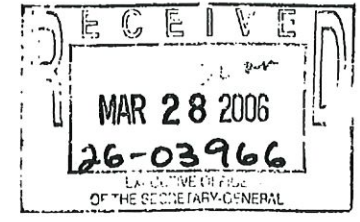


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NOTE TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Invitation to the World Summit of Religious Leaders from Alexis II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

(H 26-03055)

At the request of the Permanent Representative of Russia, I met today with the Permanent Representative and His Grace Archbishop Mercurius of Zaraisk, Administrator of Moscow Patriarchal Parishes in the US. At this meeting, both the Archbishop and the Permanent Representative pressed me to convey to you their urgent desire to have you attend the World Summit of Religious Leaders to be held in Moscow on the 4th and 5th of July 2006, immediately after the G-8 meeting.

Ambassador Denisov made it clear that his Government attaches great importance to this event, and I am aware that a formal invitation seeking your attendance has already been passed to your office by Foreign Minister Lavrov.

The Archbishop explained that the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church views the forum as significant politically, as well as for religious organizations, arguing that a constructive engagement and a positive outcome will have a bearing on Member State relations within the international community. They also extended an invitation to me to attend.

I explained to the Archbishop and the Ambassador once again that I have no formal role in decisions about your schedule, and referred them to Mr. Kennedy. However I also explained informally that it was quite possible that your extremely busy schedule around the time of the G-8 meeting may leave you unable to accept their gracious invitation. While expressing appreciation for their invitation to me, I suggested that were you unable to attend, your Special Adviser on the Alliance of Civilizations or one of its senior staff might be a more suitable alternative.

AB
~~Pls regret~~
GN Kashihara

Shashi Tharoor
27 March 2006

cc: Mr. Sommereyns

Timing of this meeting does not work for SG. It would seem best to accept right away and determine if there should be a separate five. RSK 29/3