William J. Clinton
Presidential History Project

Briefing Materials

Martti Ahtisaari

December 10, 2019

Prepared by Rob Martin, Senior Researcher
August 2019

Presidential Oral History Program

MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED OR CIRCULATED
### Martti Ahtisaari News Timeline

*Prepared by Rob Martin  
*Miller Center, University of Virginia, 08/30/2019*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965-1973</td>
<td>Martti Ahtisaari serves in Finland’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs in multiple positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-1976</td>
<td>Ahtisaari serves as a member of the senate of the UN Institute for Namibia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-1981</td>
<td>Ahtisaari serves as UN commissioner for Namibia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-1988</td>
<td>Ahtisaari serves as special representative of the secretary general for Namibia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-1988</td>
<td>Ahtisaari serves as undersecretary of state in charge of international development co-operation in Finland’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1991</td>
<td>Ahtisaari serves as undersecretary-general of the UN for administration and management. In 1989-1990 he leads the UN operation (UNTAG) in Namibia. In March 1991, Ahtisaari inspects the humanitarian conditions on the ground in Iraq as the secretary general’s special envoy. (<em>McNair Papers</em>, 08/01/1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1993</td>
<td>Ahtisaari serves as state secretary in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>March While working to build support for the UN-sponsored Vance-Owen peace plan to divide power and territory in Bosnia, Ahtisaari remarks, “This is like arranging a shotgun marriage, except that you need two shotguns.” He adds, “A Russian shotgun gives us a better chance.” (<em>The Washington Post</em>, 03/02/1993)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1994

January NATO announces that it intends to expand, though President Bill Clinton adds that the U.S. is not yet willing to support full membership of Eastern European countries into NATO. It will instead support partial membership through the Partnership for Peace program. Russian President Boris Yeltsin has been strongly opposing NATO expansion into Eastern Europe, which would reportedly empower Russian hardliners. (Strobe Talbott, The Russia Hand, New York: Random House, 2002, p. 218; The New York Times, 01/07/1994)

February Ahtisaari is elected president of the Republic of Finland as a member of the Social Democratic Party on the 6th. He takes office on March 1st. Ahtisaari had been a strong supporter of joining the EU, as had his opponent, Elisabeth Rehn. (Martti Ahtisaari, The United Nations at 70: Restoration and Renewal, New York: Rizzoli, p. 25; Reuters, 11/04/1994)

May Finland becomes a member of the Partnership for Peace program on the 9th. Russia becomes a member the following month. (Merikallio and Ruokanen, p. 201)

Summer Clinton appoints Dr. Derek Shearer as U.S. ambassador to Finland. (Merikallio and Ruokanen, p. 188)


November Ahtisaari meets with Clinton in the Oval Office on the 8th. During the meeting, Clinton thanks Ahtisaari for his work helping to maintain peaceful relations between Estonia and Russia as the Baltic states pursue independence. Ahtisaari assures Clinton that Finland’s parliament would ratify the referendum to join the EU. Discussing the U.S. mid-term election taking place that day, Clinton tells Ahtisaari, in the words of Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, that the Democrats are “getting creamed.” The Democrats lose the majority in the “Republican Revolution.” Ahtisaari meets with other top U.S. officials to discuss issues such as NATO policy in Europe. Ahtisaari discusses with Talbott the important role NATO forces must play in the Balkans, stating, “Without NATO the Finns aren’t coming.” (Merikallio and Ruokanen, p. 189; Russell Riley, Inside the Clinton White House: An Oral History, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 285; Agence France-Press, 11/06/1994)

December Ahtisaari attends the European summit in Essen, in which EU and NATO expansion are discussed. (Thomas Banchoff, The German Problem Transformed, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2010, p. 135)
Clinton and Yeltsin attend the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe summit in Budapest on the 5th. During the summit, Yeltsin strongly lashes out against NATO expansion into former Warsaw Pact countries. According to Talbott, Clinton had promised Yeltsin that he would hold off on NATO expansion until after Yeltsin’s reelection bid in 1996. However, the NATO foreign ministers had announced just a few days before at the CSCE summit that it would complete a study in 1995 on how NATO would expand. (Talbott, p. 217; The Washington Post, 12/06/1994)

