William J. Clinton
Presidential History Project

Briefing Materials

Strobe Talbott
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1992

January

October
Clinton calls Talbott to discuss the Bush Administration’s SALT II talks with Russia. (Talbott, p. 34)

November
President-elect Clinton asks Talbott if he would be interested in serving as U.S. Ambassador to Russia. Talbott declines but soon after accepts a position at State to work on U.S. policy towards the former Soviet Union. (Talbott, p. 38)

Dennis Ross advises Talbott that Georgi Mamedov, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev’s deputy in charge of U.S.-Russian relations and arms control, is “the one guy over there you can work with.” (Talbott, p. 41)

1993

January
Talbott is nominated as Ambassador-at-Large and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State on the New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union on the 19th.

February
Talbott meets with former President Richard Nixon. Nixon calls for the Clinton Administration to fully support Yeltsin in his struggle with the Russian parliament. Nixon holds additional meetings with Clinton and Talbott in March to further advocate support for Yeltsin. (Talbott, p. 51)

Clinton announces that Talbott will head a new interagency steering group to coordinate aid policy towards the NIS. The National Security Council (NSC), Defense, and Treasury will also be represented. (The New York Times, 02/08/1993)

Talbott travels to Geneva to attend Secretary of State Warren Christopher’s first official meeting with Kozyrev. Talbott also meets with Mamedov. (The New York Times, 02/26/1993)

March
Talbott writes his first memo to the President on the 15th, entitled, “A
Strategic Alliance with Russian Reform.” (Talbott, p. 52-53)

Clinton meets with Talbott and other senior advisers on the 18th to discuss the upcoming Vancouver summit with Yeltsin. Clinton tells his advisers to “go back and think bigger” in constructing Russian aid proposals. Domestic advisers such as George Stephanopoulos oppose larger aid as it could undermine the Administration’s efforts to reduce the deficit and promote economic growth. (Talbott, p. 53)

Clinton meets with Talbott and other senior advisers on the 20th to discuss how the Administration should respond to Yeltsin’s battle with the Russian parliament. Yeltsin has invoked “special rule” and announced he will hold a referendum in April appealing to the Russian people for support. Some advisers are hesitant to support Yeltsin too strongly for fear that he might abandon democratic reform. Clinton issues a statement standing behind Yeltsin’s efforts to support the democratic process. (Talbott, pp. 56-57; Los Angeles Times, 03/21/1993)

Talbott, Christopher and National Security Advisor Anthony Lake work out the details of a Russian aid package in preparation for the Vancouver summit. (The Los Angeles Times, 04/01/1993)

April

Talbott is sworn-in on the 2nd in Portland, Oregon.

Talbott attends the Clinton-Yeltsin Vancouver summit on the 3rd and 4th. Clinton offers Yeltsin $1.6 billion in aid for Russia. Clinton and Yeltsin agree to create the Joint Commission on Economic and Technological Cooperation to be co-chaired by Vice President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. Convening twice a year, the Commission later becomes an important channel for managing U.S.-Russian relations. Talbott and Mamedov agree to meet regularly throughout the year. Mamedov suggests calling the channel the Strategic Stability Group. (Talbott, pp. 62-69; The Los Angeles Times, 06/13/1993; The New York Times, 04/05/1993)

Talbott travels to Moscow to discuss Clinton’s plan for military action in Bosnia. Russian officials continue to reject the plan despite promising comments made by Kozyrev the previous week. (The Washington Post, 07/02/1993)

May

Talbott travels to Moscow to seek Russian support for airstrikes against the Bosnian Serbs, but the Russians resist. (Talbott, pp. 75-76)

Talbott begins the “zdravstvidaniya” tours of the fifteen NIS countries in an expression of U.S. support. Talbott’s first stop is to meet with Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma on the 10th and 11th. In an effort to
ease mounting tensions between the U.S. and Ukraine, Talbott announces that the Clinton Administration will consider providing energy assistance and security assurances to Ukraine. Presidents Bush and Clinton had previously refused to consider economic aid to Ukraine until it honored its 1992 pledge to ratify the START I treaty and to accede to the nonproliferation treaty as a nonnuclear state. Tension between the U.S. and Ukraine had continued to build when Clinton refused to meet with Kuchma in April. (Talbott, pp. 78-80; Journal of Commerce, 05/14/1993)

**June**

Talbott and Defense Secretary Les Aspin meet with Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev in Germany to discuss the future of Ukraine’s nuclear weapons. Grachev rejects a U.S. compromise proposal to place Ukraine’s warheads under international control, as Ukraine had already pledged to transfer its nuclear weapons to Russia without condition. (The New York Times, 06/07/1993)

**July**

Mamedov asks Talbott to come to Moscow to work out several issues before Clinton and Yeltsin meet at the Tokyo G-7 meeting later in the month. The G-7 goes on to offer Russia $28.4 billion in aid at Tokyo. (Talbott, p. 85)

Talbott nears a compromise with Russian officials over the proposed sale of Russian rocket engines to India. (Talbott, pp. 81-82)

**August**

Christopher appoints James Collins, Deputy Chief of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, to serve as a diplomatic mediator under Talbott to help resolve regional and ethnic disputes throughout the former Soviet republics. (The Washington Post, 08/07/1993)

**September**

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the 7th, Talbott asks Congress for $2.5 billion in assistance for Russia and other former Soviet republics. Congress is reportedly hesitant, as Yeltsin’s fight with conservative hard-liners in parliament continues to build.

