NATO expansion: Benefits and consequences

Jeffrey William Christiansen

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NATO EXPANSION:

BENEFITS AND CONSEQUENCES

by

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for the degree of

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The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 altered the nature of European politics almost overnight. As Soviet and then Russian political influence in Central and Eastern Europe rapidly receded, the countries there were left to direct their own political destinies and to develop their own arrangements for state security. As Europe’s premier military organization, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) became interested in extending its sphere of influence into this region by inviting some Central and Eastern European states to join the Atlantic Alliance.

Although NATO successfully added the countries of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to its membership in 1997, there are still some who oppose NATO’s expansion eastward. This study examines the thesis as posited by George F. Kennan that the expansion of NATO is the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era. The arguments supporting NATO expansion include the potential for increasing political stability and democratic reform in Central and Eastern Europe, aiding NATO in its transition from a strictly collective defense organization to a cooperative security organization with broad European security concerns including peacekeeping operations, and perhaps most importantly, aiding in the transition of Central and Eastern Europe into the greater European community.

The arguments against the expansion of NATO include the problem of antagonizing a politically unstable Russia, the problem of consensus, and the problem of exclusion. Following an analysis of both sides of the issue, the final chapter includes a review of the study as well as predictions for NATO’s future role in European security. An expanded membership contributes to NATO’s metamorphosis into an organization with broad European security concerns and offers the best chance for unity in Europe.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
Plan of Study

Following the defeat of Nazi Germany in Europe at the end of the Second World War, another adversary appeared out of the east to challenge the political and military supremacy of the United States and Western Europe. Once an ally of Great Britain, France, and the U.S., the Soviet Union emerged from the turmoil of the Second World War as the greatest power in Asia and Europe and, arguably, a world superpower second only to the United States.¹

When Germany surrendered on May 7th, 1945, the Soviet Red Army occupied much of Eastern Europe including Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria, and roughly one third of Germany.² With the large, battle-hardened Soviet army directly to the east of them, many Western European nations became nervous and suspicious about potential Soviet designs.
for a military invasion of Western Europe.

Responding to this perceived threat, on March 4, 1948, representatives from several Western European countries met in Brussels to consider the development of a mutual assistance pact designed for the military and political protection of its members. The result of this meeting was the signature of the Brussels Treaty. This treaty included Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. In addition to pledging the members to assist one another in the event of an armed invasion of one of the member countries, the Brussels Treaty also included a provision that the member states would agree to "build up a common defense system and to strengthen their economic and cultural ties."

It soon became evident, however, that the Brussels Treaty would be insufficient to deter effectively a potential Soviet military threat. The five signatories realized that to guard against Soviet aggression, a common defense treaty organization would necessarily have to include a North American component—namely the United States. Talks about the inclusion of the United
States and Canada into a possible European security organization ultimately culminated in the signature of the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949.5

Originally, the North Atlantic Treaty provided little in the way of an organizational framework for military operations. The "organization" suffix became more realistically applied as the member states of the North Atlantic Treaty effectively rallied to carry on the Berlin Airlift and field forces in the Korean War, after which point the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) became the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

NATO, as a military alliance originally formed to deter the Soviet Union from expanding militarily and politically into Western Europe has, on the whole, been a resounding success.6 Indeed, NATO managed to "win" the Cold War without ever firing a shot. Shortly after the creation of NATO and its subsequent expansion to include the Federal Republic of Germany, the Soviet Union and the "satellite" nations of Eastern Europe formed the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO). What soon developed was a Cold War between rival alliances that lasted until the Soviet collapse in 1991.
From its creation until the end of the Cold War, NATO succeeded in achieving its mission by preventing Soviet expansion. In considering the history of NATO's creation, purpose, and recent political developments, it becomes clear that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO has lost the impetus for its original mandate— or its "raison d'etre." Furthermore, many argue that in developing a new mandate for NATO, the organization should expand to include new member-states.

The impact that enlargement will have on NATO as well as the European community is worth scholarly consideration for two principal reasons. First, as Europe's premier selective defense organization, its internal stability and cohesion can have important positive or negative consequences for the security of Europe. Second, NATO's viability as an effective selective defense organization—with which the issue of enlargement seems inextricably intertwined—may also prove to be vitally important to the progress of democratic and capitalist reforms in the recently independent countries of Central and Eastern Europe.
It is the purpose of this study to test the thesis posited by George F. Kennan that "NATO enlargement would be the most fateful error in American policy in the entire post-Cold War era."