1995

January  Finland formally accedes to the EU on January 1st, 1995, along with Austria and Sweden. (Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 186-187)

October  Ahtisaari meets with Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev on the 11th to discuss a range of issues, including “blueprints for building an integrated Europe.” Kozyrev reportedly suggests that Finland and Russia are in general agreement on security arrangements in Europe and that the debate on NATO expansion is hampering the implementation of existing accords. (BBC, 10/13/1995)

November  The Bosnia peace deal is brokered in Dayton on the 21st. (The Washington Post, 11/22/1995)

December  Ahtisaari is asked that Finland participate in the NATO-led Implementation Force in Bosnia. Finland agrees to send peacekeepers after much debate within parliament. (Merikallio and Ruokanen, p. 196)

1996

February  U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher meets with Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov in Helsinki to discuss NATO expansion. Russia has threatened to ally with China should NATO expand eastward. Primakov also meets with Ahtisaari and reportedly complains about the Partnership for Peace program, of which both Russia and Finland are members. Ahtisaari and Primakov reportedly agree that Russia must not become isolated from Europe and needs to be a part of Europe’s newly-emerging security structure. (Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 200-201)

June  Ahtisaari gives a speech on the 13th at Finlandia Hall on the NATO question, in which he reportedly raises questions about whether Finland should join NATO. He argues, “We would not enhance our security with this alliance. Aligning would not contribute to the stability of Northern Europe and the Baltic region.” (Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 201-202)
July
Yeltsin defeats the Communist Party candidate Gennady Zyuganov to win reelection in the second round of the Russian presidential election on the 3rd with 54% of the vote.

First Lady Hillary Clinton meets with Ahtisaari in Finland on the 9th. She had just completed a tour of Eastern and Central Europe that included stops in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. (*Agence France-Presse*, 07/09/1996)

September
The NATO foreign ministers announce that the new candidates for membership in NATO will be identified at the NATO conference in Madrid in July 1997. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are reportedly among the top candidates. (Talbott, p. 218)

Late 1996
Clinton expresses support for NATO expansion during a speech given in a heavily Polish suburb of Detroit. (*Foreign Affairs*, 03/12/2019)

1997
February
Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin meets with Vice President Al Gore in Washington as part of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission on the 7th to discuss U.S.-Russian economic cooperation. Clinton is set to hold a summit meeting with Yeltsin to discuss a range of issues, including NATO expansion, in the next month. In an attempt to alleviate Russian concerns, Clinton tells Chernomyrdin that, “No one has any intention of providing an increased threat to the security of Russia.” However, it is unclear if Clinton’s reassurances are effective, as Chernomyrdin later remarks, “Perhaps we are talking a different language.” (*The Associated Press*, 02/07/1995) Clinton and Yeltsin are also expected to discuss arms control issues, including the status of the four-year old START II talks. Gore suggests to Chernomyrdin that Yeltsin and Clinton could discuss guidelines for a START III treaty to help re-start the stalled START II talks. At Ahtisaari’s invitation, Clinton agrees to shift the upcoming U.S.-Russian summit meeting from the U.S. to Finland. Yeltsin has recently undergone open-heart surgery. (Bill Clinton, *My Life*, New York: Knopf, 2004, p. 750; Talbott, pp. 232-233; *Associated Press*, 02/07/1995; *The New York Times*, 02/08/1997)