While hard-liners are calling on Yeltsin to ease the pace of economic reform and increase spending on social welfare, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is threatening to delay further loans unless Yeltsin tightens government spending and gets a handle on inflation. Additional funding is later approved. (The Washington Post, 09/17/1993)

While traveling throughout the former Soviet republics, Talbott tells the presidents of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan that the U.S. will make the provision of economic aid contingent on democratic reform. (The Washington Post, 07/16/1993)

Yeltsin dissolves the Russian parliament on the 21st and calls for new
elections to be held on December 12th. Parliamentary hard-liners call the move unconstitutional and barricade themselves inside the parliament building. Talbott meets with Clinton to discuss the situation and the U.S. response. (Talbott, pp. 86-91)

October

Yeltsin’s forces storm the Russian parliament on the 4th. The Clinton Administration issues a statement in support of Yeltsin. (The Washington Post, 10/05/1993)

The Principals Committee decides on the 18th to recommend to the President the “Partnership for Peace” (PFP) program as a preliminary step towards NATO expansion. The program is developed under General John Shalikashvili as a means to increase military ties with prospective members without immediately and necessarily committing to expansion. Talbott, who had argued against rapid expansion that would exclude Russia, supports the PFP. Talbott also argues against naming the first new prospective members at the Brussels NATO summit in January. Christopher and Talbott travel to Europe shortly thereafter to brief European leaders. (Talbott, pp. 98-99; Warren Christopher, Chances of a Lifetime, New York: Scribner, 2001, pp. 275-276; Goldgeier, “NATO Expansion: The Anatomy of a Decision,” The Washington Quarterly, Winter 1998

December

Ultranationalists benefit from a strong anti-economic reform vote in Russia’s parliamentary elections on the 12th. Talbott calls for “less shock and more therapy,” suggesting that Yeltsin adopt a “broader” definition of reform that is more sensitive to meeting the needs of the Russian people. Talbott is later criticized for his comments, particularly by Russian reformers. (Talbott, pp. 106-107; The New York Times, 12/21/1993)

Talbott is nominated as Deputy Secretary of State on the 28th. Talbott replaces Clifton Wharton, Jr., who had resigned in early November. In addition to assuming the traditional duties of deputy secretary, Talbott’s new responsibilities reportedly will include speaking on a broader range of foreign policy issues to the American people and to Congress. The Administration also announces that Gore will begin to speak more on foreign policy. Talbott continues his work in interagency groups managing Russia policy. (The Washington Post, 12/29/1993; The Wall Street Journal, 12/28/1993)

Talbott, Deputy Secretary of Defense William Perry, and Mamedov meet in Ukraine and forge a deal to transfer Ukraine’s nuclear weapons to Russia. (Talbott, p. 109)

1994
January  
Talbott announces that Clinton will support both greater economic reforms and greater social support for the Russian people during talks with Yeltsin scheduled later in the month. (*The Washington Post*, 01/06/1994)


Clinton attends a trilateral meeting in Moscow where Yeltsin and Ukrainian President Kravchuk sign a deal placing Ukrainian nuclear weapons under Russian control. While in Moscow the U.S. delegation learns that Yeltsin is firing liberal economic reformers Yegor Gaidar and Boris Fyodorov from their cabinet positions. (Talbott, pp. 114-117)

February  
The Senate confirms Talbott’s nomination as Deputy Secretary of State on the 22nd by a vote of 66 to 31 despite some criticism that Talbott is too soft on Russia and too hard on Israel. (*The Washington Post*, 02/23/1994)

April  
Talbott travels to India to help improve U.S.-Indian relations. India is reportedly upset with the U.S.’s delay in sending an ambassador to India and its pending agreement to sell F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan. Talbott also stops in Pakistan. Both India and Pakistan reject the U.S. proposal to move forward with the delivery of U.S. fighter jets to Pakistan if Pakistan agrees to cap its nuclear program and subject itself to verification. (*Los Angeles Times*, 04/16/1994)

Talbott travels to Poland to discuss the “Partnership for Peace” program. Polish leaders warn that only Russia will benefit from America’s cautious approach to NATO expansion. (*The Financial Times*, 04/12/1994)

After consulting with Talbott and Lake, U.S. officials in Croatia tell Croatian President Franco Tudjman that they have “no instructions” regarding the transfer of Iranian arms to Bosnian-Muslim forces. The decision, read as tacit acceptance, later draws criticism from Congress, the CIA, and European allies for allegedly violating UN sanctions. Although the UN sanctions prevent the under-armed Bosnian Muslims from defending themselves against Bosnian Serb atrocities, European nations with peacekeepers on the ground in Bosnia support the ban to help prevent the conflict from escalating. (*The Washington Post*, 05/24/1996)

Talbott and Lake meet with ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on the 21st and agree to seek tougher UN sanctions against Haiti to help restore Aristide to power. Aristide also protests Clinton’s direct

Talbott sits on Deputy National Security Adviser Sandy Berger’s panel to review the Haiti situation. Deciding against stronger measures, the panel supports a plan to dispatch military trainers to Haiti once all parties have agreed to a political settlement. (*The Washington Post*, 05/04/1994)

**May**

Talbott asks Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. Ambassador to Germany, to return to Washington, D.C. to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. Talbott reportedly hopes Holbrooke can help stabilize U.S. policy on Bosnia and NATO expansion. (Holbrooke, *To End a War*, New York: Random House, 1998, p. 57; Goldgeier, pp. 8-9)

**June**

After attending an Organization of American States (OAS) meeting in Brazil, Talbott reports that a number of Latin American and Caribbean allies support tough new sanctions on Haiti. Talbott also refuses to rule out the use of military force. (*The Washington Post*, 06/09/1994)

**July**

Clinton attends the summit of the newly formed G-8 in Naples, with Russia joining the G-7 in political discussions. At a joint Clinton-Yeltsin press conference, Yeltsin surprises the audience by announcing that Russian troops will not be withdrawn from the Baltics by August 31st. (Talbott, pp. 125-128)

