

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 3, 1978

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: Robert Lipshutz
FROM: Joyce Starr *gls*
SUBJECT: Belgrade CSCE trip, February 15 -
February 24: observations and
recommendations

1. Leadership of Arthur Goldberg

It may not be often during this term of the Carter Presidency that we can evaluate with some assurance whether a bold and decisive course of action was the right one. Ambassador Goldberg's appointment and the leadership which he brought to the CSCE process does provide us that opportunity.

In a few words, to observe Ambassador Goldberg in action is to have enormous pride in the spirit of a country that produced such a tireless advocate for universal justice. At 69 years of age, Ambassador Goldberg attended, I am told, almost every plenary and caucus session, absent only for reasons of competing but equal demands. During the time I was there, the closing phase of a long and tedious six month negotiating process, he was yet committing his total energies to the objectives of the day at hand. When you consider the relative isolation of this task -- carrying the President's message on human rights to a conference some thousands of miles from home, one that is outside the realm of awareness of the vast majority of Americans, and when reported on, generally subject to mixed review -- this is significant.

2. Allied Unity

Ambassador Goldberg was under instructions to preserve allied unity. Cliff Brody of the Department of State says

it was his understanding that Goldberg was not to emphasize these instructions at the cost of exertion of U.S. leadership. Cliff admits, however, there was considerable disagreement within the Department on the priority that should be attached to this instruction. Goldberg's statements within the context of private staff meetings, coupled with the role he took during the NATO caucus sessions, made it evident that he interpreted the instructions to read "preserve allied unity at all cost".

Privately the Ambassador told me that if he ever heard the term "allied unity" again, he would "murder the person who said it". He was deeply frustrated and disappointed by the failure of our Allies to rally behind the American effort for a substantive, final document.

Sitting in on the NATO sessions, I believe he was in fact unduly constrained by this instruction with an unanticipated result: we were often unable to back up initiatives by the more aggressive Allied and Neutral countries that were consistent with our own policy objectives out of deference to others who were not so sympathetic to our interests. In other words, while the U.S. objective in maintaining Allied unity may have been a "strong front" and a clear statement of differences with the Eastern European bloc, the actual result was a dissolution of leadership and consensus within our own.

3. CSCE Staff Structure

Ambassador Goldberg was not given the option of appointing staff assistants of his own choosing, but had to rely principally on foreign service personnel; this would not have been an inherent obstacle were it not that most of these people had served under Ambassador Scherer during the original negotiations at Helsinki and resented Goldberg's replacement of Scherer as the principal figure at Belgrade. Scherer himself, while much too proper to let a public controversy develop over his differences with Goldberg, did let it quietly be known quietly exactly where he stood. As a footnote, Scherer will be joining, no less, the Republican National Committee. (I might add with some concern that Scherer took copious notes on everything Goldberg said, including comments made in the privacy of CSCE staff meetings.)

Our failure to provide Goldberg with several additional slots was probably more an oversight than a matter of intent. I discussed this point with David Aaron on my

return. He noted that Goldberg could have made this request, but to his knowledge had not done so. I cannot say whether in fact Goldberg raised this question within the Department and was turned down, or simply failed to address it at the time; the result was a drain on his energies and attention, having to continuously consolidate support and oversee the implementation of his directives within our own delegation.

3. A Substantive Final Document

We are now taking the position with the press that we never really expected to achieve a substantive final document. You may recall Greg Treverton's emphasis on this point at our Saturday meeting concerning strategy during the final phase.

Based on numerous conversations with representatives of the NATO Caucus delegations, I believe we could have generated sufficient support to this end had we assumed a leadership stance. In my opinion, the instructions on allied unity did more to render this a foregone conclusion than the nature of the task.

If we did not expect to win, we made a serious error in allowing our public credibility to be tied to this goal. (You may have seen the CBS report last night underscoring this failure.) We now face an uphill public relations battle of confidence that could have been foreseen and probably avoided. Again, Department guidance on this probably suffered more from a conflict of views than an intent to weaken Goldberg's negotiating posture. Nevertheless, the result only reinforces the need for improved coordination on our approach to the Madrid Conference by the White House and with sufficient lead time to spare.

I have already begun to discuss this with the NSC staff, Treverton and Hunter; we are in agreement (as we tend to be on most aspects of this process) and will be considering how to best ensure such future coordination and consensus.

4. Human Rights Principles versus Human Contacts Provisions

It was our policy decision to emphasize the human rights principles of Basket One at this conference. My conversations with our Allies suggested some frustration with this strategy.

Our Allies (and many of the Neutrals) applauded the U.S. for its commitment to human rights; still they questioned repeatedly why we could not appreciate the significance of the

human contacts provisions (Basket Three) as an operationalization of this principle. (Although the human contacts provisions would not provide any protection to a prisoner such as Scharansky -- to have medical attention or to see a lawyer -- such protections could be built in to this section at the next conference.)

I raised this with Greg Treverton and with John Kornblum of the Department of State immediately upon my return. I suggested that we use Goldberg's concluding speech to signal our Allies that we were attentive to their position on this matter and will be giving it serious consideration as we move towards the Madrid Conference. They agreed and the appropriate language has now been inserted.

5. East-West Cooperation

One of the most interesting facets of the conference was the extent of cooperation between the Neutral and Nonaligned bloc, particularly Yugoslavia and the West. A Washington Post article of February 23 (see attached) points to this cooperation as one of the interesting developments of the conference. A separate Post article (February 28) noted this Administration's emphasis on strengthening relationships with the Warsaw pact countries, as differentiated from Kissinger's approach in negotiating almost solely with the Soviet Union. My experience at Belgrade affirmed the forward-looking potential of our policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Follow-up Strategy

We came into the game very late, yet I think its fair to say that we exerted influence and improved a process that might have otherwise proved, at best, a non-event or, at worst, a defeat for the West. Therefore, while we can be proud of our involvement, we should not fail to realize the importance of avoiding such a reactive stance in the future. I've discussed this with Gregg and with Cliff Brody and, again, we are in agreement. We can't predict whether we and other concerned actors will have the same involvement one or two years hence. But we are already thinking along the lines of the next conference.

2. Generating Public Support

Ambassador Goldberg has suggested the convening of a meeting or conference with leading figures in the country, which would produce a United States Helsinki Monitoring Watch Group. We do have a Congressional Commission to monitor Helsinki, but this does not have broad based support. I

noted in a Time magazine article some reference to White House sponsorship for a human rights foundation. I intend to talk to Jessica Tuckman about this idea; it may in fact prove to be the vehicle for the kind of initiative Goldberg is describing.

Goldberg does not believe that such a group should come under the sponsorship of the White House; however, the White House might serve as a catalyst, perhaps through contacts with various foundations. I mentioned this idea to David Aaron who thought it had merit and said he would get back to me with suggestions.

3. Arthur Goldberg

I would like to propose that Arthur Goldberg be given the Medal of Freedom for his leadership at the CSCE Conference. This is the one remaining honor that would have significant meaning for him.

Goldberg's report to the President should be received with some fanfare. I also urge that time be found on the President's schedule for a private meeting with the Ambassador; this would be viewed by Goldberg as a sign of respect and appreciation. It could perhaps take the form of a private lunch, followed by the presentation of the report to a wider audience.
