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TO:: The Secretary
FROM: T - Dr. Davis
SUBJECT: Strategy for NATO's Expansion and Transformation

Needed: American Leadership for NATO and Europe

The NATO Summit is an opportunity for the President to articulate a vision for the American role in Europe in the post-Cold War era, and to lead a fundamental transformation of NATO. Such direction is sorely needed and would be welcomed in Europe and on Capitol Hill. It is what Senator Lugar and various friends of NATO have been asking for in their calls for expansion of the Alliance. Thus far, Summit preparations have focused on making NATO look relevant to new problems. Lacking is a context linking our goals for Europe with NATO's role and that of the United States.

Our goals in Europe are to ensure the successful transition to democracy and economic development in the East and to support the deepening and broadening of political and economic integration to prevent the return of dangerous nationalisms and conflicts throughout the continent. These have not changed with the end of the Cold War. What has changed is the very real prospect of success in both goals. Yet there is the growing possibility of failure, once again.

Twice before when such opportunities presented themselves in Europe, the United States sought to avoid responsibility. But then threats to our vital interests required our return to Europe and to assume a leadership role. We confront a similar historical moment.

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The fundamental task for the President is to develop a rationale for why Americans still need to play a major role in Europe's evolution, beyond support for reform in Russia. The answer is that American leadership will be required both to build democracy and to prevent the dangers of revived nationalism. Fortunately, the costs to Americans will not be large if undertaken today, and certainly not as large as those of the past. Unfortunately, the public case will be difficult to make, and the means will require fundamentally new institutional arrangements in Europe.

What's At Stake?

Why the urgency for a fundamental transformation of NATO? Western-oriented reformers in central and eastern Europe, unable to show many concrete benefits from embracing democracy and free markets, are in danger of losing control of key governments in the next few months to former communists or nationalist extremists. This could over time lead to backsliding and new conflicts in the region. The ensuing political and economic instability and refugee flows from the center of Europe would threaten reform in Russia and the NIS and even undermine the social cohesion of our West European allies. Similarly, Germany's inward focus on unification and on building bridges to the East have given rise to worries about its future orientation.

If the Summit skirts the question of expansion, disillusionment with the West and the process of democratic reform will deepen in many of these states. Interest in NACC could diminish further because it would tend to confirm that this body offers its members only a permanent second-class status rather than a way station to full integration into the West, especially as the obstacles to European Community membership expand. Pressures could arise in Germany for a re-nationalization of its security and defense policy.

Status of NATO Summit Preparations

So far, our NATO Summit approach has consisted of three elements to demonstrate NATO's continuing relevance, notwithstanding events in Bosnia: give NATO, through the NACC or other "outreach" arrangements, new capabilities for joint action with NACC partners to address certain security problems in the East, with a focus on peacekeeping; make adjustments in political and military structures that recognize the EC governments' desire for greater autonomy and the U.S. taxpayers' desire to see Europeans bear more of the burden; and adapt NATO's military instruments to take into account both these steps and new security challenges emanating from outside Europe.

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This plan is fine as far as it goes, but lacks the context noted above. Moreover, it misses a critical point. We turn to NATO to promote our goals in Europe because of the current limitations of other institutions. The EC and CSCE would be better positioned to promote democracy and cooperation in Europe than a Cold War "collective defense organization." But neither is today capable of fulfilling that role.

Our long-range vision for Europe involves strongly supporting the development of these institutions. But today, NATO must assume a critical role in providing all European countries a means of working cooperatively on security, thereby giving support to those building democracy in the East. At the same time, NATO must continue as an important hedge against failure.

An Alternative Strategy for the Summit

What is necessary for NATO to play this critical role? An incremental approach would focus on the NACC, and a "NACC Charter" which would "transform the NACC into an operational organization in its own right--a new all-European concord--encompassing a peacekeeping partnership with the countries of central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union."

A more fundamental transformation would be for NATO now to commit to expansion. The NATO Summit would announce criteria for membership, which would include standards for all states. These would be couched in a way that does not a priori exclude Russia, Ukraine, or other NIS. Other bilateral programs, as well as NACC activities and possibly new NATO arrangements with Russia and Ukraine, would be designed to take away the sense that NATO expansion was directed against them.

