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Dear George:

I am sorry not to have written more promptly in response to your letter on NATO enlargement. Dealing with precisely that issue as it figured on the agenda of the recent meeting of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission has kept me quite busy over the past two weeks. But now that those meetings are behind us, I want to put before you a few thoughts that I hope will clarify our own views on the several difficult and important questions that you raise.

Before going further, I should tell you that I have shared your letter with the President, the Vice President, Secretary Albright and Sandy Berger. (They all, of course, saw your op-ed piece in *The New York Times*.) Let me say, on their behalf as well as my own, how seriously we take your advice and, more to the point, your criticism. We esteem the cogency of your arguments, the patriotic and constructive spirit in which you take us to task, and the immense experience and wisdom that informs everything you have to say on the subject of Russia and U.S.-Russian relations.

If I might strike a personal note, I have benefited greatly and frequently from your kindness, your counsel and occasionally your forbearance going back to our first meeting under the auspices of Max Hayward at the Luna Caprese in Oxford more than 25 years ago. You've taken the time to come to Washington to help us grapple with the problems we face, and you've received me in your home in Princeton for the same purpose. All this makes me all the more determined to be responsive to your letter.

I recognize, however, that I have little hope, in this letter or otherwise, of changing your mind about the justification for NATO enlargement. But I do hope that perhaps I can lay alongside the cautions and remonstrations you have stressed some counterpoints that you will consider.

I will start with what I understand to have been the thinking behind the President's original decision, which he made in late 1993 and announced early in '94, to seek the agreement of his fellow Allied leaders to open the doors of NATO to new members.

With the end of the Cold War, the breakup of the USSR and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, an obvious question arose: should there continue to be, on the landscape of Europe, a U.S.-led military Alliance? Or did the end of the original *raison d'être* of such an Alliance mean that, like the Warsaw Pact itself, NATO should fold up its tent — retire, voluntarily, to the ash heap of history?

The President concluded that an Alliance would continue to be necessary because there were still — and would be in the future

— threats to the common security of the member-states and to the peace of Europe as a whole, ones that only a collective defense organization could deter and, if necessary, combat.

He was concerned about essentially three contingencies:

1. Intra-European regional conflict, stemming from ethnic and other tensions arising primarily inside and between the post-Communist states.
2. External threats from the Middle East or the Gulf.
3. A resurgent menace from the East, if Russia or other post-Soviet states were to regress toward dictatorship and return to a foreign policy of expansionism and intimidation.

Of the three, only the first is easy to imagine, since we have been faced with precisely such a situation in the former Yugoslavia. The latter two possibilities may seem remote. But they are not unthinkable. Therefore they must figure in the planning and the capabilities of an Alliance intended to endure and to confront any danger that may lurk in the future. Indeed, for us and our Allies to have the military machinery to deal with *any* external threat, from any point of the compass, will diminish the chances that such a threat might arise.

Another question then arose: if there is a continuing need for an Alliance, should it be a *new* one? Is NATO *per se* too inextricably identified with the Cold War to serve the needs of a

genuinely post-Cold War institution? In short, should we wipe clean the slate and start over?

The President decided to adapt the existing Alliance to the new tasks. He made that decision for two reasons:

- first, quite simply, NATO is available; building on what already exists is far easier and cheaper than starting from scratch;
- second, he was convinced that NATO is truly *adaptable*; it is capable of changing with the times;
- and third, NATO was, is, and must remain the anchor of America's own commitment to and role in the defense of Europe.

In addition to these primarily military considerations, the President was determined to maintain, enhance and adapt NATO for another reason as well. He was mindful of a key but underappreciated aspect of NATO's history and nature. NATO has never been solely a military instrument. From its inception, even as it was attending to its principal job of deterring the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, NATO has served a *political* function as well. For example, during the Cold War, it promoted the consolidation of civilian-led democracy in Spain, and it has, on several occasion (including, I might add, recently) helped keep the peace between Greece and Turkey.