Critics of NATO enlargement cite several reasons for their position. One reason asserts that expansion into Eastern Europe by admitting former Warsaw Treaty Organization states serves to foment renewed distrust between Russia and the NATO member-states. Second, the exclusion argument states that by admitting some Eastern European states and not others, the political stability of the region may potentially be damaged. Third, by increasing its membership, NATO may have a more difficult time reaching consensus on courses of action.

Advocates of NATO expansion argue that adding new members will help to stabilize the political environment in Eastern Europe by helping to incorporate the newly sovereign countries there into the larger European community. In this regard, enlargement provides these states military security not necessarily afforded them from other organizations such as the United Nations or the European Union. Furthermore, the proponents of this
argument point out that NATO's credibility as an international organization allows it to serve as an effective peacekeeper as it moves from a strictly selective defense organization to a cooperative security organization.8

In order to explore the arguments surrounding the issue of NATO enlargement, it will be necessary to examine the historical, political, economic, and military foundations for these arguments by examining the mission of NATO leading up to, and following, the end of the Cold War in 1991. Furthermore this study explores, through review of literature, the development of new missions and future responsibilities for the Alliance.

In examining the arguments for and against enlargement, it is necessary to qualify the difference between what is good for the Alliance, and what is good for Europe and European security. By asserting that enlargement is preferable or not preferable, we may assess the merits of the arguments based on their impact on political, economic, and military factors, as well as how these factors affect the Alliance versus greater
Europe.

**NATO's Theoretical Basis**

**Collective Security**

Prior to the First World War, the international community operated under a system known as the balance of power system. Under this system, nation states formed short alliances during conflicts to preserve a perceived balance of power among nations—in effect, to preserve the status quo. During the Napoleonic Wars in the first years of the 19th century, French aggression was perceived by most of Europe as a threat to the balance of power among European states. Consequently, Great Britain and other nations banded together to prevent France's domination of Europe. From the Napoleonic Wars to the First World War, the system worked well and prevented any major outbreaks of war in Europe.

However, by the end of the First World War, the states of Europe recognized that the balance of power system was no longer effective in preventing major conflicts. The result was the articulation of the idea of collective security as represented by the creation of
the League of Nations. Collective security is designed to prevent aggression through the threat of combined action on the part of a community of nations.\textsuperscript{9}

According to political scholar Inis Claude, the designers of collective security envisioned a system which:

\textit{...involved the establishment and operation of a complex scheme of national commitments and international mechanisms designed to prevent or suppress aggression by any state against any other state, by presenting to potential aggressors the reliable promise of effective collective measures, ranging from diplomatic boycott through economic pressures to military sanctions, to enforce the peace.}\textsuperscript{10}

The proponents of collective security argued that the problem was that the balance of power system fostered the creation of competing military alliances that were often unknown to states not party to the alliance. Indeed, the First World War is frequently cited as an example of the dangers of a balance of power system. Forward-thinking political philosophers like Thomas “Woodrow” Wilson and Immanuel Kant believed that a system of collective security would best promote peaceful coexistence among nations. Although the League eventually failed, the subsequent United Nations (UN)
serves as a good example today of a collective security organization.\textsuperscript{11}

The problem of establishing a peaceful international order in Europe has been present since the breakdown of the feudal system and the emergence of the modern Westphalian system of nation-states.\textsuperscript{12} Although the term "collective security" is an early twentieth century invention, the central concept has been advocated since the beginning of the modern state system.\textsuperscript{13} In the words of political observer Martin Wight:

By collective security we mean a system in which any breach of the peace is declared to be of concern to all the participating states, and an attack on one is taken as an attack on all. It is amusing and at the same time sobering to reflect that this system was written into the Covenant of the League of Nations, and endlessly discussed and refined for the next 15 years, without any suspicion...or knowledge on the part of Woodrow Wilson, or the League of Nations Union that it had been tried repeatedly in international history since the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{14}

