGARD FOR HER. SERREQI EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH LINO'S NOMINATION AND HOPED SHE WOULD ARRIVE SOON. THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT SECRETARY PERRY HAD TOLD HIM ABOUT THE VERY SUCCESSFUL SOUTH BALKANS DEFENSE MINISTERIAL IN TIRANA; UNDER SECRETARY WIRTH REPORTED THAT HE HAD HELD VERY USEFUL DISCUSSIONS ON ENVIRONMENT, POPULATION, AND THE UPCOMING ALBANIAN ELECTIONS. THIS INTENSIVE DIALOGUE REFLECTED OUR INTEREST IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AS WELL AS OUR CONCERN ABOUT THESE ISSUES.

ELECTION PREPARATIONS

5. (U) SERREQI RESPONDED THAT THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT TIME FOR ALBANIA, AS PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD IN THREE WEEKS. HE DESCRIBED PREPARATIONS FOR THE ELECTIONS, INCLUDING RECENT LEGISLATION. AN AMENDED ELECTION LAW INCREASED THE NUMBER OF DIRECTLY-ELECTED VERSUS

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PROPORTIONAL SEATS IN THE 140 -MEMBER PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY.

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HE DEFENDED PASSAGE OF A LUSTRATION LAW THAT EXCLUDES
FORMER HIGH OFFICIALS OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME FROM HOLDING
OFFICE. CRITICISM OF THIS "ANTI-GENOCIDE LAW" BY
OPPOSITION FIGURES MERELY REFLECTED THEIR OWN BACKGROUND:
FORMER COMMUNISTS WHO NOW CALL THEMSELVES SOCIALISTS. THEY
HAD CHANGED THEIR NAME BUT NOT THEIR PHILOSOPHY OR
LEADERSHIP. SERREQI REPORTED THAT RECENT OPINION POLLS
SHOWED THE RULING DEMOCRATIC PARTY WITH A 20 PERCENT LEAD
OVER THE SOCIALISTS.

6. (U) THE SECRETARY EXPRESSED HOPE THAT HE WOULD SEE
SERREQI AFTER THE ELECTION AT THE NACC IN BERLIN, WHICH
SERREQI ACKNOWLEDGED WAS NOT CERTAIN. (COMMENT: SERREQI
INDICATED LATER THAT THIS WOULD BE HIS LAST TRIP TO
WASHINGTON, CONFIRMING REPORTS THAT HE IS PLANNING ON

STEPPING DOWN AS FOREIGN MINISTER AFTER THE ELECTION,
REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME. END COMMENT)

V (C) REGARDING THE ELECTIONS, THE SECRETARY STRESSED THE
NEED FOR THE GOA TO CONDUCT THEM IN A WAY THAT WAS FULLY
TRANSPARENT AND TECHNICALLY EVENHANDED. SERREQI ASSURED
HIM THAT WOULD BE THE CASE. ASKED BY THE SECRETARY WHETHER
THE OSCE WOULD SEND ELECTION MONITORS, SERREQI SEEMED
UNCERTAIN. SWIGERT NOTED OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT OSCE
OBSERVERS WOULD BE PRESENT, BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED
BY U.S. NGOS INVOLVED IN THE ELECTIONS.

A PRICE FOR FREE MARKETS

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8. (U) SERREQI CITED HIS GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS
DURING ITS FOUR YEARS IN OFFICE. GOA REFORMS INCLUDED
WHOLESALE PRIVATIZATION, DEVALUATION AND STABILIZATION OF
THE CURRENCY, AND TAMING OF INFLATION HAD RESULTED IN
ALBANIA ACHIEVING THE HIGHEST ECONOMIC GROWTH RATE IN
EUROPE FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS. THE SECRETARY ASKED
WHETHER ALBANIA'S FAST-GROWING POPULATION AND URBANIZATION
WERE PRESENTING PROBLEMS. SERREQI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT LARGE
POPULATION SHIFTS HAD OCCURRED AS PEOPLE LEFT THE
INHOSPITABLE HIGHLANDS TO SEEK OPPORTUNITIES IN COASTAL
TOWNS. HOWEVER, ALBANIA HAD OVERCOME THE HUMANITARIAN

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EMERGENCIES THAT ENGULFED IT BEFORE THE COMMUNISTS LEFT POWER IN 1992. HE THANKED THE SECRETARY FOR GENEROUS U.S. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND ONGOING SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC REFORMS. ALLUDING TO THE DROP IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S POPULARITY SINCE ITS 1992 VICTORY, SERREQI OBSERVED THAT THE GOA HAD PAID A POLITICAL PRICE FOR APPLYING NECESSARY ECONOMIC SHOCK THERAPY.

WORRIES OVER KOSOVO

9. (C) TURNING TO KOSOVO, SERREQI SAID REPRESSION OF THE ALBANIAN MAJORITY IN THE SERBIAN PROVINCE WAS NOT ONLY A HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM, BUT AN UNSOLVED POLITICAL PROBLEM THAT HAD THE POTENTIAL TO BOIL OVER VIOLENTLY AND THREATEN REGIONAL STABILITY. THE GOA HAS SUPPORTED A STRATEGY OF PEACEFUL RESISTANCE FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS, WHICH HAS HELPED TO AVOID VIOLENCE. ALBANIA CONTINUED TO CALL FOR NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PRISTINA AND BELGRADE IN THE PRESENCE

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OF A THIRD PARTY, AND OPPOSED CHANGING BORDERS BY FORCE.

