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May 10: Moment of Truth

- o **The Summit will put to the test your determination to keep on track two strategies that are crucial to your vision of post-Cold War Europe: admitting new members to NATO, and developing a parallel security relationship between the Alliance and Russia.**
- o **There are two possible outcomes at the Summit -- one that we must try as hard as we can to get, and another we may have to settle for:**

1) **The best outcome is that you succeed in allaying Yeltsin's concerns about the pace of NATO expansion and securing Russia's engagement in PFP.**

The necessary assurances are a *not* a matter of compromising or retreating on our policy; rather, they are a matter of disabusing Yeltsin of his mistaken fears about what is happening -- and what will happen during the next two years. *If you can* convince him that it is in Russia's interest to participate fully and promptly in the Partnership for Peace, and *if* he commits himself to a date-certain for signing the PFP documents, thus making Russia a full Partner, you and he will then be able to initiate the NATO-Russia dialogue. That dialogue should yield, by the end of this year, a "framework" for NATO-Russia relations. Such an agreement will be welcomed by our Allies, by the Central European aspirants for NATO membership, and, in our own country, both by most advocates of NATO expansion and by many critics of our policy, who fear that NATO expansion jeopardizes Russian reform.

2) **The second-best outcome in Moscow is that you and Yeltsin have a tough, serious, inconclusive but not acrimonious exchange on an extremely difficult subject. In short, no breakthrough -- but no repetition of Budapest either. Both Chernomyrdin and Yeltsin's national-security adviser Ryurikov, asked me to assure you that even if you and Yeltsin can't solve the NATO/PFP issue, Yeltsin will not be a "bad host."**

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How We Got Here

- o Since your trip to Europe and the former Soviet Union in January 1994, you and the rest of your Administration have been consistently asserting a determination to enlarge NATO (“not a matter of if but when”) and also to advance the goal of an integrated, undivided Europe (“for the first time in a millenium...”).
- o At your September Summit with Yeltsin in Washington, you got him to accept the proposition that NATO would, over time, bring in new members. You assured him that the process would be governed by the four “no’s”: no rush (expansion would be *gradual*), no surprises (it would be *transparent*), no threat (it would take account of Russia’s legitimate security interests), and no exclusion (Russia would be, at least in theory, eligible for membership someday). There’s a fifth “no” as well: no veto.
- o In December, Yeltsin backed away from your September understanding for two reasons, one connected with his domestic politics, the other with ours:
 - First, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) Ministerial that month announced a ‘95 workplan for the “why” and “how” of NATO expansion. That action made Yeltsin fear that the expansion train was leaving the station, and that the “who” and “when” of enlargement would be answered in ‘96, in the midst of his own re-election campaign, subjecting him and reformers to withering, perhaps fatal attacks from the Communists and nationalists.
 - Second, our congressional elections the month before made him fear that the Republicans would push the pace even faster -- and that you, in your own re-election campaign, would yield to their pressure.

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In short, Yeltsin concluded that, contrary to your promises to him in September, we were going to “rush” expansion and violate several other “no’s” in the process.

- o That is why, at your disagreeable encounter with him in Budapest in December, Yeltsin said, in effect: “You can have an undivided Europe or an expanded NATO, but not both. NATO enlargement is inherently hostile to Russia’s interests. Therefore we’ll cooperate on integration but resist on NATO enlargement. If you insist on bringing Central European states into NATO, you’ll risk re-dividing Europe into two competing, potentially hostile blocs.” The implied warning: “cold peace” could be a prelude to a new Cold War.
- o Shortly afterward, the Vice President calmed Yeltsin down somewhat and got him to accept a new principle -- *parallelism*: NATO’s deliberations within its own ranks and its discussions with PFP members on enlargement would proceed in parallel with a NATO-Russia dialogue to define a NATO-Russia agreement or relationship protecting the interests of both sides.
- o Since then, in two meetings between Chris and Kozyrev, the Russians have tried a stalling tactic: by going slow on the NATO-Russia track, they hope to slow down if not stop any action on the NATO expansion track.
- o They are motivated by a fear and a hope. The fear is that we’ll accelerate the timetable of expansion; the hope is that Moscow can drive a wedge between us and our West European Allies, who are grouching a bit about “pressure” from Washington to expand the Alliance.
- o We’ve been trying to persuade the Russians that both their fear and their hope are mistaken: we’re still guided by the first four “no’s” (no rush, etc.); but we’re also still guided by the fifth (no veto) -- i.e., there’s solidarity among the Allies, and Russia’s not going to split us.