March
Ahtisaari hosts Clinton and Yeltsin at the Helsinki Summit on the 21st and 22nd to discuss a number of issues, including NATO expansion. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had announced earlier in the week that NATO expansion will continue this summer as scheduled regardless of Russia’s objections. Yeltsin reportedly wants assurances that NATO will not expand into former Soviet republics and that no military weapons will be moved into new NATO members. He also calls for a legally binding document to ensure that NATO consider Russia’s concerns when taking future actions. Clinton hoped to offer Russia membership in the G7 and World Trade Organization to help Yeltsin “live with NATO expansion.” (Clinton, p. 750) At the summit, Clinton agrees not to station troops or missiles in the new NATO member countries “prematurely” and offers
to support Russian membership in the G7 and international organizations, such as
the WTO, in exchange for Yeltsin’s acceptance of NATO expansion and a
NATO-Russian partnership. (Clinton, p. 750) Clinton and Yeltsin agree to
additional cuts under START II, which would make it easier for Russia to afford a
nuclear arsenal roughly the size of the U.S.’s. The Helsinki agreement also leaves
the door open for further cuts under START III. Russia agrees to acknowledge
that the U.S.’s short-range missile defense system is permissible under the 1972
ABM Treaty. While Yeltsin accepts the Helsinki agreement, he later tells the
press that he still thinks that NATO expansion is “a mistake, and a serious one at
that,” but he now hopes to “minimize the negative consequences of NATO
expansion for Russia.” (The Washington Post, 03/22/1997; Clinton, pp. 750-752;
255-256; Talbott, pp. 237-246; Texas National Security Review, August, 2018;
Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 202-205; U.S. Newsire, 03/22/1997; The New York
Times, 03/21/2007, 03/22/1997; Chicago Sun-Times, 03/23/1997; The Moscow
Times, 03/25/1997)

Spring
Following up on the Helsinki summit, U.S. and Russian officials negotiate the
NATO-Russia Founding Act to create the NATO-Russian Permanent Joint
Council as a “consultative mechanism” to give Russia a role in European security.
The document is signed at the NATO summit in Paris on May 27th. (Talbott, pp.
245-246; Albright, pp. 256-257)

July
NATO formally invites Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to join the
Western military alliance, while putting off decisions on Romania and Slovenia
until 1999. The focus of attention in the expansion debate now turns to the
ratification process by NATO members. Though Yeltsin has recently agreed to
the establishment of a new special relationship between Russia and NATO, his
government still maintains that expanding the alliance is “a big mistake.” (The
Washington Post, 07/09/1997)

September
Ahtasaari backs the Clinton administration’s calls that NATO-led peacekeeping
forces should remain in Bosnia beyond the scheduled June 1998 withdrawal date.
(Japan Economic Newswire, 09/26/1997)

October
Fighting between Serbian and Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) forces begins to
escalate.

1998

Early
Talbott meets with Ahtisaari in Helsinki to discuss the transfer of Russian missile
technology to Iran. Talbott tells Ahtisaari that he is concerned that the U.S.
Congress is getting ready to pass sanctions on Russia if Russia doesn’t quickly
announce that it will close the loopholes in Russia’s non-proliferation laws.
Ahtisaari warns Talbott that sanctions would be “just about the stupidest thing
you could possibly do.” Talbott asks Ahtisaari if he would be willing to relay
Talbott’s warning to the Russians. Chernomyrdin announces new Russian “catchall” legislation to close all loopholes the next day. (Talbott, pp. 261-263)

**September**
The UN Security Council passes a resolution on the 23rd calling for a cease-fire in Kosovo. Yeltsin calls Ahtisaari to tell him that Russia would strongly oppose NATO military intervention in Kosovo. Ahtisaari has recently traveled to Macedonia to observe the situation in Kosovo and discussed his findings with Clinton. (Financial Times, 10/03/1998; BBC, 08/08/1998)

**October**
The U.S. secures an agreement from Serbian President Slobodan 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. However, the agreement does not hold. U.S. officials have increasingly come to believe 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: PublicAffairs, 2001, pp. 117-118; The New York Times, 11/29/1998)

**December**
NATO begins to deploy an “extraction force” (XFOR) in Macedonia to defend peacekeepers in Kosovo.

Clinton is impeached by the House on the 19th.

**1999**

**January**
The Clinton impeachment trial begins in the Senate on the 14th.

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**
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, p. 303)

The impeachment proceedings in the Senate fail and Clinton is acquitted on the 12th.