Wight uses as examples of these early collective security organizations the Most Holy League of Venice in 1454, the Treaty of London in 1518, the Association of the Hague of 1681-83, and the Quadruple Alliance of
The collective security system is founded in an aspiration to think of interests beyond those of the nation and its allies and to consider those of the international society as a whole.¹⁵ There is inherent in the idea of collective security a sense of involvement in the fate of others. Author and philosopher John Donne noted in *Meditation XVII* that,

...no man is an Island, entire of it self; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.¹⁶

The characteristics of universality present in collective security organizations have frequently made them ineffective in dealing with political and military conflicts. Although political philosophers like Kant believed that the only remedy for war and international lawlessness was a system of international right founded upon public laws conjoined with power to which every state must submit, the most recent incarnations of collective security such as the League of Nations and the United Nations have often proven unreliable in
dealing with regional security concerns.

Selective Security

While the United Nations serves as an excellent forum within which member states may openly discuss matters that are of concern to them, and although this function does much to foster the advancement of peaceful coexistence among nations, the United Nations has historically been unable to deal effectively with many regional security concerns. The inability of the United Nations to combat “ethnic cleansing” in the Balkans during the 1990s is evidence of collective security's inadequacy as a framework for a military alliance.

As a result of collective security’s frequent ineffectiveness in preserving local and regional peace, many nations have found it necessary to form security organizations with a more regional, narrow scope, and with limited membership. Such international arrangements represent what are known as selective security organizations. NATO is a manifestation of this type of security organization. Formed under the auspices of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter which ensure the right of nations to create regional
organizations for collective self-defense and the regional resolution of disputes, NATO is essentially a regional, selective security organization dedicated to preserving peace in the North Atlantic region of the world.¹⁷

On a theoretical level, selective security addresses one of the fundamental problems with the practical application of collective security.¹⁸ One political scholar posited the problem of regional conflict prevention as such:

...as long as the primary political units of world society are nation states, determined to protect their independence above all other values except physical survival and run by leadership groups accountable to domestic interests ahead of world interests, no member nation of an international collective security association will participate in actions likely to put its independence and domestic interests at risk unless such participation is clearly required to protect these interests.¹⁹

In the more regionally-oriented selective security organization, the focus is generally more narrowly defined, and a common enemy is firmly designated. While a collective security organization is typically dedicated to universal security for all, selective security is dedicated to security only for its members.
Summary

As earlier noted, selective security organizations such as NATO are frequently defined by the common enemy against whom the member states are generally united against. With the collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union, the common enemy that had once unified the NATO member states has disappeared. NATO leaders are now left with a dilemma—what should the new purpose of NATO be, and should NATO admit new members to achieve this goal?

For the purpose of answering the question posed above, this paper is divided into four parts. Chapter Two is an historical summary which examines the roots of distrust which developed between the United States and Soviet Union long before the onset of the Cold War. This account goes on to examine the events of the Second World War that are relevant to the formation of two opposing geopolitical camps following the end of the war. It is important to understand these forces as they helped to create the political environment that gave birth to selective security organizations like the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the North Atlantic Treaty
Organization. This part also includes an outline of the organizational structure of NATO—as familiarity with it is important to understanding many of the arguments both for and against enlargement.

Chapter Three of this study articulates and examines the arguments in favor of NATO enlargement. As the arguments in favor of NATO enlargement are numerous, only the most prominent of them are examined here. Such arguments stress the importance of NATO as a successful security organization and include the idea that NATO can serve as a broader security framework for all of Europe and, furthermore, that the states of Eastern Europe would more rapidly be brought into the European community through membership in NATO.

Chapter Four examines the arguments against NATO expansion. These arguments are largely based upon the assumption that NATO's mandate will remain similar to that which it has had for more than fifty years—solely the defense of its member states from aggressive neighbors. The most prominent among the arguments against NATO expansion is the Russian position on NATO enlargement. Just as the Soviet Union strenuously
objected to the creation of NATO in 1949, Russia also vehemently opposes enlargement—particularly the inclusion of those nations of the former Warsaw Treaty Organization.\textsuperscript{20} By expanding to include nations like Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, NATO creates renewed animosity between historic rivals. Furthermore, the two issues of expansion at the cost of efficiency and expansion at the cost of exclusion are similarly addressed.

