

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2011 4:53 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: OSCE Sec Gen position

No one things you will have strong opinion. Do you?

From: Gordon, Philip H
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2011 11:47 AM
To: Steinberg, James B; Burns, William J; Sullivan, Jacob J; Abedin, Huma; McElDowney, Nancy E
Subject: OSCE Sec Gen position

In OSCE Sec Gen race, we have remained mostly on margins, noting only that we could support several of the candidates. Lithuanians now pressing for a stronger signal, now that former Austrian FM Ursula Plassnik has taken a clear lead in straw poll. Unless anyone feels strongly in other direction, I plan to let him know we can support Plassnik as the front-runner.

Plassnik is a strong personality and as a former FM might have some difficulty in accepting the limited powers of the Sec Gen position in a consensus-based organization dominated by participating states. But she's clearly smart and experienced, and has the full backing of most of the West Europeans (including, particularly, by Merkel who has lobbied us on her behalf.) She may ruffle some feathers in Vienna, but I don't think we should stand in the way of this train.

That said, there is a chance others (Turks, Russians, etc.) could block her – in which case we'd be fine supporting Italian diplomat Lamberto Zannier, who would probably be next on the list.

Let me know if any objections. Jake/Huma you might want to run by S as well.

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