**March**
PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat meets with Ahtisaari in Finland to discuss his plans to declare an independent Palestinian state on May 4th. (Reuters, 03/15/1999)

NATO initiates airstrikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the 24th. The bombing campaign would last 78 days. Efforts to obtain a UN Security
Council resolution authorizing the use of force had reportedly been blocked by Russia and Clinton. 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)

Speaking before the newly elected Finnish parliament on the 31st, Ahtisaari condemns Milosevic’s “ruthless violence against the civilian population” of Kosovo. (Reuters, 03/31/1999)

April

Yeltsin warns on the 9th that NATO’s military actions against Serbia could provoke a world war. (CNN, 04/09/1999)

On the 14th, Yeltsin appoints former Prime Minister Chernomyrdin as Russia’s special envoy for Kosovo. (Talbott, p. 308)

Ahtisaari attends the NATO/Partnership for Peace summit in Washington, D.C., where Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are formally inducted into NATO. Talbott later writes that Ahtisaari was a strong supporter of the NATO position on Kosovo during the summit, demanding “Serb forces out, NATO in, refugees back.” Ahtisaari specifically argues against Russia’s position that the UN serve as a mediator between NATO and Milosevic. On the last day of the summit, Yeltsin proposes to Clinton to start a U.S.-Russian initiative to end the war in Kosovo. Clinton agrees but tells Yeltsin that he could not pause the bombing while Talbott and Chernomyrdin enter negotiations as Yeltsin requests. (Talbott, pp. 308-311)

Ahtisaari announces in Finland on the 27th that he would not run in the Social Democratic Party’s presidential primaries. (Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 209-211)

May

Chernomyrdin meets with Gore and top U.S. officials in Washington, D.C. on the 3rd, where they discuss the situation in Kosovo. On the 4th, Chernomyrdin proposes to Gore and Albright that they find a non-NATO third party envoy to join Chernomyrdin in discussions with Milosevic that would be acceptable to both Milosevic and NATO. Albright proposes Ahtisaari and Chernomyrdin agrees. As Sandy Berger later explains, “We wanted Ahtisaari saying, ‘Mr. Milosevic, the conditions are all Serb forces out, Kosovars returned, NATO-led force.’ We wanted Milosevic to turn to Chernomyrdin and Chernomyrdin to say, ‘I agree.’” (Riley, p. 224) Berger dubs Ahtisaari and Chernomyrdin as the “Hammer” and “Anvil.” (Clinton, pp. 858-859; Talbott, pp. 313-314; Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 213-216)

Talbott calls Ahtisaari on the 5th to discuss whether Ahtisaari would be willing to work with Talbott and Chernomyrdin as a neutral, third-party envoy to Kosovo. Ahtisaari had declined an offer from the Clinton foreign policy team the month before to serve full-time as one of two UN envoys on Kosovo, but agrees to
Talbott’s new proposition contingent on the EU’s naming Ahtisaari as its official representative. German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder soon after secures the EU’s approval for Ahtisaari to represent the EU in talks with Milosevic. (Albright, p. 417; Ahtisaari, The United Nations at 70, pp. 28-29; Merikallio and Ruokanen, p. 216)

Meeting in Germany on the 6th, Russia agrees to endorse a set of principles issued by the G8 calling for the withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo 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. Milosevic agrees on the 10th to negotiate on the basis of the G8 principles. (CNN, 05/06/1999; The New York Times, 05/29/1999)

NATO forces accidentally bomb the Chinese embassy in Belgrade on the 7th. (BBC, 05/08/1999)

On the 13th, Talbott, Chernomyrdin, and Ahtisaari meet in Helsinki in the first of four sessions 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 and that NATO lead the post-war Kosovo force. The second session is held a week later in Moscow. Speaking from the U.S., Clinton suggests that the U.S. is now willing to consider the use of ground troops in Kosovo. (Talbott, pp. 313-328; Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 217-219; 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)

The UN’s International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia complicates negotiations with Milosevic when it indicts Milosevic for crimes against humanity on the 24th. (Albright, p. 419; Talbott, p. 322; Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 219-220)

In the fourth and final negotiating session on the 1st, 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. (Riley, p. 225; Talbott, pp. 321-331; Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 221-222)