Here I would stress a point that you, George, as an historian, with special knowledge of the 19th century, would, I hope, appreciate: through history, alliances have often served not

just, or even primarily, to wage or deter war so much as to *manage relations among their member states and restrain or control the policies of alliance members themselves*. As historian Paul Schroeder has noted the British alliance of 1834 with Spain, Portugal, and France had the nominal purpose of deterring Russia but, in fact, functioned as a “pact for restraint and management in Western Europe....” The Quadruple Alliance of 1815 was intended to promote both cooperation and restraint in Europe after Napoleon’s defeat. Several years later the Allies brought France into the fold in order to manage European Security. In 1833, after the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, the Austrians reacted by reaching agreement with Russia to prop up the Ottoman Empire and manage Austro-Russian differences if they failed. I could provide other examples, but the basic point that treaties of alliance serve a variety of purposes is clear.

Here, the end of the Cold War has actually buttressed the rationale for NATO — and should make it easier for those who earlier regarded NATO as a necessary evil to see it instead as a valuable good. With the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact no longer in existence, NATO can, while retaining its military capacity and its core identity as a defense treaty, concentrate its energies increasingly on the political dimension of its mission. Indeed, it can extend that mission to the former member states of the Warsaw Pact — and of the Soviet Union itself.

That consideration predisposed the President to answer in the affirmative the question of whether to enlarge the Alliance. I would suggest that while that question was vexing, it was also

simple. That is, there were only two possible answers: yes or no. "Maybe," or "later but not now," would amount to "no."

There are several reasons why the answer should be yes. One, again quite simple, is that the Central European states very much want — and deserve — to be part of NATO and of the transatlantic community that NATO helps to underpin. Having regained their sovereignty, they should have the freedom to choose their associations. They want to join NATO for the same reasons that Germany and other current NATO members chose, correctly, to keep the Alliance after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain: they want to be part of a free, increasingly integrated Europe and transatlantic partnership with the U.S. It would be the height of injustice and irony if these countries were, in effect, to be punished — to be denied their aspirations — for the next fifty years because they had been, very much against the will of their people, part of the Warsaw Pact for the past fifty. That would be the ultimate in double jeopardy.

Now, I recognize that a country's merely wanting (or even deserving) to be in NATO is not sufficient reason for the Alliance to admit it to membership. The Alliance must conclude that the addition of a new member enhances the security, individual and collective, of the current members. But precisely that case is very strong. The current 16 members of NATO will be better off — safer, more prosperous — if Central Europe continues to evolve in the direction of democracy, civil society, market economics and harmonious interstate relations.

The very prospect of NATO membership encourages those trends in Central Europe, and the fact of enlargement, as it occurs between July of this year and April of 1999, will do so even more. (In their eagerness to qualify for NATO, a number of Central European states — most dramatically, Hungary and Romania — have already accelerated their internal reforms and improved relations with each other.)

Let me make the same point in the negative: a decision not to enlarge NATO — a decision to freeze a post-Cold War NATO, with a post-Cold War mission, in its Cold War membership — would send the message to the Central Europeans that their future does not lie with the West; it would imply that they are, as the President has sometimes put it, consigned to a “security limbo.” It would underscore the old divisions of the Cold War at a time when Western policy is committed to overcoming those divisions. The resulting sense of isolation and vulnerability would be both discouraging and potentially destabilizing.

Our overarching, long-range goal is to create a Europe whole and free where all countries can enjoy equal security. It would be difficult to argue in that context that the West Europeans deserve an American security guarantee, but the Central Europeans do not. The perpetuation of the artificial lines left behind by Hitler and Stalin should not be the compass for Western policymakers today.

