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April 8, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR: Erskine Bowles

Chief of Staff, The White House

FROM: Joseph Duffey
Director, United States Information Agency

SUBJECT: Weekly Report

I. KEY USIA NEWS

VOA COVERS PRESIDENT'S AFRICA VISIT: The VOA Africa Division continued its extensive coverage of the President's trip. From Dakar, VOA reported the President's enthusiastic welcome in Senegal and his emotional visit to Goree Island on April 2.

SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO AFRICA: USIA successfully supported President Clinton's historic 12-day visit to six African countries through reference services, as well as bilingual written materials provided in the Washington File and a "visit" website. USIA's press coverage of the visit began on January 21st with the White House announcement, and continued through the president's April 3rd statement in

the Rose Garden that "political and economic liberty is on the rise" in Africa. In total, more than 140 texts, transcripts and articles were carried in English by the Washington File. Last week's items included the president's announcement of Radio Democracy for Africa, the transcript of the president's round table with African environmentalists, the transcript of the president's address to Senegalese troops, a fact sheet on the African Center for Security Studies, a fact sheet on the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), and the transcript of the president's final trip speech on Goree Island.

POLLING ON NORTHERN IRELAND: More Britons favor the Irish government over the British government when asked who should play "a major role" in the affairs of Northern Ireland (45% vs. 25%), and nearly three-quarters support the proposal to create a Council of the Isles which would include representatives of all governments in the region, according to a USIA survey in Britain conducted March 20-22, 1998. The British public splits about evenly into optimists and pessimists on the current peace process. Few are confident that leading paramilitary organizations will permanently renounce violence. A large majority (69%) think it is not appropriate for the American government to be involved in the peace process, and many perceive an American bias in favor of the Irish Nationalists.

BOSNIAN POLLING: A recent survey in Bosnia finds that economic improvement remains a top policy priority for Bosnians, and except among Bosnian Muslims, it competes with public concern over nationality-based rights. Many hope that inter-ethnic commerce and economic improvement may eventually help unify the three nationalities. Bosnian Serbs remain the most negative about their financial situation and the most pessimistic about the future. While support for a market economy persists, Bosnian Croats and Serbs are less inclined now than in the past to say it is right

for Bosnia.

RUSSIA: TELECOM LAWMAKERS CONVINCED OF NEED FOR OPENNESS: Six key Russian Duma members and staff involved in drafting new telecommunications legislation returned from a one-week IV Freedom Support project in March on regulation of the U.S. telecom industry. They were impressed with the open-mindedness of their American counterparts and with their ability to see the Russian point of view. They gained a new understanding of the importance of unrestricted access to electronic media. A member of the Duma Media and Telecommunications Committee, said that he no longer believed that the government should have the power to close down media organizations for expressing controversial views.

USIS SPOTLIGHTS USAID PUBLIC HEALTH EFFORTS IN MOROCCO: USIS Rabat coordinated a public affairs campaign with the Moroccan Ministry of Health to publicize a USAID-produced film on preventing deaths during childbirth. This USIS effort led to coverage of the film during March by radio and television news programs in both French and Arabic and by eleven French and Arabic language newspapers and magazines. USIS also arranged press coverage of a USAID donation of medical equipment to a hospital in Fez. Reports about the donation appeared in six national and regional papers and on radio and television.

SUDAN PRESS USES USIA ARTICLES: Despite tense official relations between the U.S. and the Sudan, USIS Khartoum continues to place the texts of Washington File articles in the Sudanese press. Recent examples include the March 23 appearance of the article "Albright: Clinton Trip Will Spotlight Forward-Looking Africa" in the privately-owned Arabic language daily newspapers "Alwifag" and "Al-Raay Al Akhar." On March 26 "Al-Raay

Al Akhar" published a Washington File story entitled "Sudan Cited as Behind Child Abductions in Northern Uganda" as well as the text of a speech about human rights by Ambassador Nancy Rubin, head of the U.S. delegation to the United National Commission on Human Rights.

NEW ELECTRONIC JOURNAL "CLIMATE CHANGE: THE CHOICES": The Global Issues team launched another electronic journal on Climate Change. The first journal on this subject promoted acceptance of U.S. positions at the U.N. conference in Kyoto last December. The new journal, released in time for Earth Day programs, analyzes the Kyoto accords and discusses pending issues that will be taken up at a follow-up conference in Buenos Aires this November.

USIS KIEV DEMOCRACY GRANT HELPS JOURNALISTS COVER MARCH 29 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS: A USIS Kiev democracy grant to the Democratic Initiatives Research and Education Center enabled the Center to train journalists in the use of polls during the run-up to the Ukrainian parliamentary elections. Results of polls distributed during the grantee's conference appeared in several Kiev newspapers, and on February 23rd the daily newspaper "Kievskie Vedomosti" published an article summarizing the use of poll results as explained during the workshop. USIS regards the results of this grant as a significant step toward establishing open access to information during elections.