The Clinton Administration continues to debate the use of military forces in Haiti. While Talbott, Lake and U.S. Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright reportedly favor taking military action, Defense Secretary William Perry and Deputy Secretary of Defense John Deutch reportedly oppose the use of force. (*The Washington Post*, 07/17/1994)

**August**

Clinton approves planning for military operations in Haiti during a meeting on the 19th. (*The Washington Post*, 09/24/1994)

Talbott and Deutch attend a meeting in Jamaica on Haiti. Jamaica, Barbados, Belize and Trinidad agree to contribute support personnel to the Haitian intervention force. (*The Washington Post*, 08/31/1994)

Talbott signals at a press conference that military forces will go to Haiti regardless of whether Haitian military ruler Raul Cedras agrees to step down or not. (*The Washington Post*, 09/02/1994)

**September**

Talbott attends a Cabinet Room meeting with Clinton to discuss NATO enlargement in preparation for the upcoming Clinton-Yeltsin Washington summit. (Talbott, p. 132)
Testifying before Congress on the 27th, Talbott and Deutch request that Congress set no specific date for ending the U.S. military operation in Haiti. They face criticism for the Administration’s failure to put the military operation to a vote before Congress. (*The Washington Post*, 09/28/1994)

**October**

Talbott tours several African nations to promote democracy and encourage African solutions to African problems. Talbott reportedly seeks to encourage other countries to play a larger role in Liberia after Nigeria dramatically scales back its contribution to regional peacekeeping forces. (*The New York Times*, 10/24/1994)

**December**

In a surprise move, Kozyrev refuses to sign Russia into the “Partnership for Peace” program at the last minute during the signing ceremony on the 1st. Russia had reportedly interpreted a recent NATO communiqué on enlargement as a slap in the face. Clinton is also ambushed at the Budapest summit when Yeltsin warns of a “cold peace.” Kozyrev later signs Russia into PFP on May 31, 1995. (Talbott, pp. 139-141; *The Washington Post*, 01/16/1995)

After Talbott reviews the security situation in Haiti with U.S. military commanders and Aristide on the 6th, the Clinton Administration begins to pressure the UN to allow U.S. forces in Haiti to turn over their peacekeeping responsibilities to UN troops ahead of schedule. Aristide had been restored to power in October. (Christopher, *In the Stream of History*, p. 227; *Los Angeles Times*, 12/07/1994)

**1995**

**January**

Christopher and Talbott present a proposal to Gore to consolidate three independent agencies – the Agency for International Development, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the United States Information Agency – under the State Department. The proposal is a response to a directive issued by Gore on the 3rd to all government agencies to present various options for reorganization. (*The New York Times*, 01/11/1995)

Talbott says that U.S. readiness to establish diplomatic ties with North Korea depends on Pyongyang's willingness to enter a dialogue with South Korea. (*The Washington Post*, 01/28/1995)

Talbott objects to Russia’s agreement to provide nuclear reactors and training to Iran. (*The Washington Post*, 02/11/1995)

Talbott announces on the 30th that the U.S. is willing to consider arming Cambodia for its war against the Khmer Rouge’s rebel forces if the

**February**

Clinton criticizes Russia's assault on Chechnya. Clinton also promises up to $20 million in U.S. humanitarian and refugee aid. Russian forces had begun moving into Chechnya in December. (*The New York Times*, 02/10/1995)

**March**

Talbott heads a delegation to Port-au-Prince that includes a number of U.S. business executives. Talbott announces a series of U.S. measures that include a $65 million lending facility for private enterprises, $12 million in additional support for small businesses and the opening of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service’s first full-time office in Haiti. (*Journal of Commerce*, 03/10/1995)

Meeting with Talbott in Washington, D.C., Russia’s deputy foreign minister proposes that NATO offer Moscow a non-aggression pact should NATO expand eastward. The proposal is reportedly interpreted as a softening in Russian opposition to NATO expansion. (*The Washington Post*, 03/11/1995)

Haitian security forces are suspected of involvement in the murder of Haitian opposition spokeswoman Mireille Bertin. Talbott subsequently travels to Haiti to push the government to fully investigate the matter. (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 04/01/1995)

Talbott proposes tighter curbs on trade with Iran during a meeting at the White House. Defense, Commerce, Treasury and Energy reportedly oppose the plan, which would also restrict Iranian oil sales. (*The New York Times*, 04/01/1995)

**April**

The Clinton Administration sharply criticizes Russia’s escalation of its offensive in southern Chechnya. (*The New York Times*, 04/12/1995)

Visiting Turkey on the 11th and 12th, Talbott backs a Turkish plan to encourage feuding Kurdish groups in northern Iraq to work together to better patrol the Turkish border. Turkish Kurd separatists have been using northern Iraq as a base from which to launch terrorist attacks on Turkey, prompting Turkish forces to enter northern Iraq in March. (*The New York Times*, 04/15/1995)

**May**

Talbott reportedly holds a secret meeting in Canada with Cuba’s National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon to work out changes in U.S. immigration policy. One proposal would reportedly allow Cuban refugees at Guantanamo Bay into the U.S., while future Cuban émigrés would be returned to Cuba. (*USA Today*, 05/08/1995)
Talbott travels with Clinton to attend the Moscow summit and Russia’s V-E Day celebrations. Talbott had encouraged Clinton to attend the celebrations during a January meeting in the Oval Office. Talbott and Mamedov had held a series of meetings prior to the summit to ensure that a replay of the Budapest summit would be avoided. At the summit, Yeltsin agrees to “begin NATO-Russia dialogue, join the Partnership for Peace and restrict nuclear cooperation with Iran.” (Talbott, p. 425)