A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

10. (C) SERREQI CREDITED THE UNITED STATES WITH PREVENTING AN EXPLOSION IN KOSOVO, AND URGED THE SECRETARY TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE ON MILOSEVIC TO REACH A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. HOWEVER, THE GOA RECOGNIZED THAT GENUINE AUTONOMY WAS CURRENTLY MORE THAN BELGRADE WAS PREPARED TO OFFER ON KOSOVO, AND LESS THAN THE KOSOVARS DEMANDED. THE SOLUTION MUST INCLUDE TWO ELEMENTS: SOME DEGREE OF SELF-DETERMINATION, AND ACCEPTANCE OF EXISTING BORDERS. THEREFORE, NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD AIM AT INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS SUCH AS DEMILITARIZATION, BETTER HEALTH CARE, AND EDUCATION FOR THE ALBANIAN MAJORITY.

11. (C) THE SECRETARY STRESSED THAT POLICY OF NON-VIOLENCE WAS A FUNDAMENTAL CONDITION FOR CONTINUED U.S. AND WEST EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR THE KOSOVAR ALBANIAN LEADERSHIP. KOSOVAR LEADER IBRAHIM RUGOVA'S INTERNATIONAL BACKING DEPENDED ON HIS ADVOCACY OF PEACEFUL CHANGE. SERREQI AGREED, BUT FEARED THAT RUGOVA WAS LOSING AUTHORITY IN THE EYES OF THE ETHNIC ALBANIANS IN THE FACE OF CONTINUED SERBIAN REPRESSION.

U.S. PRESSURE ON MILOSEVIC

12. (C) THE SECRETARY ASSURED SERREQI THAT HE HAD PRESSED MILOSEVIC TO LOOSEN HIS GRIP ON KOSOVO, AND WOULD DO SO

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AGAIN. THE U.S. WOULD NEITHER BRING DOWN NOR WEAKEN THE "OUTER WALL" OF SANCTIONS UNTIL THERE WAS PROGRESS TOWARDS RESPECTING HUMAN AND POLITICAL RIGHTS IN KOSOVO. HE HOPES THIS PRESSURE WOULD INDUCE MILOSEVIC TO ENTER DISCUSSIONS ON GREATER AUTONOMY FOR KOSOVO, AND THUS REDUCE THE DANGER OF VIOLENCE. MILOSEVIC'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE USIS OFFICE IN PRISTINA WAS A SIGN THAT THIS LEVERAGE WAS EFFECTIVE. THE SECRETARY ENDORSED SERREQI'S "TWO PILLARS" OF A SOLUTION -- NO BORDER CHANGES, AND A DEGREE OF AUTONOMY AND BETTER LIFE FOR THE INHABITANTS. HE ADDED THAT MILOSEVIC WOULD LIKELY BE MORE AMENABLE TO REACHING A SOLUTION IF SERBIA WAS NOT PRESSED TO MAKE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS.

13. (C) SDAS PERINA, WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM A ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS IN SERBIA, KOSOVO, AND ALBANIA, AGREED THAT IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS WAS AN IMPORTANT STEP FOR REDUCING TENSIONS. HE OBSERVED THAT WE INTEND TO OPEN THE PRISTINA USIS OFFICE DURING THE FIRST HALF OF JUNE.

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BECAUSE OF RECENT INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE, EMBOFFS FROM BELGRADE WERE ALREADY MAINTAINING A PERMANENT PRESENCE IN KOSOVO. PERINA JUDGED THAT THE OUTER WALL SANCTIONS WERE THE KEY TO CONVINCING MILOSEVIC OF THE NEED FOR GREATER

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POLITICAL FREEDOM IN KOSOVO, AS BELGRADE DESPERATELY NEEDED ACCESS TO IFI FUNDS. RE ASSURED THE MINISTER THAT THE U.S. DISAGREED WITH THE EU DECISION TO ALLOW RECOGNITION OF SERBIA-MONTENEGRO, AND WOULD NOT ALTER THE U.S. POSITION ON SANCTIONS.

14. (C) THE SECRETARY SAID THAT THE UK HAD ASSURED HIM THAT THEIR RECOGNITION OF BELGRADE WAS "TECHNICAL" IN NATURE AND DID NOT REPRESENT ANY CHANGE IN BRITISH POLICY TOWARD KOSOVO. AT LUNCH WITH GERMAN FM KINKEL THAT DAY, THE SECRETARY HAD URGED KINKEL TO RAISE KOSOVO IN DISCUSSIONS WITH BELGRADE. ASKED WHETHER ALBANIAN REFUGEES IN EUROPE WOULD BE ABLE TO RETURN TO KOSOVO, SERREQI WAS EMPHATIC THAT SUCH A STEP WOULD BE PREMATURE.

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REDUX ON ELECTION

15. (U) IN CLOSING, THE SECRETARY REPEATED THE IMPORTANCE THE UNITED STATES ATTACHES TO FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS. SERREQI ASSURED HIM THAT THE GOA HAD TAKEN ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES TO SEE THAT THE ELECTIONS ARE CONDUCTED PROPERLY, AND PROMISED TO RESPECT THE RESULTS.
CHRISTOPHER

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