In the final chapter, this study speculates as to the future of the North Atlantic Alliance as it searches for a new role and strives to adapt to the changes that enlargement is sure to have for it. While political observers may debate the pros and cons of enlargement, it is fruitless to speculate seriously about the future of an un-enlarged NATO—for enlargement has happened and future enlargement seems a foregone conclusion. Therefore, addressing the arguments against enlargement in this study is an exercise, to some extent, in prediction. As political observers experience the world with a new and enlarged NATO, some arguments contained herein may bear fruit, and others
may not.
NOTES


4 Ibid., 3.

5 Ibid., 15.


8 Ibid., 170


10 Ibid.


12 Ibid., 137.


14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.


17 The NATO Handbook, 30.


19 Claude, 266.

CHAPTER II
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Two Great Developing Nations

The history of NATO and the political forces that gave it birth go farther back than the actual signature of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949. Specifically, a cursory examination of the relationship between Russian/Soviet and American histories offers a great deal of insight into the development of the Cold War and the subsequent creation of NATO and other selective security organizations. Perhaps the first person to predict that conflict could one day develop between the United States and Russia/Soviet Union was the French political observer Alexis de Tocqueville. As far back as the early nineteenth century, de Tocqueville noted the potential power and ideological differences developing between the two nations. As noted in his classic examination of U.S. political culture, Democracy in America, de Tocqueville states that,
[there] are at the present time two great nations in the world, which started from different points, but seem to tend towards the same end. I allude to the Russians and the Americans... [their] starting-point is different, and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe.¹

In discussing the histories of the two nations, de Tocqueville is brief, but he does point out several important differences between the United States and Russia. One of the most interesting of these differences is the manner in which the two countries have related with foreign nations during their history.

While the people of the United States were geographically isolated and free to pursue a "manifest destiny" with great personal freedom and "rugged" individualism, the Russian people were bordered by numerous hostile nations and have been forced to develop with a political solidarity and unity that enabled them to defeat their numerous adversaries.

In fact, the Russian people have been invaded during the last two hundred years by the French, the Japanese, the Germans (twice), the British, and the United States. Much of Russian and Soviet history is a
history of warfare.  

The Formation of Two Camps

As the First World War dragged on in 1917, as a result of the Russian withdrawal, much of Kaiser Wilhelm II's army was now diverted to the Western Front. With over one million new troops heading for France, the Allies were in desperate need of military relief. One of the proposed solutions to this military dilemma was the re-opening of the eastern front from which Russia had withdrawn following the communist revolution and the signing of the Brest-Litovsk pact with Germany. This pact turned over to Germany one quarter of Russia's people, almost all of its arable land, and most of the industrially rich areas of the country.

The British, Americans, and French, fearing that the new German troops from the eastern front might break through the western line, resolved to involve themselves in the Russian revolution on the side of the Tsar's White armies. In doing so, approximately 12,000 American troops in addition to British troops invaded the area of North Russia around Archangel and Murmansk. Fighting in this arena continued well past the armistice.
which ended the WW I, and into 1919 and 1920. Ultimately unsuccessful in their attempts to re-install Tsar Nicholas II, the Western forces retreated and left the Soviet Union in 1920.4

This little-talked about episode of American/Russian history offers one historical reason why the Soviet Union developed a distrust of the West by the end of the Second World War. When this 1918 invasion is considered together with the French invasion in the early 19th century and the hugely destructive invasion by Germany in WWII, it becomes easier to understand why the Soviet Union distrusted the nations of the West--particularly the United States.

In addition to Russia’s turbulent history replete with memories of invasion, events at the end of WWII also contributed to feelings of distrust by the Soviet Union toward the United States. As described by political revisionist historian Gar Alperovitz, immediately after the death of U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, President Harry Truman learned of the imminent testing of a nuclear device. As WWII came to a close, and the political fate of many Eastern European
nations was to be decided at the Potsdam Conference, President Truman assumed a less cooperative position relative to the Soviet Union regarding issues of political influence in Eastern European nations following the war.\(^5\)

As chronicled by Alperovitz, Truman was reluctant to negotiate any arrangements until the atom bomb had been tested, so that he might politically bully the Soviets from a position of superior military strength.\(^6\) The conclusion that Alperovitz reached is that there were political as well as military reasons for the use of the atom bomb on Japan in concluding WW II. Essentially, it was believed by the Soviets that the United States, by using the bomb, endeavored to intimidate them in order to gain greater influence at the negotiating table when the political fates of Eastern European nations were to be decided at the Potsdam Conference. For all the mentioned reasons, the Soviet Union felt politically and militarily insecure following WW II.\(^7\)