Chernomyrdin and Ahtisaari travel to Belgrade on the 2nd to present Milosevic with the terms of the Kosovo peace plan. Ahtisaari tells Milosevic, “This is the best offer you will get.” (Associated Press, 10/26/2000) Milosevic agrees and the Yugoslav parliament accepts the terms without condition the next day. Ahtisaari later says, “To be honest, I was flabbergasted. It all sounded a little too easy. I looked Milosevic in the eye and asked him what he had done. ‘Nothing,’ he replied.” (Merikallio and Ruokanen, p. 224) Ahtisaari later writes that he believes
that Russia had a secret agreement with Milosevic to help Serbia keep control of northern Kosovo. “Serbia, with the help of Russian troops, would be able to keep large parts of the region and populate them with solely with Serbs.” Ahtisaari argues, “This was a logical explanation for why Milosevic accepted” peace terms. (Associated Press, 10/26/2000) Ahtisaari further explains, “Many are of the opinion that Yeltsin was included in this plan, or at least approved of it. Instead, the Foreign Ministry and the rest of the Russian Government, with the possible exception of the Defence Ministry and the Interior Ministry, were not aware of it. Neither was Chernomyrdin part of it. This kind of plan would explain why Milosevic and the Yugoslav leadership eventually approved the peace offer that I brought to Belgrade. It would also explain why Milosevic and his generals gave the Russians time by prolonging the preparations of the MTA, even though it would mean a prolongation of the bombings and was also not in Yugoslav interests.” (The RUSI Journal, 2008; Riley, p. 225; Talbott, pp. 321-331; Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 222-225)

On the 3rd, Ahtisaari flies to Cologne to brief U.S. and EU officials on his meeting with Milosevic. (Talbott, pp. 327-328; Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 224-226)

On the 8th, the G8 reach agreement on the text of a UN Security Council resolution to place Kosovo under UN administration. The resolution, which leaves the future status of Kosovo to a later date, is adopted on the 10th. Meanwhile NATO airstrikes continue as NATO negotiators continue discussing the timetable for Serbia’s withdraw of military forces from Kosovo. (Albright, pp. 420-421; Ahtisaari, Kosovo Is Not the Problem – Is Serbia?” pp. 15-16; Ahtisaari, UN at 70, p. 29; The Washington Post, 06/09/1999)

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). The talks are complicated when the Duma removes Chernomyrdin as special envoy to Kosovo. Foreign Minister Ivanov and General Leonid Ivashov begin playing a central role on Kosovo. Russia opposes placing its troops under NATO command and calls on NATO to grant Russia control over its own sector. The negotiations are further 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 complicated again when Russia asks Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine for permission to use their airspace to reinforce Russian troops in Pristina. (Clinton, pp. 858-859; Talbott, pp. 332-349; Clark, pp. 375-379; Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 226-230; The Washington Post, 06/11/1999)

Ahtisaari invites Albright and Ivanov to Helsinki to discuss the new crisis in Kosovo. They are joined by U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen and Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergejev. The U.S. and Russian teams reach an agreement on the 18th. Unable to secure a Russian sector in Kosovo, Russia agrees
to participate in KFOR along the lines of the Bosnia model. (Talbott, pp. 347-349; Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 228-231; Albright, p. 424)

Clinton attends the G8 summit in Cologne, Germany from the 18th to 20th.

On the 20th, the Serbs complete their withdrawal from Kosovo and NATO’s bombing campaign formally ends. Under NATO pressure, the KLA agrees to disarm the next day. (Merikallio and Ruokanen, p. 231)

**July**

Finland begins to hold the rotating six-month presidency of the EU. *(Associated Press, 12/17/1999)*

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that over 765,000 refugees have returned to Kosovo. (Clinton, p. 860)

While visiting Helsinki, Arafat asks Ahtisaari if he would be willing to play a more active role in the Middle East peace process. Discussing the role Ahtisaari played in the Kosovo conflict, Arafat announces, “We urge [Mr. Ahtisaari] to play a similar role in the peace process in the Middle East region, because he enjoys prestige, respect and appreciation of all parties.” *(The Globe and Mail, 07/16/1999)* Ahtisaari agrees to send Finland’s foreign minister to meet with Palestinian and Israeli representatives in August. Arafat’s request comes just hours before Clinton is set to meet with Israel’s new prime minister, Ehud Barak. *(Agence France-Press, 07/15/1999)*