Clinton reportedly shifts the Administration’s Bosnia policy late in the month by announcing that he is willing to consider placing U.S. ground forces in Bosnia to help reposition European peacekeepers. Clinton pulls back U.S. policy later in the week by restricting the use of U.S. ground troops to emergency rescues of the UN peacekeepers taken hostage. (*The Washington Post*, 06/07/1995)

**June**

Gore reportedly signs a secret agreement with Chernomyrdin in Moscow on the 30th calling for an end to Russian sales of conventional weapons to Iran by the end of 1999. In exchange, the U.S. pledges not to seek penalties against Russia under a 1992 law that requires sanctions against countries that sell advanced weapons to state sponsors of terrorism such as Iran. (*The New York Times*, 10/13/2000)

**August**

Talbott attends a series of meetings on Bosnia. Clinton decides to send Holbrooke to the Balkans to negotiate what would become a seven-point framework for peace. (Holbrooke, pp. 73-74)

Talbott travels to Haiti to encourage Aristide to compromise with the opposition parties threatening to boycott the second round of Haitian elections. The first round in June had been marred by poor organization and reports of ballot-tampering. Aristide reaches an agreement with the opposition parties by the end of the month. (*The New York Times*, 08/30/1995)

NATO launches airstrikes against the Bosnian Serbs on the 30th after Bosnian Serb forces launch a deadly attack in a Sarajevo marketplace. The airstrikes are suspended two days later to give negotiations a chance to lift the siege of Sarajevo. Talbott serves as Acting Secretary of State during this time. (Talbott, pp. 169-174)

**September**

NATO decides on the 5th to resume airstrikes after a strong lobbying effort by Talbott and other senior U.S. officials. (*The Washington Post*, 09/06/1995)
Talbott travels to Russia on the 14th to discuss the situation in Bosnia. Yeltsin has been very critical of the NATO airstrikes in Bosnia, particularly since their resumption earlier in the month. Talbott meets with Kozyrev to discuss the participation of Russian troops in an international force in Bosnia should a peace agreement be reached. Russia is calling for UN – not NATO – control of the forces, which is unacceptable to NATO. Kozyrev suggests that Perry and Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev negotiate the highly contentious issue. (Talbott, pp. 173-174; Christopher, In the Stream of History, p. 455)

NATO agrees to suspend the airstrikes in Bosnia when Bosnian Serbs pledge to withdraw heavy artillery from a weapons-exclusion zone around Sarajevo and to allow restoration of a corridor for humanitarian aid into the city. (The Washington Post, 09/16/1995, 11/16/1995; Los Angeles Times, 09/16/1995)

October  

Talbott negotiates with Moscow to re-open the gas lines to Sarajevo, clearing the way for a cease-fire in Bosnia.

Talbott travels with Perry to Geneva to negotiate Russia’s participation in a NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia with Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev. (Talbott, pp. 173-176; Christopher, In the Stream of History, p. 455)

After a brief return to Washington, D.C., Talbott travels to Moscow where Holbrooke is working with the Contact Group to negotiate the terms of a Bosnia peace conference to be held at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. (Talbott, pp. 176-177)

Talbott attends the Clinton-Yeltsin summit at Hyde Park in New York. Clinton convinces Yeltsin to agree that, at a minimum, Russian forces could participate in a support role in Bosnia but would remain separate from the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR). Clinton and Yeltsin also agree on revisions to the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty. (Talbott, pp. 179-184; Christopher, In the Stream of History, p. 455; The Washington Post, 10/26/1995)

Perry and Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev build on Clinton and Yeltsin’s Hyde Park agreement to allow for Russian combat forces to participate in IFOR. Under the arrangement, the Russian forces would be placed under a Russian general, who would serve as a deputy to General George Joulwan in his capacity as chief of American forces in Europe (as opposed to his NATO capacity as Supreme Allied Commander). The arrangement thus preserves NATO’s chain of command without officially placing Russian forces under NATO command. (Talbott, pp. 175-176, 185-186)
November
The Dayton Peace Conference begins on the 1st.

Holbrooke asks Talbott to drop in on the Dayton peace talks. It is hoped that Talbott’s visit will increase pressure on the Serbs by showing that the U.S. and Russia are working together at Dayton. (Talbott, p. 187)

The presidents of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia sign the Dayton peace accords on the 21st at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

1996

February
Meeting with Talbott, Pakistani officials deny reports that China recently sold nuclear weapons technology to Pakistan. (The Washington Post, 02/10/1996)

April
Yeltsin requests that Talbott, rather than Christopher, come to Moscow to help prepare for the upcoming G-8 summit in Moscow. (Talbott, pp. 196-199)

Talbott informs Congress in an April 12th letter that the Clinton Administration has approved a major arms sale to Pakistan despite recent reports of a nuclear weapons technology transfer from China. Talbott argues that the arms sale “provides the best opportunity to engage Islamabad in our [nuclear] nonproliferation strategy and to improve cooperation with Pakistan on such vital issues as counterterrorism and counternarcotics.” (The Washington Post, 04/17/1996)


May
Testifying before Congress on the 23rd, Talbott argues that the Clinton Administration did not have to inform Congress about its April 1994 signal to Croatia tacitly accepting Iranian arms shipments to Bosnia because the message was merely a diplomatic exchange in support of an existing U.S. policy. The CIA station chief in Croatia testifies that he had sent numerous reports to Langley outlining his suspicions that the U.S. ambassador to Croatia was involved in a rogue operation to illegally smuggle Iranian weapons to Bosnian Muslims. The State Department charges that the station chief misunderstood the diplomatic instructions and objects to the CIA’s efforts to spy on State Department officials in

**June**

At a meeting of the OAS in Panama, Talbott signs a treaty on the 2nd outlawing business corruption and the bribery of public officials to obtain contracts. (*The Washington Post*, 06/04/1996)