What would be the implications of NATO's expansion for American security guarantees, a key issue for gaining American Congressional and public support? The Washington Treaty places two different requirements upon its members. Article IV calls for consultation whenever the "territorial integrity, political independence or security" of any party is threatened. In Article V the parties "agree that an armed attack...shall be considered an attack against them all and...will assist... by taking forthwith, individually and in concert...such action as it deems necessary...."

These different requirements provide a means of phasing in both new members and expanding responsibilities of current members. Rather than provide all NACC members with an Article IV commitment, as is the current interagency proposal, we should consider giving such a commitment as the first phase of NATO membership. Phasing would permit defining criteria based on progress toward democracy. This would provide the prospect for expansion soon to a few states in eastern Europe and over time

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for Russian membership. A second phase would provide an Article V commitment, and this would be reserved for those capable of conducting collective defense, i.e. those with force structure and operational planning procedures comparable with those of NATO.

At TAB A is a description of an approach to the Summit which transforms NATO and defines a new vision for Europe and America. We outline a way of winning support in Europe with American leadership. The vision is bold, but it is one with built-in safeguards and pauses. There is risk in trying to transform NATO, but there is also risk of NATO losing credibility if it does not move more forcefully to address the Eastern security problem. Articulation of such a strategy would go a long way to answering how we hope to avoid future Bosnias. It would also fireproof us against the charge, which Senators Lugar and Dole are sowing the seeds for, that we are not doing enough to save democracy in central and eastern Europe.

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A STRATEGY FOR NATO'S TRANSFORMATION AND EXPANSIONArticulating Our Vision for NATO

We would articulate a new vision for NATO and America's role in Europe beginning with your speech on security policy later this month. In your Columbia speech, we could declare, or at least hint at, a decision to expand and transform NATO. A Presidential address later in the fall could be crafted to amplify our vision of America's future role in Europe and push Summit deliberations in the right direction. The recasting of NATO would have the following elements.

NATO's core purposes for the next decade are to:

- **Help build democracy in Europe and insure stability by preventing a return to nationalism and conflict in Western and Eastern Europe.**
 - These are America's historic goals, and ones that remain relevant in the post Cold War, for democracy in Eastern Europe is fragile, reform in Russia could fail, and Germany could turn away from the West.
 - Just as it was difficult for NATO members Greece and Turkey to go to war with one another, so too, NATO membership would bring problems in central and eastern Europe (CEE) into the NATO family where there would be great pressures and new leverage to solve them peacefully.
- **Maintain trans-Atlantic security and political links.**
 - NATO remains the premiere vehicle for our involvement in European security affairs and hence our ability to protect our interests there, which remain vital.
 - We play a pivotal role in European stability. Our military might, committed to NATO, accounts for part of this. However, we also function as an "outside" source of political leadership and a buffer in tensions among our often competitive European allies, suspicious of each others intentions.
- **Maintain the military capabilities necessary to sustain basic Article V commitments for the defense of the territory of NATO member states against any potential threats and defend members' mutual security interests more globally.**

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- To fill the security vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe thereby allaying anxieties that undermine the consolidation of democracy and free markets. Just as the U.S. extended a security guarantee to Western Europe in 1949 to safeguard their post-War recovery, NATO can now provide a similar security context for emerging CEE democracies. If Russia or other states revert to totalitarianism or otherwise threatens their neighbors, NATO might stop with this limited expansion.
- Engage Russia, Ukraine and other NIS and CEE states (through NACC and bilateral ties) in a range of cooperative security activities. Such steps will reduce the likelihood of Moscow reemerging as a threat to European stability.
 - The challenge for NATO over the next generation -- containing and coopting Russian power -- is similar to one of NATO's core purposes in the last generation -- integrating Germany as a responsible leader of the trans-Atlantic community.
 - If most of the Eastern states, including Russia, succeed in their reforms over the long term, it may seem axiomatic to work closely with them in a transformed NATO to manage Eurasian stability and address external threats to our common security. As NACC cooperation deepened, NATO could end up essentially merging with CSCE as the basic elements of a new all-European collective security system.

