

**President of RSFSR
Yeltsin Boris Nikolayevich**

MEMORANDUM

**about results of the delegation of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR's visit to
Belgium on invitation of the NATO Headquarters**

In accordance with your decision, from June 29 to July 2, 1991, the parliamentary delegation consisting of members of the Committee on Security visited NATO Headquarters in Brussels.

The purpose of our trip was to familiarize the NATO leadership with the Russian Parliament's position on defense issues, and to study the new tendencies in NATO evolution after the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty [Organization].

During two days, our delegation had numerous meetings with NATO officials at different levels. Our interlocutors exhibited great interest in the transformations and the situation in Russia. Everybody gave a high assessment of the democratic presidential elections in Russia as evidence of the first free declaration of the will of the people. NATO officials with whom we spoke noted justifiably that the results of the elections had clearly confirmed the main trend that is supported by the majority of Russians—the course toward democratic reforms.

The delegation received thorough briefings about NATO activities under current conditions. On our part, we explained to the leadership of the North Atlantic bloc that Russia does not intend to create its own armed forces, but at the same time believes that it is natural that it would have an influence over the construction of the Union armed forces proportionate to its material contribution to their development.

We put forward, as we believe, an important idea, that NATO should make a clearer, more detailed and definitive statement about the need for a gradual decrease in the military efforts of that organization. This could have great significance for the democratic forces in Russia and generally in the Union who are fighting for large cuts in the defense budget in order to allocate major resources for the implementation of economic reforms. We stated frankly that NATO's political lagging behind the current realities in Europe could be used by the conservative forces in our country to preserve the military-industrial complex of the USSR in its current state and to seriously slow down democratic transformations. Expanding NATO to [include] new members, as we emphasized, would be seen negatively in the USSR and the RSFSR. Our statements were met with understanding by our interlocutors.

On July 1, the delegation had a meeting with M. Woerner—NATO Secretary General. The top NATO official spoke about the need for direct contacts among

representatives of the USSR armed forces, Russian parliamentarians, and administrative structures.

In his statement, he responded in a way to our proposals; in particular he said that he had received a written statement from Bush about reductions of American troops in Europe in the near future by 80 thousand men. Woerner stressed that the NATO Council and he are against the expansion of NATO (13 out of 16 NATO members support this point of view). In the near future, at his meeting with L. Walesa and the Romanian leader A. Iliescu, he will oppose Poland and Romania joining NATO, and earlier this was stated to Hungary and Czechoslovakia. We should not allow, stated M. Woerner, the isolation of the USSR from the European community.

During the meeting, the NATO leadership expressed its wish to develop direct contacts with the republic that plays a leading role in formulating the USSR's defense policy, as well as with the new union of sovereign republics. Similar wishes were expressed by representatives of the North Atlantic Assembly—NATO's inter-parliamentary body.

One has to emphasize that democratic changes in Russia, the largest republic of the USSR, have the potential to exert a serious impact on the reformation of NATO, where political cooperation is becoming the main function. In principle, they are ready for active cooperation in this sphere with the USSR and the RSFSR.

Chairman of the Committee on Security
of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet

S. Stepashin

Chairman on the Defense Committee
of the RSFSR Council of Ministers

K. Kobets

Advisor of Chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet
on Defense and Security

D. Volkogonov

03.07.1991

[Source: State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), Fond 10026, Opis 1.
Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya]



National Security Archive,
Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University,
2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037,
Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, nsarchiv@gwu.edu