Talbott says that the U.S. will not support Russia’s bid for help from international financial institutions if the Russian presidential elections result in the abandonment of economic reform. Yeltsin goes on to defeat Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist challenger, in the second round in July. (*The Washington Post*, 07/05/1996)

**July**

Talbott announces on the 11th that Gore will head a team to Moscow to warn Russia that it risks losing U.S. investment unless it enacts a new tax code and energy laws. (*Journal of Commerce*, 07/12/1996)

Talbott criticizes a recent Russian offensive in Chechnya that causes civilian casualties. (*Courier Mail*, 07/13/1996)

Talbott and Mamedov begin to hold a series of discussions on NATO-Russian cooperation. One of the major issues is the eligibility of former Soviet republics to join NATO. (Talbott, 218-220)

**October**

Russia cancels a ceremony in Geneva to sign an agreement on lower-speed regional missile defense on the 31st. (*The Washington Post*, 10/31/1996)

**November**

Talbott meets with the Russian ambassador to protest Moscow’s recruitment of Harold Nicholson, the highest-ranking CIA officer ever arrested as a Russian “mole.” (*The New York Times*, 11/20/1996)

**December**

Talbott warns Serbian officials in London on the 4th that the U.S. will renew sanctions if the government cracks down on demonstrators protesting the annulment of the November 17th local elections. Talbott also demands that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic negotiate with leaders of opposition parties who had won the annulled elections. (*The New York Times*, 12/25/1996)

Clinton nominates Albright to succeed Christopher as Secretary of State on the 5th. Clinton also nominates former Republican Senator William Cohen as Defense Secretary, Berger as National Security Adviser, and Lake as Director of Central Intelligence. (*The New York Times*, 12/07/1996)

Talbott strongly criticizes Milosevic for organizing and inciting protesters
to battle anti-government protesters in the streets of Belgrade, leading to heightened violence. (The New York Times, 12/25/1996)

1997

January Talbott travels to France and Germany to discuss NATO enlargement. Talbott is later charged with the task of drafting the formal language covering NATO-Russian cooperation. (Talbott, pp. 228-229)

February State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns says that Talbott intends to stay in his position “well beyond this summer and well into the future,” ending speculation that Talbott is planning to leave the State Department. (USA Today, 02/12/1997)

During a meeting in the Cabinet Room, Clinton calls for serious consideration of bringing Russia into the G-8 as a full member to make it easier for Yeltsin to accept NATO enlargement. (Talbott, p. 234)

March Talbott attends the Clinton-Yeltsin Helsinki summit. Clinton rejects Yeltsin’s attempts to reach a secret agreement to keep the former Soviet republics out of NATO. After the summit, Talbott travels to Brussels to brief the NATO allies on Helsinki. (Talbott, pp. 238-244)

April Albright and Talbott travel to Moscow to negotiate with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov on NATO expansion. (Talbott, pp. 244-246)

May NATO and Russia sign the “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security” on the 27th, clearing the way for NATO to invite Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to begin the process to join NATO at its July summit in Madrid. Speaking at the Atlantic Council, Talbott notes that NATO’s pledge not to station nuclear arms and substantial troops in new member states could be changed if a new threat develops. (Talbott, pp. 246-247; The Toronto Star, 05/21/1997)

Talbott represents the U.S. in the eleven-nation “Minsk group” as a new round of peace talks are launched between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the 30th. (Journal of Commerce, 05/30/1997)

June Yeltsin agrees at the Denver G-7 summit to look into allegations of Russian weapons sales to Iran. Meanwhile pressure continues to build in Congress to impose sanctions on Russia. (Talbott, pp. 254-257; The Washington Post, 06/26/1997)

July The NATO leaders meet at Madrid to formally invite Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to apply for membership in the NATO alliance. (The Washington Post, 07/09/1997)
In a speech at Johns Hopkins University, Talbott argues that the U.S. should repeal its aid restrictions on Azerbaijan. While “intended to help Armenia overcome an Azerbaijani embargo... [the restrictions have] had the negative effect of limiting our leverage with Baku and complicating our ability to be as effective as we could otherwise be as an honest broker.” (The Washington Post, 07/27/1997)

**September**

The Administration debates whether to enforce the “secondary boycott” provisions of the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act and penalize French, Russian and Malaysian companies for signing an oil contract with Iran on the 28th. Talbott reportedly argues that the Administration should delay sanctions. (Journal of Commerce, 12/15/1997)

**November**

Talbott meets with Indonesian officials in Jakarta on the 6th where he discusses the economic crisis in Southeast Asia. (The Los Angeles Times, 11/07/1997)

In Australia, Talbott encourages Canberra to support an international agreement reducing greenhouse emissions at a December environmental conference in Kyoto. (Courier Mail, 11/08/1997)

**1998**

**March**

Talbott travels to Albania, Slovenia and Macedonia to encourage restraint in an effort to prevent an escalation of the Kosovo crisis. (The New York Times, 03/17/1998)

**May**

Talbott, Berger, and Leon Fuerth, Gore’s foreign policy adviser, travel to Moscow on the 7th to discuss Russia’s continued arms sales to Iran despite Chernomyrdin’s January “catchall” regulations. (Talbott, pp. 266-268)

India conducts nuclear testing on the 11th. The Clinton Administration imposes sanctions on India and sends Talbott and General Anthony Zinni to Islamabad on the 15th to urge Pakistan not to respond in kind. After the meeting, Talbott travels to England to brief Clinton, who is attending a G-8 meeting. Talbott reports that the U.S. has only limited leverage in influencing Pakistan’s decision. The G-8 leaders condemn India’s actions. Pakistan later conducts its first nuclear tests on the 28th. The U.S. imposes sanctions on Pakistan. (The New York Times, 05/16/1998; The Washington Post, 05/18/1998)

