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Executive Secretary

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May 2, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Madeleine K. Albright *MKA*
SUBJECT: Night Note

My two days of talks in Moscow indicate that your strategy for strengthening cooperation between NATO and Russia in parallel with enlargement of the Alliance is on track. Primakov and I narrowed our differences on several important issues. As a result, I think we may be able to achieve the goal that you and Yeltsin set for a NATO-Russia Summit in Paris on May 27. However, both for our own planning purposes and the French's, we need to know by about May 12 (the day you get back to Washington) whether a charter -- the necessary precondition for a Summit -- is a sure thing. Some difficult obstacles remain.

In all of our sessions, which included several one-on-ones and a working dinner at his apartment (his recent gall bladder operation prevented him from enjoying the Siberian dumplings prepared by his wife), Primakov pushed hard for a CFE adaptation agreement that imposes a collective ceiling on NATO equipment as the Alliance expands. In effect (and in intention), it would limit the scope of enlargement. I kept telling him this was impossible. At practically the last minute, in an unscheduled meeting just before I headed to the airport, he agreed to a formula that is much closer to NATO's own proposal: it relies on ceilings for individual countries, established by consensus through a negotiation that involves all the nations involved (including 13 non-NATO members, most of whom are applicants).

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CLASSIFIED BY: SECRETARY MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT
REASON: 1.5(D), 1.6 X6

Judging in part from a 20-minute phone conversation I had with Yeltsin, I sensed that Primakov was under instructions to try his best to push a maximalist position - but to settle for something consistent with our bottom line. As we saw in Helsinki, Yeltsin seems to have made the political calculation that the Paris Summit will help him manage the domestic political fallout from enlargement. But those difficulties are very severe indeed, as I was reminded in my talks with Primakov -- who pleaded with me to give him ammunition to use against opponents in the Duma -- and in a 90-minute roundtable discussion with a variety of Russian think tank specialists and parliamentarians who were unremitting in their criticism and complaints about enlargement.

If the partial understanding I reached with Primakov holds, it means we are entering the endgame in negotiation of a charter. We're going to need to decide in the days ahead how to respond to several Russian proposals, such as Primakov's suggestion of a percentage limit on foreign stationed forces in the new member states.

I sent Strobe straight from Moscow to Brussels to brief the Allies and the Central Europeans. They were generally supportive, although we're going to have to be alert to Central European anxieties that we're making deals over their heads or reducing them to second-class Allies before they even join.

I will be in touch with Bill Cohen and Shali before leaving for Mexico on Sunday to make sure that we're doing everything we can to support Javier Solana, who will hold a crucial meeting of his own with Primakov in Luxembourg on Tuesday. We must do everything we can on our side to make sure that Luxembourg is a way station on the road from Helsinki to Paris.