Near-Term: Preparing the Summit

Accepting this vision in toto will be a big leap for the allies. It would fall to you and the President to convince them of the merits of our case. This process will have to be driven top-down. If left to conventional NATO deliberations, it will never happen.

On the expansion question, we know that even before the Yeltsin-Walesa Joint Declaration there was turmoil on this question at top and lower levels of key allied governments. German Defense Minister Ruhe has been outspoken on this question and the fact that he has not been reined in by Chancellor Kohl suggests he may be a stalking horse. Elements of the British government, which otherwise accept the concept of parallel EC and NATO expansion, do favor bolder action. Some of the smaller allies, Norway and the Netherlands, appear to have been moved by this emerging debate to favor the idea of establishing criteria for expansion. Other allies have been cautious, but this may reflect lack of guidance at the end of the European vacation season.

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Wörner's Support

Most importantly, we can already count NATO Secretary General Wörner as an enthusiastic backer of expansion. Wörner sees Yeltsin's statement in Warsaw as a real opportunity. He will visit Washington in early October, but you would clearly want to discuss your speech and our broader strategy with him before then. Since we will have completed preliminary bilateral consultations with key allies by mid-September, we should be in a good position to map out a detailed strategy during Wörner's visit.

Engaging Germany

The strategic logic for Germany of expanding NATO's stabilizing influence eastward is compelling. Germany is on the front-line of Central European instability and has neither the resources nor political inclination to handle these problems unilaterally. What Bonn will want is an approach that does not seem to "draw new lines" in Europe. The concept of criteria that do not exclude Russia and the larger vision of NATO's possible future could allay these fears.

- It was a joint German-U.S. ministerial initiative, two months before the July 1991 NATO Summit, that led to creation of the NACC--the first step in transforming NATO.
- If lower-level consultations in Bonn reveal broad support for taking on the expansion issue, you might approach Foreign Minister Kinkle. If the German government is still divided, with the Foreign Ministry opposed, the President could engage Chancellor Kohl directly. We might propose a joint declaration citing our mutual agreement that the Summit should address the expansion question and offering a provisional list of criteria that the Summit might consider.

Enlisting German support for this approach early on will help bring along other allies, most importantly, the French.

Getting the French On Board

The French are not opposed in principle to NATO expansion, but would prefer more Euro-centric approaches to dealing with instability in Central and Eastern Europe, à la Balladur. However, the Balladur plan has not received overwhelming support from the EC-12 and the conservative government is acutely aware of the EC's limits in dealing with instability in the region after the Balkan experience. Moreover, if Bonn jumps on the expansion bandwagon, Paris would risk further damage to the key Franco-German relationship by putting up strong resistance.

What Paris most wants from the Summit is our unequivocal support for ESDI and of WEU use of NATO infrastructure. Our implicit quid pro quo with the French could be agreement on expansion and ESDI as a package.

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- This process of reconciliation could be formalized in a Joint Franco-American (Christopher-Juppé) Statement on ESDI, with expansion as a sub-theme. It would incorporate our political endorsement for a number of ideas that General Shali has already been working with the French military.
- We could also support elements of the Balladur Plan as important steps in building up the EC and CSCE to respond to the dangers which were the motivation of the Plan.

Other Allies

The smaller allies would lose some influence through NATO expansion. On the other hand, many of them also recognize the need to stabilize the East and the EC's failings in dealing with the Balkan crisis. As noted above, the Norwegians and the Dutch may be moving towards support for articulating criteria for expansion. The Spanish, who have benefited from NATO's democratizing influence in much the same way we hope the CEE states might, may end up being helpful on this question as well.