**June**

Talbott defends Clinton’s decision to visit China later in the month following revelations that Chinese military officials tried to make illegal campaign contributions to the Democratic Party and may have illegally obtained missile technology from an American company. Talbott argues
that China is needed to help maintain stability in Indonesia, India and Pakistan, and on the Korean peninsula. *(St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 06/01/1998)*

Talbott meets with General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander of Europe, to discuss the situation in the Serbian province of Kosovo. Milosevic has recently stepped up attacks on the ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo in a reported effort to eradicate the radical Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Talbott and Clark agree that diplomatic negotiations backed by military force are needed to contain Milosevic’s aggression in the region. *(General Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, New York: Public Affairs, 2001, pp. 117-118)*

Talbott begins traveling between India, Pakistan and Washington, D.C. to hold a series of meetings with Indian and Pakistani officials on the current nuclear crisis. *(The New York Times, 07/21/1998; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 06/13/1998)*

Talbott seeks to build bipartisan support for legislation that would give the Administration greater flexibility in imposing economic sanctions on India and Pakistan under a 1994 anti-missile proliferation law. *(Journal of Commerce, 06/25/1998)*

**July**

The Clinton Administration argues that it needs greater flexibility from Congress in the enforcement of punitive sanctions against India and Pakistan for conducting nuclear testing. *(Los Angeles Times, 07/20/1998)*

**August**

The Asian financial crisis triggers an economic collapse in Russia. Yeltsin devalues the ruble, defaults on part of Russia’s debt, and freezes transactions between Russian and foreign banks on the 17th. Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko and other leading reformers in his government resign within a few days, as Russia is beset by runaway inflation. Primakov succeeds Kiriyenko as prime minister. *(Talbott, pp. 274-276; The Los Angeles Times, 12/16/1998)*

After meeting with Yeltsin, Talbott recommends that Clinton move forward with a proposed September summit. It had been rumored in the press that Yeltsin was deathly ill. *(Talbott, pp. 281-282)*

**September**

Talbott attends the Clinton-Yeltsin Moscow Summit. *(Talbott, pp. 283-288)*

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov warns Talbott in Washington, D.C. that Russia would “not countenance” airstrikes against Milosevic. Yeltsin later directly warns Clinton against airstrikes. *(Talbott, 300)*
October
Holbrooke secures an agreement from Milosevic to withdraw the bulk of his forces from Kosovo and allow unarmed international inspectors under the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to monitor the agreement. The agreement does not hold. (*The New York Times*, 11/29/1998)

November
Following six months of intensive negotiations with Talbott, India and Pakistan agree to a series of nuclear control agreements that include voluntary moratoriums on further tests and adherence to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by September, 1999. India and Pakistan also agree to discuss a fissionable material ban, to resume negotiations on Kashmir, and to hold their first bilateral discussions on the nuclear issue. Clinton lifts most economic sanctions on India and Pakistan. (*The Washington Post*, 11/07/1998)

The U.S. clears the way for Pakistan to gain access to IMF funds to help Pakistan cope with the economic crisis. India complains that Pakistan is unevenly benefitting from the partial lifting of sanctions, but Talbott argues it does not mean the U.S. is politically tilting towards Pakistan. (*Journal of Commerce*, 11/16/1998)

In a speech at Stanford, Talbott criticizes Primakov’s economic recovery plan for retreating from free-market reform and pursuing unsound monetary policy, which Talbott warns could lead to “political drift.” (*The Washington Post*, 11/07/1998)

Talbott’s negotiations with Jaswant Singh, a senior Indian defense and foreign affairs advisor, are complicated when the ruling Hindu nationalist party fares poorly in state elections, making it more difficult for the government to sign the nuclear test ban treaty. (*The New York Times*, 12/05/1998)

December
Talbott meets with Primakov in Moscow, where Talbott reportedly warns against Russian cooperation with Iran in missile technology. Talbott also expresses optimism about the prospects for START II ratification. (*The Washington Post*, 12/12/1998)


1999

January
Serbian atrocities against ethnic Albanians in the Kosovo town of Racak are discovered on the 16th, triggering intensified efforts within the Clinton
Administration to resolve the crisis. (Talbott, p. 303; The New York Times, 02/21/1999)

The U.S. and Russia issue a joint statement on Kosovo on the 26th. (The New York Times, 01/27/1999)

**February**

India shows positive movement in negotiations with Talbott, leading the U.S. to consider the further removal of sanctions. India reportedly offers to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty if the U.S. removes all sanctions imposed last May. The Clinton Administration subsequently lifts its objection to India’s application for a World Bank loan. Talbott also has productive talks with Pakistan. (The Washington Post, 02/18/1999)

Peace talks on Kosovo begin at Rambouillet on the 6th. The talks fail to produce an agreement despite the looming threat of NATO airstrikes. Talbott is in Moscow during these talks. (Talbott, p. 303)

**March**

NATO initiates airstrikes against Yugoslavia on the 24th. Yeltsin expels two NATO representatives from Moscow and the Russian Duma suspends work on a nuclear disarmament treaty to protest NATO airstrikes. (Talbott, pp. 305-307)

**April**

Talbott travels to the Balkans to discuss the growing refugee crisis in Albania.