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- o Our “or else,” in reply to his “cold peace,” is that the NATO expansion track will proceed even if the Russians refuse to permit progress on the NATO-Russia track. Their current tactics will succeed only in isolating themselves from a process in which it is in their interest to be fully engaged.**

- o Kozyrev has told Chris on several occasions -- and he told me last Saturday -- that Yeltsin has taken over this issue personally. It must be resolved at the Presidential level.**

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Where we are now

- o** **Virtually all major players in Russia, all across the political spectrum, are either deeply opposed to, or at least deeply worried about, NATO expansion. *Therefore we cannot realistically expect a Russian blessing or endorsement of expansion now, or probably any time soon.***

- o** **However, almost as much as it fears NATO's expansion, Russia fears its own isolation. Moreover, the Russian military very much wants to cooperate as much as possible with NATO. (Defense Minister Grachev made this quite clear to Bill Perry.) *Therefore Russia wants a relationship with NATO, an agreement along the lines of what we're prepared to negotiate, especially if that relationship/agreement can, for now at least, be defined in a way that finesses the question of how large a NATO we're talking about.***

- o** **As for Yeltsin personally: much as he dislikes NATO expansion, he wants a good Summit with you, and he wants to keep open as many doors as possible for Russia's integration into the West. *Therefore he has a strong personal motive for trying to square the circle -- and for doing so at the Summit.***

- o** **Virtually all the major players in Western Europe and Central Europe -- i.e., NATO members and would-be members alike -- want to see a NATO-Russia relationship. Whether they're ambivalent about expansion (the West Europeans) or enthusiastic about it (the Central Europeans), they don't want the process to provoke spasms of paranoia and countermeasures by the Russians. They know from experience that there's nothing more offensive than a Russian on the defensive.**

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- o Yeltsin's agreement to sign the outstanding PFP documents -- if possible before May 10, failing that at the Summit, or at least at an announced date-certain soon after.**
- o A joint commitment to negotiate, by the end of this year, a "framework" on the NATO-Russian relationship that answers concerns on both sides.**
- o A joint statement released at the Summit laying out the parameters of a new European security order and Russia's role in it.**

IMPORTANT: It would help if, before the Summit, you made a major statement on your vision of European security and integration. One purpose of such a speech would be for you to put on record, yet again and in the clearest possible fashion, our objectives and an authoritative sense of the pace of the process. This message will be in fundamental ways reassuring to the Central Europeans, for it will reaffirm the seriousness of our approach: we *are* moving forward. At the same time, it will be reassuring to the Russians (and the West Europeans, who are also nervous about "rush"), since it would signal a time frame for actual expansion that is in keeping both with realities of the situation (no way is NATO actually going to expand next year) and with the assurances you gave Yeltsin in September: our forward movement does not put us on a collision course with the Russian presidential elections.

It's important for you to deliver this message in advance -- I'd say *well* in advance -- of the Summit so that what you say in Moscow (and what Yeltsin says you said) does not appear to be a concession to him on that occasion; rather, it will be -- and will be understood to be -- fully consistent with long-standing policy.

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How to Use the Remaining 25 Days

- o Today/tomorrow: We're expecting a Yeltsin reply to your letter on European security. It will ask for some familiar assurances that an expanded NATO won't threaten Russia's security or commercial interests. Knowing the questions, we are also ready with our answers. We don't know whether Yeltsin is insisting on another letter from you, or whether private assurances, delivered via our ambassador or by Chris to Kozyrev, will do the trick. How far we can go in answering Yeltsin's letter will depend on the format of the reply. A letter signed by you cannot go as far as "nonpapers" or "oral notes." We'll work this issue over the next several days so that you can include reference to his letter when you talk to Yeltsin by phone....**
- o Next Monday or Tuesday: Yeltsin has proposed a phone call then. In addition to previewing your answer to him, I suggest that you stress the importance of resolving these issues as much as possible *before* the Summit, so that in your face-to-face talks in Moscow you can concentrate on the future rather than having to haggle over the unfinished business of PFP. We'll have the following opportunities to do that:**

 - Jim Collins and Mamedov are meeting in London at the end of next week;**
 - Chris and Kozyrev are meeting in New York and perhaps in Washington as well at the end of the month;**
 - If the Russian response to our initiative is sufficiently forthcoming by the time Kozyrev gets here, it might be helpful if you had a brief meeting with him yourself;**
 - I should be prepared to make another trip to Moscow either just before or just after the next Chris-Kozyrev session, depending on how the Collins-Mamedov talks go.**