Ahtisaari chairs the Stability Pact conference on the Balkans in Sarajevo on the 30th. In signing the pact, the leaders of 40 countries agree to support economic and political reforms in the Balkans. Ahtisaari argues that Europe’s shared commitment to the principles of stability, democratic accountability, and market economics could help usher in a new era of “a Europe at long last undivided, prosperous and free.” *(Agence France-Press, 07/30/1999)* Clinton, who attends the conference, has argued that Serbia, which was not invited to attend the conference, should not be eligible for aid as long as Milosevic remains in power. Clinton later writes Ahtisaari to thank him “for making the Sarajevo Summit such a success.” He writes that it “was very effective due to your leadership skills and because your government has taken moral responsibility in this area.” *(Martti Ahtisaari, “Sarajevo Stability Conference,” Presidents & Prime Ministers, Jul/Aug 1999; Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 233-234; Associated Press, 07/30/1999)*

**Summer**

Clinton calls Ahtisaari to discuss whether he would be willing to serve as the UN’s special representative in Kosovo but Ahtisaari, who is still president of Finland, declines. (Merikallio and Ruokanen, p. 238)

**Sept.-Nov.**

In an attempt to salvage the Northern Ireland peace process, Senator George Mitchell (D-ME) is recalled to Northern Ireland in order to review the
implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. Talks are reportedly stalled over the issue of disarmament. (Loughlin, pp. 203-204; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 49-50)

**November**
Ahtisaari attends a summit on the Middle East peace process in Oslo on the 1st with Arafat and Barak. Clinton, Putin, and Jordanian Foreign Minister Abdel Ilah Khati also attend the summit. During the summit, Ahtisaari and Clinton both object to Russia’s use of force in the break-away region of Chechnya. However, Ahtisaari does concede that Chechnya is a part of Russia. (*Associated Press*, 11/02/1999)

**December**
Ahtisaari and EU Commission President Romano Prodi meet with Clinton in Washington to discussed U.S.-EU trade issues, including agricultural barriers to U.S. beef and banana exports. The WTO had been unable to launch a new round of trade talks earlier in the month. Other political issues, such as peace keeping efforts in the Balkans and Russia’s most recent use of force in Chechnya, are also reportedly on the table. (*Associate Press*, 12/17/1999)

**2000**

**January**
Ahtisaari and Clinton attend the annual World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland on the 27th. Arafat and Barak are also scheduled to attend. (*Reuters*, 01/18/2000)

Ahtisaari, Clinton, and Chernomyrdin are all nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize on the 31st. (*Nordic Business Report*, 02/01/2000)

**February**
Ahtisaari steps down as president of Finland on the 29th after completing his six-year term. His former foreign minister, Tarja Halonen, succeeds Ahtisaari as president. Ahtisaari goes on to found the Crisis Management Initiative to continue his work on conflict resolution. (*Agence France-Presse*, 05/06/2000)

**May**
Ahtisaari is nominated to inspect Irish Republican Army (IRA) weapons under a historic disarmament agreement announced on the 6th. Ahtisaari had reportedly been approached by British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s top foreign policy adviser, John Sawers, about taking the position. Clinton calls Blair and Irish Taoiseach Ahern to congratulate them on their work to keep the peace process moving forward. Blair and Ahern announce that Cyril Ramaphosa, former chief negotiator for the African National Congress, will serve as the other primary international weapons inspector. (Merikallio and Ruokanen, pp. 239-240; *Agence France-Presse*, 05/06/2000; *Charleston Gazette*, 05/07/2000)

**July**
Clinton hosts Barak and Arafat at the Middle East peace summit in Camp David. (*The New York Times*, 07/20/2000)

**2005**
Ahtisaari works on the peace process between the government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement.

2008  Ahtisaari wins the Nobel Peace Prize.
• Martti Ahtisaari News Timeline, prepared by Rob Martin, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 08/30/2019.

• Clinton Administration Timeline, prepared by Robbie Robinson, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 05/30/2002.
SELECTED WRITINGS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY MARTTI AHTISAARI


BACKGROUND ARTICLES ON MARTTI AHTISAARI


On Ahtisaari’s First Oval Office Meeting with President Clinton as President of Finland:


NATO EXPANSION AND THE HELSINKI SUMMIT

- Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott Interview, 04/15-16/2002, William J. Clinton Presidential History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia.