NATO announces it will send up to 8,000 troops to Albania to provide assistance. Talbott travels to Greece to help secure a unified NATO front despite widespread public opposition to NATO airstrikes. Talbott also travels to Brussels to meet with Russian and European officials. (Clark, p. 239; The Washington Post, 04/04/1999; The New York Times, 04/07/1999)

Talbott meets with Clark on the 8th and discusses the military situation in the Balkans. Talbott strongly warns against moving ground forces towards Belgrade in northern Serbia because it could further destabilize the region, placing Ukraine and Hungary in particularly difficult situations. (Clark, p. 282)

Appearing on Face the Nation, Talbott says that Milosevic is “going to be held responsible” for his war crimes. He also announces that the Pentagon had prepared plans last fall to deploy ground troops in Kosovo as part of a proposed NATO peacekeeping force that could be “taken down off the shelf and updated” if Clinton decides it is necessary. (The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, 04/12/1999)

Yeltsin calls Clinton on the 25th to suggest that they work closely together
to end the conflict in Kosovo after NATO continues to stand firm at its Washington summit. NATO agrees, as Clinton sends Talbott to Moscow at the end of the month. (Clark, p. 287; The New York Times, 04/27/1999)

**May**

Gore meets with former Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, Yeltsin’s special envoy for Kosovo, in Washington, D.C. on the 3rd. Chernomyrdin suggests that they find a third, non-NATO party to “accept the sword of surrender from Milosevic.” Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari is later chosen and agrees to serve this function. (Talbott, pp. 313-314)

The G-8 issues a set of principles on Kosovo on the 6th calling for a withdrawal of Serb forces from the region and the introduction of an international force to oversee the safe return of refugees. The principles do not specify the composition of the international force nor whether all Serb forces are to be withdrawn. (The New York Times, 05/29/1999)

Milosevic agrees on the 10th to negotiate on the basis of the G-8 principles.

Talbott, Chernomyrdin, and Ahtisaari meet in Helsinki, Moscow, and Bonn to negotiate the terms of a peace plan to be presented to Milosevic. Ahtisaari backs the U.S. demand that Milosevic withdraw all of his forces from Kosovo. (Talbott, pp. 313-328; Ivo Daalder and Michael O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000, pp. 168-173; Clark, p. 326)

**June**

Talbott, Chernomyrdin and Ahtisaari reach an agreement in Bonn on the terms of a Kosovo peace plan to present to Milosevic. The plan calls for a complete withdrawal of all Serb forces from Kosovo and “an international security presence with substantial NATO participation [to be] deployed under unified command and control.” (Clark, p. 345) Russia’s role in the international force is left unclear. Chernomyrdin and Ahtisaari travel to Belgrade on the 2nd. Milosevic and the Yugoslav parliament accept the terms the next day. (Talbott, pp. 321-331; Clark, pp. 345-355)

Talbott holds a series of meetings with Yeltsin and senior Russian officials in Moscow to negotiate the inclusion of Russian troops within the Kosovo Force (KFOR). Russia opposes placing its troops under NATO command and calls on NATO to grant Russia control over its own sector. The already difficult negotiations are complicated when 200 Russian troops unexpectedly move into Kosovo, ahead of NATO forces, to seize control of the Pristina airport on the 11th and 12th. Negotiations are further complicated when Russia asks Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine for permission to use their airspace to reinforce Russian troops in Pristina. (Talbott, pp. 332-349; Clark, pp. 375-379; The Washington Post, 06/11/1999)
Yeltsin calls Clinton and assures him that Russian forces will participate in KFOR along the lines of the Bosnia model. The details of Russia’s participation are negotiated by Cohen and Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev in Helsinki. (Talbott, pp. 347-349)

Talbott attends the G-8 summit in Cologne with Clinton. (Talbott, pp. 348-353)

**August** Following recent news reports of an alleged $10 billion Russian money-laundering operation through the Bank of New York, Talbott says, “Calm down, world.... We have been aware from the beginning that crime and corruption are a huge problem in Russia and a huge obstacle to Russian reform,” but that “the problem will only get worse if you isolate Russia.” (The Washington Post, 09/01/1999)

**September** Talbott travels to Moscow to participate in two days of talks on nuclear arms reduction and possible amendments to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. (The Washington Post, 09/10/1999)

**October** Talbott urges Russia to refrain from the use of “indiscriminate force” as Russia launches air and ground attacks to fight rebel and terrorist activities in Chechnya. (The Washington Post, 10/02/1999)

Talbott meets with Russian officials in Helsinki to discuss the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty. The U.S. is reportedly proposing to help Russia complete a large missile-tracking radar installation if Moscow agrees to renegotiate the ABM treaty to enable the U.S. to build a national missile defense system. (The New York Times, 10/17/1999)

Talbott travels to Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkey to discuss the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. Later that day, extremist Armenian nationalists assassinate Armenian Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian, along with the speaker of the Armenian parliament and several other senior officials. (The Washington Post, 10/28/1999)

**November** Talbott travels to NATO headquarters in Brussels to defend the Administration’s plans to deploy a national missile defense system. (The New York Times, 11/29/1999)

**December** Talbott welcomes an EU plan during a NATO meeting in Brussels to build a rapid reaction military force, but warns that it must not evolve in a way that undermines NATO or neglects the security interests of those allies not taking part in the force. (The Washington Post, 12/16/1999)

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin calls for ratification of the START
II nuclear arms treaty as Talbott arrives in Moscow to discuss arms control and other issues. The treaty calls for the reduction of nuclear stockpiles but has languished in the Russian parliament since 1993. However, debate over revisions of the ABM treaty continues to divide the U.S. and Russia. The continued Russian offensive in Chechnya also draws criticism from Talbott. *(The New York Times, 12/22/1999)*

Talbott meets with Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh in Washington, D.C. to discuss nuclear and terrorism issues. *(The Washington Post, 12/24/1999)*

### 2000

**February**

Meeting with senior officials in Tokyo on the 16th, Talbott calls on the Japanese government to reconsider a proposal to reduce its financial support for American troops in Japan. *(The New York Times, 02/17/2000)*

Talbott travels to Beijing to urge China to use “restraint, caution and prudence” in its response to next month’s Taiwanese presidential election. Shortly after the U.S. delegation leaves, Beijing releases a confrontational document threatening military force against Taiwan. *(The Washington Post, 02/19/2000, 02/27/2000)*