During the years between 1945 and 1949, faced with the need for economic and political reconstruction as
well as military protection, Western European countries and their North American allies became concerned with the expansionist capabilities and ambitions of the Soviet Union. Having fulfilled the purpose for which they were intended, the armies of the Western European powers were rapidly demobilized following the war. When it became apparent that the Soviet leadership had no intention of reducing the size or scope of the Red Army, Western European leaders became alarmed.

Furthermore, given the nature of the Soviet Communist Party ideology and its call for a global revolution of the proletariat, it became clear that the integrity of politically weak European nations—namely those occupied by the Red Army in Eastern Europe—may be compromised by an aggressive Soviet Union. The subsequent imposition of undemocratic forms of government in many Eastern European countries added to these fears.

One of the most visible factors that led to political tension between the Soviet Union and the United States was the conflict over Eastern Europe. The most important issue here was the fate of Poland,
and indeed the Polish question dominated relations between the Soviet Union and the western powers at the beginning of 1945; Poland was far more important to both sides than any other of the Eastern European countries. It was the invasion of Poland that finally prompted France and Great Britain to declare war on Germany in 1939. Moreover, Poland formed the path by which Germany invaded Russia and the Soviet Union in WW I and WW II. Political hegemony in Eastern Europe was important to the Soviets not only to provide a buffer zone between themselves and the West, but also to serve as the Soviets' own path to invade Germany should they again have reason to fear German power.

The Soviet Union needed both the right of passage through Poland as well as secure lines of communication. If Poland were allowed to be independent, or even worse come under the influence of the West, such rights could not be secure. By the start of 1945, the thrust of Soviet policy seemed clear to the Western allies. The Soviet Union, in spite of vociferous objections from her Western allies, recognized the communist-dominated
The Lublin Committee as the provisional government of Poland.

**The Making of the NATO system**

By 1949 Europe was divided between East and West. Each side had organized its part of Germany and had incorporated it into its bloc. This division of Europe into two camps did not, however, lead to a stable peace. It was not enough for the two sides simply to accept things as they were. The Soviets, clearly interested in the question of German power, believed they had the right to take any measures necessary to protect themselves, while the British and Americans felt it necessary to retain some influence in Poland and other Eastern European countries, as the Berlin Blockade by the Soviets and the subsequent Berlin Airlift by Western powers in 1948 amply demonstrate.

By 1949, the balance of power shifted away from the West when the Soviet Union successfully exploded an atom bomb. While the Soviets had long enjoyed a clear superiority of ground forces in Europe, the Western allies had been able to counterbalance this superiority with their possession of nuclear weaponry. With the
breakup of the Anglo-American nuclear monopoly, the Soviets were now in a much better position to accept a political and even military showdown with the West. In fact, Stalin was quoted in October of 1950 as saying that the United States, "was not prepared at the present time for a big war." The general consensus in the east was that if war is going to happen, let it happen now.

The western powers were then faced with a serious problem. The military weaknesses now so obvious to western military planners in the light of Soviet nuclear technology led them to conclude that Western European military buildup was necessary. In short, Western Europe would have to be defended on the ground, and a military alliance would be necessary to accomplish such a buildup.

The Structure of NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) of April 1949— which is the legal and binding basis for the alliance— was created within the framework of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which reaffirms the inherent right of independent states to individual or collective
defense. As the preamble to the Treaty states, the aim of the Allies is to "promote peaceful and friendly relations throughout the North Atlantic Area."\(^{14}\) However, at the time of the Treaty's conception, the immediate purpose of NATO was to deter the Soviet Union from expanding militarily and politically into Western Europe.

In order to understand the arguments surrounding the question of NATO enlargement, it is important to develop an understanding of how NATO operates. The principal decision-making and administrative bodies of NATO include the North Atlantic Council, the integrated military command structure, the secretary general, and the various committees of NATO.

