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Folder Title:
NATO-Russia Signing 5/27/97

Staff Office-Individual:
Speechwriting-Blinken

Original OA/ID Number:
3388

Row: 48  Section: 6  Shelf: 1  Position: 3  Stack: V
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE</th>
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>RESTRICTION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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**COLLECTION:**
- Clinton Presidential Records
- National Security Council
- Anthony Blinken (Speechwriting)
- OA/Box Number: 3388

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**RESTRICTION CODES**

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5/23/97 4 P.M.

PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

STATEMENT ON THE SIGNING OF THE
NATO-RUSSIA FOUNDING ACT

PARIS, FRANCE
MAY 27, 1997

Secretary General Solana; President Yeltsin; President Chirac; fellow leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization:

On this day, in the twilight of the 20th century, we set our sights on a new century of possibility -- with a new Russia and a new NATO working in partnership in a new Europe. The NATO-Russia Founding Act we have just signed joins a great nation and history’s most successful alliance in common cause for a long sought goal: a peaceful, democratic, undivided Europe.

Through this Act, NATO and Russia will consult and coordinate regularly. Where all agree, we will act jointly. Already in Bosnia, a Russian brigade serves side-by-side with NATO troops -- giving the Bosnian people a chance to build a lasting peace. Now, by deepening this practical partnership, we can make America, Europe and Russia stronger and more secure.

The historic change in the relationship between NATO and Russia both reflects and shapes a fundamental change in the way we think about each other. NATO’s member states recognize that the Russian people are building a new Russia -- defining their greatness in terms of the future as well as the past. The transition to democracy and open markets has been as difficult as it is
dramatic -- but Russia's steadfast commitment to reform and progress has earned the world's admiration.

In turn, we are building a new NATO. It will remain the strongest alliance in history, with smaller, more flexible forces prepared to provide for our defense but also trained for peacekeeping. It will work closely with non-members states through the Partnership for Peace. And it will be an alliance directed against no one nation, but designed to advance the security of every nation in Europe -- NATO's old members, new members and non-members alike.

I know that some in Russia still see NATO through the prism of Cold War -- especially its decision to open its doors to Central Europe's new democracies. I ask them to look again. The new NATO will work with Russia -- not against it. By reducing rivalry and fear... by strengthening peace and cooperation... NATO will promote greater stability in all of Europe -- and Russia will be among the beneficiaries.

The partnership between NATO and Russia is compelling proof that European security is not a zero sum game in which NATO's gain is Russia's loss... and Russia's strength is our alliance's weakness. That is old thinking -- these are new times. Together, we are summoning the vision and seizing the opportunity to build a Europe -- inextricably tied to America -- in which every nation is free, and every free nation joins in strengthening peace and stability.
Half a century ago, on a continent darkened by the shadow of evil, brave men and women from Russia and the world's free nations fought a common enemy with uncommon valor. Their partnership -- forged in battle, strengthened by sacrifice, cemented by blood -- gave hope to millions in the West and in Russia that the Grand Alliance would be extended in peace. But in victory's afterglow, we missed an opportunity to shape a new Europe... and the dream of peace gave way to the hard reality of Cold War.

Now, we have another chance. Russia has opened itself to freedom -- and the veil of hostility between East and West has lifted. Together, we can see a future of partnership too long delayed -- and that must no longer be denied. The Founding Act that we have signed today shows the way to a New Alliance of interests and values. We must build on the promise of this day -- making it real, making it work, and making a difference in the lives of the generations who succeed us.

That is our most sacred task and solemn obligation.
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From this day forward, NATO and Russia will consult and coordinate regularly. Where all agree, they will act jointly -- as they already are doing in Bosnia. This practical partnership will make America, Europe and Russia stronger and more secure.

The historic change in the relationship between NATO and Russia reflects a fundamental change in the way we think about each other. NATO's member states recognize that the Russian people are building a new Russia -- defining themselves in terms of the future, not the past. And Russia recognizes that we are building a new NATO not directed against anyone, designed to advance the security of everyone -- NATO's old members, new members and non-members alike.
President Yeltsin, the most hopeful act of our lifetimes came when your nation broke with communism to build a future in which people control their own lives and pursue their dreams. The transition to democracy and open markets has been as difficult as it is dramatic -- but your steadfast commitment to reform and progress has earned the world’s admiration.

I know that some people in Russia still see NATO through the prism of Cold War -- especially its intent to welcome new members from among Central Europe’s new democracies. I ask them to look again. The new NATO we are building wants to work with Russia -- not against it. By reducing rivalry and fear... by strengthening peace and cooperation, NATO will promote greater stability in Europe -- and Russia will be among the beneficiaries.

As we enlarge NATO, we are adapting it to new realities. Already, NATO has reduced its nuclear weapons deployed in Europe by 90 percent. The United States has reduced its forward military presence in Europe from 325,000 to 100,000 troops. The European NATO allies have significantly modified their force structures. And the NATO countries are now 20 to 30 percent below their equipment entitlements under the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty.

The partnership between NATO and Russia is the most powerful proof of all that European security is not a zero sum game in which NATO’s gain is Russia’s loss... and Russia’s strength is our alliance’s weakness. That is old thinking -- these are new times. Together, we are summoning the vision and seizing the opportunity to build a Europe in which every nation is free - - and every free nation joins in strengthening the peace and stability of Europe.
President Yeltsin, a half century ago, on a continent darkened by the long shadow of evil, brave men and women from Russia and the alliance of free nations fought a common enemy with uncommon valor. Theirs was a partnership forged in battle, strengthened by sacrifice, cemented by blood. They planned together, they served together and they died together so that we might live in freedom. But in victory’s afterglow, the freedom so many Russians had sacrificed for was denied to their sons and daughters... and the dream of peace gave way to the reality of Cold War.

Now, Russia has opened itself to freedom -- and the veil of hostility between Russia and the rest of Europe has lifted. Together, we can see a future of partnership too long delayed -- and that must no longer be denied. We must build on the promise of this day -- making our new alliance real, making it work, and making a difference in the lives of the generations who succeed us. That is our most sacred task and solemn obligation. Let us do our duty.
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