Seek Russia's OK Too

Having spurred the expansion debate, Yeltsin will be a key player in its denouement. We would want to enlist Yeltsin's support for our new NATO goals fairly early on. Indeed, a draft Yeltsin letter to President Clinton and other Western leaders, which Deputy Foreign Minister Mamedov previewed with our DCM in Moscow, recognizes East European states' rights to join NATO, endorses NATO's transformation, and offers to work with the U.S. to plan this process. Obviously, this is tricky. We can't grant Moscow an explicit droit de regard over NATO policy, but we do need to coopt the Russians. We would begin with informal consultations now, building on Yeltsin's expression of Russia's "understanding" for Poland's desire to join NATO. In the run up to the Summit, we could provide Moscow with special briefings on NATO's deliberations. At the Summit, we could announce NATO's expansion in the context of having provided additional bilateral security cooperation and endorse ideas for NACC's development in the area of peacekeeping.

Other NACC States

To avoid alienating the NACC states, we will have to develop a mechanism for consultation with them on criteria and other elements of the Summit declaration concerning expansion. This could be accomplished through briefings and NACC meetings in Evere. At the same time, we will want to be sure that the Poles and others likely to be active on this debate are saying the right things, particularly to the Russians. Thus, we may also want to open some special bilateral channels with the Visegrad countries to coordinate our efforts.

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A Fallback Approach

If we meet greater than expected resistance once we begin consultations, particularly on the question of timing, we could settle for a two Summit approach: have the January Summit announce a general direction and commitment to expanding NATO's stabilizing influence eastward but task a new "Harmel Report" to address how this might be done to be reviewed at a NATO Summit in 1995.

At the Summit

The Summit Declaration would include a general statement of NATO's mission for the post-Cold War era, drawing on the points above, and a list of criteria that would influence members' decisions on offering membership to additional states. A paper with a useful list of criteria is before the Deputies Committee.

Our allies justifiably fear expansion means obligations to states with real security problems and loss of influence with the U.S. We can allay the former concern with a criterion requiring peaceful settlement of regional disputes and suggesting an initial "provisional" status for new members. Provisional members would be entitled to article IV crisis consultations, but they would have neither full voting rights nor article V security guarantees, for a certain period.

After the Summit

The criteria would make it clear just how much work needed to be done by both current and aspiring NATO members. A number of states, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, might meet the political and economic criteria in short order. However, the military criteria, e.g. ability to operate with NATO forces, modernization restructuring of force structures, would take some time. Russia might meet the military criteria sooner than others, but still need to show progress on democratic reform. Ultimately, everyone knows these will be political decisions and criteria will be interpreted as needed.

If NATO's missions were tending towards peacekeeping and limited out-of-area brushfire missions, meeting the military criteria would not necessarily require enormous foreign assistance or redirection of resources to the military in CEE countries. Rather, it could mean bringing a few units up to snuff. Activities in the NACC peacekeeping work program would serve to support this effort.

One could envision a process of phased expansion of groups of states in key regions to diminish de-stabilization, with notional time lines, which we would not announce:

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- I. By 1996: the EFTA states that join the EC.
- II. By 1998: the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and possibly Bulgaria and Slovenia.
- III. By 2000: Romania, Albania, and the Baltics.
- IV. By 2005: Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Russia.

Within this phasing, the goal would be to hold out those let into NATO first as an inspiration to those states still in NACC. Our message to Ukraine would be, look at what Poland has achieved as a reward for the hard choices it made beginning in 1987, full integration into the European mainstream. Follow that example. The door remains open.

Clearly, if Russia reverts to totalitarianism or otherwise emerges as a threat to states in the region, NATO might stop its expansion at phase III. But here again, this need not be seen as a threat to Moscow. Rather NATO's mission would still be guardian of European democracies.

A harder question relates to suspension of new members whose democratic political reforms are reversed or even of existing members (a la the Greek junta in 1967) who have democratic lapses. In this new context, it might very well make sense to suspend such members to underscore that NATO is a club limited to democracies. Greece was suspended from the Council of Europe during the junta.

Conclusion

Yeltsin has once again taken a bold step that changes the political dynamic in Europe. We should seize the opportunity to work out the details with him and other key European leaders to lay the foundation for NATO's long-term transformation.

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