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*****THE SECRETARY OF STATE
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December 7, 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Warren Christopher/MC

SUBJECT: Night Note from Brussels

Your visit last week to Europe, following on the heels of the Dayton agreement, was, in my view, a defining moment in the history of US-European relations. Your efforts on Bosnia, on Northern Ireland and the transatlantic agenda demonstrated convincingly that the United States intends to remain engaged in Europe and that we are prepared to sustain America's historic leadership role. Your speeches -- not only in Northern Ireland, but in London, Dublin and Germany -- were letter perfect, and resonated powerfully throughout Europe. As a result, we now have an unprecedented opportunity to fulfill the vision you laid out in your first visit to Europe as President -- a vision of an integrated, democratic Europe at peace. This will have enormous benefits for the security and prosperity of Americans, as well as for the people of Europe.

The annual NATO ministerial meetings brought together several important strands of our policy in a testament to the importance of your leadership. The unprecedented meeting of the 16 NATO foreign ministers together with the 16 defense ministers showcased our unity of purpose on the eve of the Bosnia deployment. The decision of France to re-engage with NATO's military structures demonstrated vividly that NATO is and will remain the pre-eminent security organization in Europe. The involvement of Central European countries and Russia in the Bosnia operation vindicates the hopes you set forth for the Partnership for Peace. At the same time we continued our steady progress on enlargement by launching a second phase of the process. The selection of Javier Solana as NATO's Secretary General will bring real energy and a deep appreciation of America's central role to that key position. All in all, I believe this NATO meeting will long be remembered as one of the most important steps in building a post-Cold War security system for Europe.

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The importance of your decision to end the drift on Bosnia and to achieve a peace agreement was evident in all my discussions at NATO this week. Among our NATO allies, there was a palpable feeling of relief that impotence had been replaced by determination, and that the divisions that had haunted us from the beginning of the war in ex-Yugoslavia had been replaced by unity. They grumble that we dominated Dayton, but they really know that it would not have gotten done otherwise. The appreciation for America's leadership was, if anything, even greater among the Central Europeans, who have a much more tangible sense of the dangers posed by the war in the Balkans.

Only a few months ago, many in Europe, as well as in the United States, questioned whether NATO had a continuing role to play after the Cold War. Now, NATO's central role is universally acknowledged. It has found a vocation. I think it was not a coincidence that France chose this moment to re-engage with the military side of NATO, after years of pushing for a separate European security organization.

Similarly, Russia's decision to acquiesce in NATO's role in Bosnia is a further recognition that only NATO has the means to take on the most serious challenges to European stability. This is not that easy for Russia to swallow: although they seem prepared to go along with the arrangements Bill Perry worked out with Grachev, Kozyrev made clear it would be difficult for them to sign a formal memorandum codifying NATO's political control (at least until after the Duma elections). Andrei seemed surprised that I even asked if Yeltsin would come to Paris. Yeltsin has urged Chernomyrdin to stand in for him, but Chernomyrdin is demurring because of the elections.

The "twin-track" approach of strengthening the Partnership for Peace while moving forward steadily on enlargement continues to pay dividends. The step we took on Tuesday on enlargement is fully consistent with what you previewed for Yeltsin, yet it is substantial enough to maintain our credibility with the Central Europeans. As has been my practice, I met with all the Central European and Baltic foreign ministers attending the NACC. I thought the Romanian Foreign Minister summarized the mood nicely when he said to the press: "The pace of enlargement may not meet all our desires, but I believe it is proceeding in the most realistic way." All of the ministers made a point of thanking you and the United States for our leadership on this issue.

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We have a good program for 1996, but by the end of next year we will need to address some of the hardest questions on enlargement. Our allies remain ambivalent, with the Germans, somewhat surprisingly, the most ambivalent of all, no doubt out of Kohl's sensitivity to Yeltsin's political situation. Kinkel said that the schedule laid out last December was perhaps too fast. I replied that the worst thing we could do was to alter our steady pace in deference to the Russian protest, and Kinkel desisted. Kozyrev's opposition to enlargement ("partnership yes, enlargement no") seemed almost pro forma, though that largely may be a reflection of his own sense of resignation.

I am convinced that your leadership will pay dividends in the United States as well as in Europe. News and opinion flow westward. The glowing reviews of your trip and the obvious if sometimes grudging admiration for your leadership will soon be reflected at home. There are important risks in our course, but it is safer than standing on the sidelines and letting others determine our fate. Because of the distance we have come on Bosnia and because we are the United States, we must continue to lead.

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