- James Steinberg Interview, 04/01/2008, William J. Clinton Presidential History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia.


• Stephanie Streett, Anne Hawley, Nicole Elkon, “Memorandum to the President: Trip to Helsinki & Copenhagen,” Clinton Presidential Records, 02/28/1997.


• “Joint Statement on U.S.-Russia Economic Initiative,” Office of the Press Secretary, 03/21/1997.

• “Fact Sheet: Joint Statement on U.S.-Russia Economic Initiative,” Office of the Press Secretary, 03/21/1997.


• “Fact Sheet: Joint Statement Concerning the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty,” Office of the Press Secretary, 03/21/1997.

• “Joint Statement: Concerning the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty,” Office of the Press Secretary, 03/21/1997.


• “Joint Statement on Parameters on Future Reductions in Nuclear Forces,” Office of the Press Secretary, 03/21/1997.


• M.E. Sarotte, “The Convincing Call from Central Europe: Let Us into NATO,” Foreign Affairs, 03/12/2019.
Kosovo

- Samuel R. Berger Interview, 03/24-25/2004, William J. Clinton Presidential History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia.


OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

On Russian Missile Technology Transfers:


On the Middle East Peace Process:


On U.S.-EU Trade Disputes:


On Northern Ireland:

Your Work with the Clinton Administration

- Tell us about your relationship with President Clinton. When did you first meet? Tell us about your work with Hillary Clinton, Strobe Talbott, Derek Shearer, Eric Edelman, and Madeleine Albright. Did you work closely with Richard Holbrooke on the Balkans?

The U.S.-Russian Relations & the Helsinki Summit (1997)

- How did Helsinki come to host the summit? Tell us about your work with Presidents Clinton and Boris Yeltsin in planning the summit, and then your own role at the summit.
- How did Clinton try to reassure Yeltsin that NATO expansion would not threaten Russian interests? What were the key sticking points in the negotiations? What understandings were ultimately reached at the summit regarding NATO expansion and the future of Russia’s role in Europe? Did any major issues go unresolved?
- Finland joined the Partnership for Peace program in 1994. Did you think Finland should also join NATO? Were there ever tensions with the U.S. because Finland is outside NATO?

The Balkans

- Discuss what you saw of early efforts by the Clinton administration in 1993-94 to find its way on Bosnia. Were you disappointed with the American response at this stage? Were the Americans helpful or not as you worked to secure approval to send peacekeepers from Finland to Bosnia in 1995?
- How did you come to serve as the EU’s representative in negotiations with Slobodan Milosevic? How did you attempt to balance your responsibilities as president of Finland with your work on Kosovo?
- Tell us about your work with Strobe Talbott and Viktor Chernomyrdin to draft the peace terms to be delivered to Milosevic. Discuss your work negotiating Russian participation in a NATO-led Kosovo Force. Why did you feel that you should only commit Finnish forces to the Kosovo Force if it was under NATO command?
- How did Milosevic’s indictment for war crimes affect your work negotiating with Chernomyrdin and Milosevic? Discuss your trip to Belgrade with Chernomyrdin to deliver NATO’s and Russia’s terms to Milosevic. Why do you think Milosevic agreed? Discuss Russia’s ensuing attempt to take the Pristina airport. What role did you play in helping to mediate an end to the crisis in Pristina?
- Tell us about your work chairing the Stability Pact conference on the Balkans in Sarajevo in July 1999. What did the conference accomplish? Why did you decline Clinton’s approach to serve as UN special representative in Kosovo in 1999?
Other Important Issues

- What role did you play in the Middle East peace process? Did you work directly with Clinton or other American officials on this issue? Were there issues in this area where you had significant disagreements with the Clinton administration?
- Discuss your work with the EU on trade issues with the U.S.
- Tell us about your work inspecting IRA weapons in Northern Ireland during the final days of the Clinton Administration. Was President Clinton deeply involved in the decommissioning process?

Clinton Presidency in Retrospect

- What do you judge to be your most important foreign policy accomplishments in working with President Clinton and his administration? Evaluate President Clinton as a world leader.
- What features of the Clinton Administration do you think have been missed or misunderstood by the press? How should the Clinton presidency be viewed by history?