USIS TALLINN SUPPORTS FIRST FRASURE MEMORIAL LECTURE: USIS Tallinn took part in the very successful and moving first annual Robert C. Frasure Memorial Lecture on April 1. The event was conceived by Estonian President Lennart Meri as a tribute to the first U.S. Ambassador to newly independent Estonia in 1991, who lost his life en route to peace talks in Bosnia in 1995. Ambassador Holbrooke delivered the inaugural lecture, and

then joined EUR DAS Ronald Asmus in a lively standing-room-only press conference. The excellent media coverage (all television news programs carried long stories, and all dailies gave it front-page coverage) stressed Holbrooke's commendation of Estonia's progress, insistence that the current administration is the most "pro-Europe" since Kennedy, and opinion that Estonia faces no "threat" from the east, though problems remain to be solved. Guests included President Meri, the Foreign Minister, the speaker of Parliament, many ambassadors and government officials). USIS helped plan the program and the press conference, and received special mention at the ceremony from Amb. Frasure's widow who thanked USIA for designating an annual Estonian Fulbright student award in memory of Ambassador Frasure.

WIVES OF MISSIONARY HOSTAGES MAKE APPEAL ON VOA: The wives of three American missionaries believed held by guerrillas in Colombia appealed again for the release of their husbands during exclusive interviews broadcast by VOA in English and Spanish. Nancy Mankins, wife of missionary David Mankins, told VOA's "Report to the Americas" that, "we are just three American families ... who have been caught up in a war that has nothing to do with us.... We aren't concerned with politics, we are concerned with the lives of our husbands." In January 1993, missionaries David Mankins, Rick Tenenoff and Mark Rich of the Florida-based New Tribes Mission were taken from their homes in Panama and then moved into Colombia, reportedly by the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC). A 1997 statement by their captors said the three Americans are alive. The three wives last visited VOA in December to deliver a Christmas message to their husbands. They said they keep hoping their husbands will hear their words on VOA.

SENATOR MCCAIN TALKS ABOUT THE U.S. AND VIETNAM ON VOA: Senator John McCain appeared March 30 on the daily English language call-in program, "Talk to America," and spoke with an international audience about U.S.-Vietnamese relations. "A long time ago," said McCain, "I decided that the best thing for America and our veterans and, frankly, the Vietnamese as well, is a process of reconciliation and normalization of relations.... So I think that what we have done recently, and the additional measures that need to be taken, are a long process to bring us out of perhaps the most painful and divisive period in American history." The program went on to explain that the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation signed an accord with Vietnam March 19 as part of efforts to normalize economic relations. The accord was signed in the office of Sen. McCain, who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam for more than five years.

USIS TOKYO TRANSLATES, DISTRIBUTES USTR REPORT: Hours after the official announcement in Washington, the USIS Tokyo translation of the USTR ,s latest report on Japanese trade barriers hit the desks of key Japanese officials and journalists in booklet form, and became available on the Internet, even before the report ,s Washington announcement appeared in the afternoon papers. On the media front, since every area of bilateral trade contention is listed in this year ,s National Trade Estimate of Foreign Trade Barriers (NTE), by distributing the 59-page translation to the seven major ministry press clubs, USIS Tokyo also made available to every beat reporter the latest and most accurate Japanese-language description of U.S. trade policy towards Japan.

FOIA REQUESTS: The NEW TIMES, Miami, Florida, requested a copy of all professional service contracts for Radio and TV Marti and all audits and reports evaluating the Office of Cuba Broadcasting from 1996 to the present.

EXPULSED CHINESE DISSIDENT PRAISES VOA MANDARIN SERVICE: Chinese dissident Xu Shuiliang, along with his wife and son, arrived in New York April 1. In an exclusive telephone interview with the VOA Mandarin Service (April 1), Xu said he was forced out of China. He said Chinese police confiscated more than 60 articles from him when he departed. Xu Shuiliang has been involved in China's democracy movement since the 1970s. He has been jailed twice since 1979 for a total of 13 years. Xu praised VOA's coverage of the democracy movement saying, "You have made a great contribution to the cause of democracy in China ... allow me to express my appreciation to you ... for your support of China's democratic and human rights movement."

NEWSFILE COVERS ROMANIAN DEFENSE MINISTER AT PENTAGON: In a joint WORLDNET/VOA effort NEWSFILE covered Secretary Cohen and Romanian Defense Minister Constantin Ionescu at the Pentagon to sign an Agreement of Cooperation in the area of Counterproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and Promotion of Defense and Military Relations. All major Romanian TV broadcasters and some cable systems made use of the footage. ROMANIAN TV (RTV) began its coverage in the lunch time news and repeated it all day long. PRO-TV, PRIMA-TV and ANTENA-1 also televised the footage. Cable systems (KAPPA, RCS, CINEAMAR BAIA MARE and TELE M IASI) simulcast the material at midday.

II. PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVES

WORLDNET PROMOTES SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS: In support of the Summit of the Americas, WORLDNET is producing a series of 12 televised Dialogues and 4 CONVERSEMOS call-in programs. Program guests include Presidential Counselor Thomas "Mack" McClarty (April 13) and representatives from USTR,

the World Wildlife Fund, and the Freedom Forum. Additionally, WORLDNET's FORO INTERAMERICANO program will originate from Santiago on April 17 and NEWSFILE will carry periodic reports on the event.

HOLBROOKE VISIT BREAKS DOWN ONE BICOMMUNAL BARRIER IN CYPRUS: USIS NICOSIA provided public affairs support to Presidential Emissary Holbrooke during his recent visit to Cyprus. The visit led to a renewal of bicomunal contacts and fanned hope for progress on negotiations, currently stalled, between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders. Holbrooke's efforts resulted in the first bicomunal meeting since December 1997. USIS arranged an international news conference for Holbrooke at the Fulbright Center in the buffer zone which was covered in the local, U.S. and European media. The Post also arranged an exclusive interview with CNN which was broadcast April 4 and 5.

USIS/USNATO PLACES LETTER ON NATO ENLARGEMENT IN APRIL 7 WASHINGTON POST: USIS/USNATO arranged for placement of a letter to the editor from U.S. Ambassador to NATO Alexander Vershbow in the April 7 edition of the WASHINGTON POST. The letter rebuts frequent criticism of enlargement, including the assertion that a debate on the issue has not yet occurred, and points out that NATO, through the Partnership Joint Council with Russia, has created important opportunities for Russia to play a positive role in European security.

USIS/USNATO COUNTERS "SPY" ALLEGATIONS: A story in the April 4 edition of DER SPIEGEL alleging that NATO security specialists are concerned about possible infiltration of spies from the former communist intelligence services of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic unleashed a barrage of media inquiries to USIS/USNATO. The USIS Public Affairs Advisor, who is traveling with Ambassador Vershbow this week in Poland and Hungary,

successfully placed stories in AP, REUTERS, PAP (Polish News Agency), the Hungarian daily NEPSZABADZAG, and the HUNGARIAN PRESS AGENCY, arguing that these allegations are wrong, that NATO has confidence in the ability of the new members to safeguard NATO secrets, and that the Alliance is working closely with new members to ensure cooperation on intelligence and security-related topics.

USIS PRESENTS U.S. POSITION ON CLIMATE CHANGE TO GERMAN ENERGY SECTOR

LEADERS: In connection with a major conference in Frankfurt on March 31 involving top executives of German electric utilities, USIS FRANKFURT requested a video message from Melinda Kimble, Acting Asst. Sec. of State for International Environmental Affairs on U.S. policy on greenhouse gases. The video was presented by the USIS FRANKFURT branch PAO and played to the 300 energy executives, journalists and politicians in attendance. The conference was organized by the Association of German Electrical Utilities, and dealt with challenges which the German economy will be facing in the new Millennium, including environmental protection. In her remarks, Kimble reviewed U.S. objectives for reducing greenhouse gases, as presented recently at the Kyoto Conference on Climate Change, and reaffirmed the Administration's position on policies for achieving those objectives.

MARCH NATO TOUR OPENS BULGARIAN EYES: Excellent organization by USNATO and USIS Warsaw allowed USIS Sofia to provide five Bulgarian Members of Parliament with an enlightening view of NATO. After a week of intensive briefings, the four in the group who already supported enlargement and Bulgarian membership (three from the ruling United Democratic Forces and one from the People's Union), had a greater understanding of why they support these initiatives. While it would be incorrect to say that the Socialist Party participant saw the light (his party does not favor

joining NATO), he did get satisfying answers to his probing and critical questions, and he, too, gained a clearer idea of what membership might mean and require of Bulgaria.

III. PRESS/MEDIA INQUIRES

"JOINING HANDS" CONFERENCE: THE DISABILITY LAW REPORTER SERVICES covered USIA and Mobility International's conference for leaders in the international exchange and disabilities communities. A USIA staffer served as the official photographer at the conference, and will send photo stories to major disability and exchanges media this week.

ASIAN STUDENT MEASURES: Stories based on the USIA-organized briefing on measures being taken to assist Asian students in the United States ran in the KYODO NEWS SERVICE (Japan) and the STRAITS TIMES (Singapore.) Public Liaison received calls from several people after the briefing including the CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION; the Philippine Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Raul Chaves Rabe; and the Indonesian Cultural Attache, Dr. Yahya Muhaimin.

REORGANIZATION: A reporter from the CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY, called Public Liaison called to arrange for an interview with Director Duffey for an upcoming article on reorganization. His appointment has been set for Wednesday, April 8. PL also suggested other individuals both in the Agency and outside to complete his assignment.

PALESTINIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION: PL arranged for Dr. Duffey to be interviewed by Hansen Hussein, NBC NIGHTLY NEWS producer in Tel Aviv, for

a possible story on alleged USIA aid to the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation. After the interview, NBC determined their original premise was incorrect and told PL they had decided not to run the story.