The North Atlantic Council

The North Atlantic Council is the only body within the Alliance that derives its authority expressly from the North Atlantic Treaty and is the highest decision-making body in the organization.\(^{15}\) The Council, which meets once a week in regular session, has effective political authority within the organization and is composed of representatives from each of the member

28
states, known as Permanent Representatives.

The North Atlantic Council serves the important role of providing a forum within which the NATO members are able to express their concerns. Permanent Representatives act on instructions from their capitals, and act to inform or explain the views and policies of their governments to their colleagues around the council table. Conversely, the representatives report back to their governments the views and opinions expressed by other governments. As NATO is an example of an intergovernmental institution, each member retains full sovereignty and responsibility for its own actions. When decisions are made by the Council, consensus is required for collective action; simple majorities obtained through formal voting procedures are not used.

The Council, in addition to its duties as the prime decision-making body of the alliance, has an important public profile as it issues declarations and communiques explaining NATO policy to the general public as well as to the governments of countries which are not members of NATO.
The Secretary General

The Secretary General is a senior international statesman nominated by the member governments as Chairman of the North Atlantic Council, the Defense Planning Committee, and the Nuclear Planning Group, and as Secretary General and chief executive of NATO. The Secretary General is responsible for promoting and directing the process of consultation and decision-making throughout the Alliance. He has the authority to propose topics for discussion and decision and possesses a good measure of influence in settling disputes between member states.

In addition to his position within the alliance, the Secretary General is the principal spokesperson for the Alliance in its external relations.

The Integrated Military Structure

The Integrated Military Structure provides the means by which the member countries provide for their common defense. All nations opting to become members of the military part of NATO contribute forces which together constitute the integrated military structure of the Alliance. In accordance with Article 5 of the North
Atlantic Treaty, the integrated military structure provides the organizational framework which allows the member countries to defend themselves against threats to their security or stability.

Under the present arrangement, the forces within the military command structure are organized into three main categories: Immediate and Rapid Reaction Forces, Main Defense Forces, and Augmentation Forces. Each of these categories is designed to combat specific types of threats to NATO security.

In addition to the organization of military forces on a function-basis, NATO military command structure is further divided into two geography-based theatres of operation: Allied Command Europe (ACE) and Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT). The position of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) is located at the top of the command hierarchy. The SACEUR is responsible for the security, peace, and territorial integrity of the European member states. In addition to these responsibilities, the SACEUR is also spokesperson for the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). To this end, the SACEUR has direct access to the Chiefs
Allied Command Europe (ACE) is charged with safeguarding the area extending from the northern tip of Norway to Southern Europe including the Mediterranean, and from the Atlantic coastline in the west to the distant eastern border of Turkey. Responsible for the security of over three million square miles and a population in excess of 320 million people, ACE has divided military operations into three categories including Allied Forces Northwest Europe (AFNORTHWEST), responsible for Norway and the United Kingdom, Allied Forces Central Europe (AFCENT), responsible for the area south of AFNORTHWEST to the southern German border, and Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH), charged with the security of Italy, Greece, Turkey, the Mediterranean Sea, the Sea of Marmara, and the Black Sea. The region of AFSOUTH is separated from AFCENT by the non-NATO member countries Switzerland and Austria.

Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT) is headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, U.S.A. ACLANT extends from the North Pole to the Tropic of Cancer and from the coastal
waters of North America to those of Europe and Africa, including Portugal, with the exception of the English Channel which remains the purview of ACE.

NATO History from 1949 to Present

Between 1947 and 1949 a series of dramatic political events brought matters to a head. These events included direct threats to the sovereignty of Norway, Greece, Turkey, and other Western European countries, the June 1948 coup in Czechoslovakia, and the illegal blockade of Berlin which began in April of the same year. The signature of the Brussels Treaty of March 1948 marked the determination of five Western European countries—Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom—to develop a common defense system and to strengthen the ties between them in a manner which would enable them to resist political, military, and ideological threats to their security.

Negotiations with the United States and Canada subsequently followed regarding the establishment of a single North Atlantic Alliance based on security commitments and mutual guarantees between the nations of Western Europe and North America. Denmark, Iceland,
Italy, Norway and Portugal were invited by the Brussels Treaty powers to become active participants in this process. These negotiations culminated in the signature of the Treaty of Washington on April 4, 1949, bringing into being a common security system based on a partnership among the countries of the United States, Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Canada, Norway, Denmark, Italy, Iceland, and Portugal. These twelve countries came to form the "original" NATO. In 1952, Greece and Turkey acceded to the Treaty. The Federal Republic of Germany joined the Alliance in 1955, and in 1982, Spain also became a member of NATO.

