

RELEASE IN FULL

December 5, 1994

Chris:

To Stroke
12/5/95 7:30 pm
we

This is a one-topic memo, on P4P and NATO. It picks up on our discussion of last evening in your office. I'm putting these thoughts to paper in some haste because I expect -- indeed, hope -- that the subject will come up at the White House later this morning:

Let me start with the point on which you quite rightly caught me off base: I promise never again, even in a small and trusted circle, to predict that P4P will eventually replace NATO, or that it will evolve into the successor-organization to NATO. I see clearly how that will sound, and how it will, as you so nicely put it, handicap the argument I'm trying to make.

So a forensic mea culpa on that score.

From now on, I will speak about the possibility, and desirability, of P4P eventually merging into NATO.

But we're now dealing with a new line coming out of the White House that could handicap in the other direction the argument that we, as an Administration, are trying to make. If we speak about P4P as a kind of holding room for members-in-waiting of NATO, we will increase their dissatisfaction at being there; their impatience to get out; and their mutual suspicion and unease about being in that room together. In other words, if we treat NATO membership too explicitly as the big prize that any deserving P4P

partner should have its eye on, then we'll devalue P4P partnership itself.

Moreover, if we take a public line to the effect that the raison d'etre of P4P is expansion of NATO -- and certainly if we accompany such statements with background hints that Poland, Hungary, etc. are going to be the first beneficiaries -- we're back in the soup we managed to say out of in September and October. We invite the interpretation that NATO is expanding eastward, that we're making plans to move the border of the alliance from the German-Polish to the Polish-Belarus frontier. That would appear to be prejudging a pessimistic answer to one of the great questions of our time: Is Russia on the road to eventual full integration with the West? Or is Russian imperialism just in remission?

I'm not for a minute suggesting that we should walk back on our original line about an "open door" and an "evolutionary process." Those strike me as just the right buzz words. Just as P4P is open to all the countries that have broken free from the old Soviet Empire, so NATO itself should be open to future new members. However, we should give P4P as much meaning and operational value as possible in its own right.

It seems to me that we have every right, intellectually and politically, to use P4P as a means of keeping options open -- and of resisting pressure to tip our hand toward one option or the other. That's not a fudge; it's a recognition of the reality we face, which is this:

(2) All periods of history are, by definition, transitional, but some are more transitional than others -- and the current one is particularly so. An old order has ended, but the new one has not yet taken

I think we should stress the value of P4P on its own merits, and I among others can improve on this score. I have not strayed into "first beneficiaries" territory.

agree - need to have pres. emphasize. Also stress in my Friday speech

I plagiarized this today - unconsciously, so be careful what you write to me.

shape. Our task is to do everything we can to shape the future in a way that conforms to our interests and values.

From the late 40s to the late '80s, the ordering principle of international politics was the Cold War, the Great Divide between the U.S.-led Free World and the Soviet-led Communist world. NATO was key to that order; it was a bastion of the Free World; it was the most successful alliance -- in effect, the winning alliance -- of the Cold War.

In its core mission, NATO was, and still is, a collective security pact; it exists to defend its member states against an external threat. That threat has greatly receded but it has not entirely disappeared. Russia has yet to define itself or its role in the world. There are forces inside Russia pushing in various directions, including toward the malevolent combination of isolationism and expansionism that found full expression in the USSR. Therefore there is still a rationale for NATO's continued existence as a collective defense pact on behalf of its current members.

Moreover, if those bad forces were to gain the upper hand in Russia, there would be rationale for the rapid expansion of NATO to include East European states that were on the USSR's side during the Cold War, but are now on the West's side -- and that would be vulnerable to a resurgent Russia.

As I've come to understand it, Partnership For Peace can and should be developed in a way that will make it easier to bring the East European states into NATO fairly quickly if Russia goes bad.

But the reemergence of Russian imperialism is by no means a foregone conclusion. There are also forces in Russia that are reaching for integration and cooperation with the West.

Therefore Partnership For Peace can should be developed in a way that will encourage those forces. That argues for extending to Russia full membership in P4P, and holding out to Russia the prospect for eventual membership in NATO, on the same basis as for other states emerging from Communism. Otherwise -- that is, if we adopt a discriminatory or exclusionary approach to NATO/P4P -- we'll inadvertently vindicate xenophobic forces in Russia and, by the same token, discredit integrationist ones.

The beauty of P4P is that it is well suited to either outcome; it can, if handled right, prepare us to deal with the worst case while at the same time offering us an additional instrument to bring about the best case.

This is obviously a matter of nuance, of getting right the balance of implications in what we say. Obviously, it gives me no joy that because of the leak of my now-all-too-famous Sunday memo to you, I'm responsible for an imbalance in the direction of a perception that we're closing the door to the East Europeans or that we're giving Russia a blackball on NATO expansion. I'll work very hard at getting the nuances right in what I say.

But I'm very concerned about what Tony seems to be up to -- both in substance and in process. One reason I've never liked Tony's favorite word, "enlargement," is that, in the context of NATO, it connotes an admission standard that gives priority to countries with geographical

one problem here is that several NATO allies cannot contemplate (practice) Russia in NATO. They may get education, or they may just have to swallow it. The option remains a special security relationship with Russia & that seems the right choice down the road.

proximity to NATO. I've told Tony this on several occasions.

In any event, what he's saying now -- or at least what I gather he's saying -- risks tilting the nuances of our position too far in the other direction. Moreover, he's risking a rash of stories, on the eve of the President's trip, reporting a "split" in the Administration. And it was clear from your reaction last night that you need no convincing about how wrong it is for him to be pressing what is, in effect, a new line on the President without you at the table. But you will be in your rightful seat this morning, and I hope you find a way to lay down a marker on that occasion.

Steve

The worst fears seem not to have been realized on this. Tony's background was breathless but not too problematic on this point. Do you agree? Is this problem necessary -- in the sense that we can best handle it by fixing the Friday speech & the other remarks ??