

Excerpt from Memorandum of Conversation between U.S. Congressional Delegation and Speaker of the Russian State Duma Gennady Seleznev

October 21, 1996

Nunn: I have, for a number of years now, maintained the position that expansion of NATO must follow, and not precede, the process of expanding EU membership. In the near future, I do not think that Russia represents any kind of threat to the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. They speak in favor of expanding NATO for a different reason, thinking that this step would encourage the expanding of democracy in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, and not in order to stand up to some imagined threat. I, from my point of view, represent the minority opinion, and do not represent the opinion of the administration.

From a purely military point of view, one can quote the opinion and the position expressed in his time by Napoleon, when he said that if you succeed in attracting the opponent to your side, that is already a guarantee of success.

If we want to improve the NATO structure in the military sense, then we should get rid of a number of members, instead of adding new ones. I could name several candidates for exclusion from NATO. But I will just not do it.

In a purely military sense, all our commanders would be able to tell you privately that by expanding NATO at the present moment, and simultaneously cutting the defense budget, we are not achieving our set goal of increasing the battle readiness of the alliance. Russia has understood this situation well, because we can see what it is doing in terms of the budget, trying to improve its economic affairs.

We continue to negotiate about agreements regarding the deployment of armed forces and the deployment of nuclear weapons, while I think our two countries should focus their attention on the political and psychological aspects related to the problems of NATO expansion. (p.89)

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