The North Atlantic Alliance was founded on the basis of a Treaty between member states entered into freely by each of them following open debate and parliamentary process. The Treaty upholds their individual rights as well as their international obligations in accordance with the Articles 51 through 54 of the United Nations Charter.

The North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) commits each member country to sharing the risks and responsibilities as
well as the benefits of selective security. The greatest difficulty in negotiating the NAT was finding an exact formula that would satisfy the European desire for a U.S. commitment sufficient to deter Soviet aggression, yet flexible enough to allow the United States time to deliberate prior to entering any conflict. Eventually the agreement stated that,

[the] Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.²²

This was a revolutionary commitment from the United States in view of its political traditions of isolationism and avoidance of "entangling alliances" during peacetime.

At this time, the North Atlantic Treaty was nothing more than a document pledging mutual defense. It took the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June of 1950 to "put the 'O' in NATO--that is to persuade the Allies
to organize an integrated military command structure in peacetime and to establish the presumption of a large, long-term U.S. military presence in Europe.”

The invasion of South Korea had direct relevance for Western forces in Europe as many Western states believed the Korean invasion to be a Soviet stratagem. Specifically, military advisors saw the communist invasion of South Korea as a possible prelude to armed invasion of Western Europe. The response by NAT powers was swift and decisive. In December of 1950, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had served as the Supreme Commander of Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe in 1944-45, was appointed the first Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR). In April 1951, Allied Command Europe (ACE) became operational, with the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) at Roquencourt, near Paris.

The German Problem

The United States was, however, not satisfied with bearing so much of the security burdens in Europe. Specifically, the United States proposed that the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) develop an
independent military force capable of shouldering some of the security burden. Although West Germany had been established as a state in 1949, it had only been given conditional sovereignty and was still under an occupational regime.\textsuperscript{25}

The U.S. proposal for West German armed forces met some resistance. The terrible memories of WW II had not faded, and many within the Alliance were hesitant to allow the rearmament of Germany. Although the strategic reasons for the creation of such a force were perfectly logical given the potential for Soviet aggression in Europe, the French sought to impose severe restrictions on such forces through a counterproposal which called for the creation of a European Defense Community (EDC). As French leaders vowed never to accept “the creation of German divisions,” they instead proposed that German forces be “organized into battalion units of about 1,000 men” to be distributed throughout the proposed European army.\textsuperscript{26} This proposal eventually faded away when an alternate framework for the establishment of West German forces was devised.

The French eventually lost their argument. In

\textsuperscript{37}
1954, at meetings held in Paris, a series of agreements was reached regarding the status of West Germany. First, the agreements normalized relations between the NATO allies and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG or West Germany). Second, the occupational regime then being imposed upon the FRG was officially terminated. The Paris agreements also recognized the FRG as a fully sovereign state, and finally, the FRG was invited to join NATO as a full member.  

In 1954, West Germany was admitted to the Western European Union (WEU) together with Italy and the original Brussels Treaty signatories. West Germany renounced the use of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons on its territory, and accepted various restrictions on its conventional armaments. With assurances from the United States, Canada, and Britain to maintain air and land forces in West Germany, France finally agreed to West Germany’s admittance into NATO which finally occurred in 1955.

The Warsaw Treaty Organization

In response to the West German induction into NATO, the Soviet Union signed the Warsaw Treaty in 1955,
thereby creating the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO). The WTO included the Eastern European countries which came to be known as Soviet "satellite" nations. These countries included Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany (granted technical independence by the Soviet Union in December, 1955), Hungary, Poland, and Romania. Although the WTO was a military alliance directed toward the NATO member countries, the creation of the WTO served to counterbalance NATO militarily and politically. A rough balance in European politics soon emerged which would last until the Soviet collapse in 1991.\textsuperscript{26}

