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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 21, 94 DEC 21 P4:43

MEETING WITH

THE VICE PRESIDENT ON RUSSIA AND NATO EXPANSION

DATE: December 21, 1994

LOCATION: Study in Residence

TIME: 5:45 - 6:15 p.m.

FROM: SAMUEL BERGER (ml)

I. PURPOSE

To have the Vice President brief you on his discussions with Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin in Moscow on NATO expansion and to discuss our next steps on this issue.

II. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this meeting is to hear a detailed briefing from the Vice President on his discussions last week in Moscow with Boris Yeltsin and Victor Chernomyrdin on NATO expansion. Following his briefing, I recommend that you discuss briefly with the Vice President, Secretaries Christopher and Perry and others present our next steps in engaging the Russians on this issue.

The Vice President held a series of important meetings last week in Moscow on our overall relationship with Russia and specifically on NATO expansion. The most important was his meeting with Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin in Yeltsin's hospital room on Friday, December 16. The Vice President succeeded in convincing Yeltsin that the Russians had misunderstood the NATO decision on December 1 to proceed with the process of NATO expansion in 1995. In the course of his conversation with Yeltsin, it became clear that Yeltsin had mistakenly interpreted the NAC communique to mean that NATO would make a decision in 1995 on the timetable of expansion. Yeltsin was especially angry because this appeared to him to contradict the assurances you had given him during your September summit meeting. Kozyrev's refusal to sign the PFP documents in Brussels and Yeltsin's hardline speech in Budapest were a direct result of this misunderstanding.

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E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.5 (b)
White House Guidelines, September 11, 2006
By VZ NARA, Date 9/16/2019
2015-0772-1A (1.26)

Yeltsin told the Vice President that he is now prepared to put the misunderstanding behind us and to get on with the good relationship we have established during the last two years. We will send to you shortly a letter to Yeltsin reaffirming the major points the Vice President raised with him and suggesting a way forward for our discussions with the Russians. The Russians have agreed that Secretary Christopher and Foreign Minister Kozyrev should meet in mid-January to engage in the first of a series of discussions on NATO expansion and other major issues in our relationship. Eventually, we will need to widen these discussions to include other NATO allies.

These meetings will challenge us to develop by January a refined strategy to begin discussions with the Russians which could extend beyond your first term in office. In sum, we will need to conduct a detailed discussion with the Russians on three crucial issues: the NATO expansion process; developing the U.S.-Russia relationship; and developing and deepening Russia's relationship with NATO. All three of these issues will be important to convincing the Russians to accept our long-term interest in expanding NATO to the East.

You need not have a long discussion of these issues during the meeting today. But you should know that we will begin to develop them in a small circle within the Administration in order to prepare Secretary Christopher for his January discussions.

III. PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary Christopher
Secretary Perry
Samuel Berger
Strobe Talbott
Leon Fuerth
Nicholas Burns

IV. PRESS PLAN

White House photographer

V. SEQUENCE

Briefing followed by discussion