The essence of strategy, as I see it, is to prepare for the worst while trying to bring about the best. The President

concluded in early 1994 that we needed an Alliance in post-Cold War Europe in order to advance both halves of that proposition. It would help preserve — and extend — a zone of security and stability. Within that zone Western Europe would be able safely and confidently to continue its own integrative processes, such as deepening and broadening the EU. The President felt it important that the newly liberated nations of Central Europe feel part of that zone as well, and therefore encouraged to partake in those integrative processes.

There is, of course, one powerful point that many have had made against NATO enlargement — you perhaps more eloquently than anyone else: Russia deeply distrusts NATO and fears enlargement; the “specter,” as it seen, of NATO “encroaching” on Russia’s western borders plays into the hands of ultranationalists.

The President has understood that problem from the beginning, not least because he and President Yeltsin have discussed the issue at virtually all their meetings, and intensively so since the one they held in January 1994.

Once again, for the President, a profoundly difficult issue came down to a starkly simple choice: should Russia’s acute aversion to enlargement keep the process from going forward? Yes or no? The President decided the only right answer was no. He believed, and continues to believe, that the arguments in favor of enlargement were sufficiently compelling to outweigh the negative of opposition in Russia (including, as you say, on the part

of most Russian reformers and democrats).¹ He has also maintained that it should be possible to work out with the Russian leaders a set of understandings and arrangements that will answer their legitimate political and security concerns — thereby managing the difficulties in U.S.-Russian relations that inevitably arise over enlargement.

I know that you disagree with the first judgment and that you are skeptical about the second. We're working very hard right now on what we call the NATO-Russia track, which we are prepared to pursue in parallel with enlargement. But success will depend on the Russians themselves as well as on us. It will depend on their coming, over time, to recognize several points:

- They, too, have an interest in a stable Central Europe. After all, Russia came to grief twice in this century because of wars that originated in precisely that region.
- Just as NATO never posed an offensive threat to the Soviet Union during the Cold War, a post-Cold War NATO poses no such threat to Russia.
- Operational, on-the-ground cooperation between NATO and Russia, of the sort that is now underway in Bosnia, provides a model for such cooperation in future such "category I" threats to the peace of Europe.

¹ Most reformers believe NATO enlargement is a blow to their own cause — but not all. Did you happen to see Andrei Kozyrev's article in a recent issue of *Newsweek*? If not, I'm attaching it.

- Cooperation between NATO and the Russian military establishment can help the latter address the dire difficulties it faces as it tries to modernize (this is a point that I believe has found resonance with both the previous Defense minister, Pavel Grachev, and the current one, Igor Rodionov).
- NATO has already changed, profoundly, dramatically and lastingly. At SHAPE [AND WHERE ELSE TK] today, our Generals are not worrying about how confront or deter Russia. Instead, they are increasingly focused on being able to respond to new threats as well as finding ways to cooperate with Russia. U.S. forces in Germany do not plan or train to fight Russian forces in Central Europe; they train for new missions in and around Europe where we would act with our Allies to defend common values and interests. And we're prepared to engage further with the Russians themselves in these activities. In short, the NATO that is getting ready to take in new members is already a new NATO, not the old Cold-War model.
- Finally, a word about the nuclear-weapons factor, which you stressed in your letter and in your op-ed (as well as in so much of what you've written over the past couple of decades): Enlargement will not in any ways increase the role of nuclear weapons in European security. Quite the contrary. With the end of the Cold War, NATO has already reduced the number of nuclear weapons in the region by 90%. SENTENCE TK IF WE CAN SAY THAT THE ALLIANCE WILL, OVER TIME, RELY EVEN LESS ON NUKES. Moreover, if the Alliance were not to enlarge, the consequential danger of renewed

nationalism and geopolitical rivalry in Central Europe would carry with it the potential for all kinds of proliferation, including nuclear.

CONCLUSION TK..... IF POSSIBLE INVOKING SOME COSMIC PRINCIPLE ASSOCIATED WITH KENNAN'S OWN WORK AND CAREER AS A SCHOLAR AND DIPLOMAT..