**April**

Talbott meets with Berger and Cohen at the White House. The group decides to sell Taiwan upgraded versions of three missiles and a long-range radar system, but not four hi-tech destroyers. *(The New York Times, 04/18/2000)*

**May**

Talbott attends a conference on U.S.-African relations in South Africa. *(Financial Times, 05/10/2000)*

**June**

Talbott travels with Clinton to attend the Moscow summit. Clinton and Russian President Vladimir Putin both acknowledge “a dangerous and growing threat” of nuclear attack from emerging powers such as North Korea but continue to disagree over whether revising the ABM treaty is the best means to deal with that threat. *(St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 6/06/2000)*

**September**

Talbott attends a Clinton-Putin summit in New York on the 6th. Speaking at the UN, Putin had called for an international conference to ban weapons in outer space earlier that morning. The previous week Clinton had postponed a decision on national missile defense until the next Administration to give the U.S. and Russia more time to reach a common position. Talbott says that Clinton also continued to push Putin to do more to block the transfer of Russian ballistic missile and nuclear technology to Iran. The U.S. also continued to link progress on START III to holding
talks on strategic defense. (The Washington Post, 09/07/2000)

A report by leading House Republicans criticizes the Administration’s Russia policy, renewing charges that Gore had too quickly dismissed intelligence reports of corruption by Russian officials. (The Washington Post, 09/20/2000)

2001

January  Talbott steps down as Deputy Secretary of State.

July     Talbott is named Director of the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization.

2002

July     Talbott is named President of the Brookings Institution.
STROBE TALBOTT SUGGESTED TOPICS
Prepared by Rob Martin
Miller Center, University of Virginia, 03/16/2002

Joining the Administration
• How did you come to leave TIME and join the Clinton Administration? How did your prior experience help to prepare you for your work in the Clinton Administration? Did you consider other positions in the Administration before accepting the Ambassador-at-Large post?

Ambassador-at-Large and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State on the New Independent States
• Discuss your selection as Ambassador-at-Large and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State on the New Independent States (NIS). Comment on the creation of this new position.
• Discuss your role and responsibilities within the State Department. How was the State Department organized under Warren Christopher? Describe your relationship with Christopher.
• How was foreign policy towards the NIS made in the State Department? Who were the other key players in setting NIS policy for the Administration? What role did interagency groups play in this process? Discuss the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission.

Deputy Secretary of State
• How did you come to serve as Deputy Secretary of State? Describe your confirmation process. Discuss your responsibilities as Deputy Secretary. Did your role in this position differ from that of your predecessor, Clifton Wharton? How were responsibilities divided between Christopher and yourself? In which policy areas did you take the lead?
• How was foreign policy set in the Clinton Administration? Describe the role that the State Department played in the interagency process. Discuss your work in the Deputies Committee. Describe your working relationship with the President’s national security advisers.
• How did the Clinton Administration address criticisms of its early foreign policy record? How did changes in Clinton’s foreign policy team in the second term affect the Administration’s foreign policy-making? How did the arrival of Madeleine Albright affect your work as Deputy Secretary?

Key Foreign Policy Issues in the Clinton Administration
Possible topics might include:
• The U.S. role in the international community in the post-cold war era; U.S. responsibilities as a world leader; ethnic conflict and U.S. intervention strategy.
• The NIS and reform; Russian-Ukrainian relations; ethnic conflicts in the NIS; Russian weapons and nuclear reactor sales to Iran; the START and ABM treaties.
• NATO expansion; Russia and the Partnership for Peace program.
• Bosnia-Herzegovina; Russian participation in the NATO implementation force.
• India-Pakistan and nuclear testing.
• The Haitian crisis; U.S. work to help rebuild Haiti after the crisis.
• China and Taiwan; China, human rights and MFN status.
• Kosovo; negotiating Russian participation in the Kosovo Force.

**Clinton Presidency in Retrospect**

• Evaluate President Clinton as a public leader, a legislative leader, and a world leader.
• How would you characterize Clinton’s decision-making style? How did Clinton respond to adversity and setbacks?
• What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Clinton foreign policy team?
• What were the most important foreign policy accomplishments of the Clinton Administration?
• What were the most important historical forces giving shape to the world in which Clinton governed?
• How did foreign diplomats and heads of state view Clinton? Were there any common misconceptions?
• What features of the Clinton Administration were missed or misunderstood by the press? How should the Clinton presidency be viewed by history?
TIMELINES

• Strobe Talbott Timeline, prepared by Rob Martin, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 12/01/2002.


• Clinton Administration Timeline, prepared by Robbie Robinson, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 05/30/2002.

SELECTED WRITINGS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY STROBE TALBOTT


- Strobe Talbott, "Aims Transfer to Bosnia," Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S. Senate, 05/23/1996.


JOINING THE STATE DEPARTMENT

• Norman Kempster, "Friend of Bill to Become President's Friend to Russia," Los Angeles Times, 02/16/1993.


U.S. POLICY TOWARDS RUSSIA AND THE NIS


NATO EXPANSION


• Strobe Talbott, "Russia Has Nothing to Fear," The New York Times, 02/18/1997.
INDIA-PAKISTAN


- Strobe Talbott, "Dealing with the Bomb in South Asia," Foreign Affairs (March 1999).

- Shamshad Ahmad, "Response: the Nuclear Subcontinent," Foreign Affairs (July-August 1999).
INTERVENTION AND PEACEKEEPING IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

**General Commentary**


**Haiti**


**Bosnia**


- Strobe Talbott, "Arms Transfer to Bosnia," Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S. Senate, 05/23/1996.

**Kosovo**