The French Withdrawal

Responding to a dissatisfaction with U.S. nuclear policy, and domination of the NATO military command structure, French President Charles de Gaulle officially withdrew French forces from the integrated military command structure in 1966. Moreover, the French requested that all American nuclear weapons, NATO installations and facilities, be removed from French soil. While the French remained a part of NATO in virtually all other aspects, its withdrawal from the
military command structure did have significant combat readiness consequences. For example, by removing NATO installations from French soil, lines of communication and supply were weakened, requiring that more resources be moved farther east and closer to the front. The French withdrawal also had the effect of requiring more support from the United States, and further required that West Germany play a more significant role in NATO's military readiness.²⁹

Détente

Relations between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies relaxed during the Nixon administration. During this time, many political observers were asking questions similar to those that would come after the Soviet collapse in 1991. Specifically, many were questioning the purpose of NATO during a period of détente between the East and West. In response to this concern regarding NATO's future, the North Atlantic Council commissioned a year-long study to examine the future tasks of the Alliance which came to be known as the Harmel report.³⁰
The Harmel report provided for two essential functions of the Alliance. First, the Alliance was to "maintain adequate military strength and political solidarity to deter aggression and other forms of pressure and to defend the territory of member countries if aggression should occur." Further, the report also created a new function which stated that NATO was "to pursue the search for progress towards a more stable relationship in which the underlying political issues can be solved." Because this report addressed issues both of military preparedness as well as the political gap between the East and the West, its adoption provided the foundation of NATO's subsequent efforts in arms control negotiations.

As arms control and reduction efforts realized success, and the nuclear options available to NATO were voluntarily reduced, NATO came to be increasingly dependent upon conventional forces. With the increasing reliance on conventional forces, the strength of NATO placed greater responsibility on the European member states.
The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 has led NATO to assume a somewhat different role in European peacekeeping. Specifically, the fall of communism was perhaps nowhere more violent than in former Yugoslavia, where NATO eventually became involved.

The Balkans and NATO as Peacekeeper

NATO's first major statement on the civil war in Yugoslavia, in November 1991, gave no indication that the conflict would lead to Operation Joint Endeavor, which NATO defense Ministers in June 1996 called "the largest and most complex operation NATO has ever undertaken, a mission to help bring peace and stability to Bosnia and Herzegovina." Originally, the NATO countries expressed their "deep concern" over the bloody events unfolding there. Over the course of time, however, NATO determined that it must take a more active role in the Balkans in order to preserve European security.

It was not until the middle of 1992 that NATO began to assume peacekeeping responsibilities in the former Yugoslavia. By the end of the same year, NATO in cooperation with the Western European Union (WEU), was
enforcing the UN economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, as well as the general arms embargo against the entire Yugoslav area. This effort came to be known as the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

During the period between 1992 and 1995, the Alliance made decisions that led to naval operations, in cooperation with the WEU, to monitor and later to enforce the UN embargo in the Adriatic. NATO operations there began with monitoring the UN no-fly zone over Bosnia, as well as the ultimate implementation of air strikes to break the siege of Sarajevo and other areas.

Summary

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, created by political and cultural forces that began well prior to the end of the Second World War, has been a successful selective security organization. Throughout the intense years of the Cold War during the 1950s and early 1960s, the years of détente in the late 1960s and through the 1970s, and into the political turmoil associated with Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika, NATO successfully provided for the security of its member states.
In assuming a new role of European peacekeeper, and for a variety of reasons that this study later discusses, NATO has determined that an increased membership will best facilitate the achievement of NATO's goals. While NATO enlargement has already happened with the 1997 admittance of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, and though further enlargement seems a forgone conclusion, this policy of enlargement has critics. Although the Cold War is over and peace seems to have arrived in most of Europe, NATO may be creating new problems with which it must deal.
NOTES

1 Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: Random House, 2000), 133.


3 Ibid., 37.

4 Ibid., 13.


6 Ibid., 109.

7 Ibid., 90.


11 Ibid., 95.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 The NATO Handbook, 15.

15 Ibid., 35.

16 Ibid., 37.
17 Ibid., 35.
18 Ibid., 215.
19 Ibid., 248.
20 Ibid., 252.
21 Ibid., 3.

23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., 30.
25 Ibid.

27 Harder, 42.
28 Ibid., 43.

30 Harder, 45.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.

34 Yost, 193.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
Most propositions for the enlargement of NATO find legitimacy in the fact that NATO is a successful international collective defense organization. Indeed, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is widely regarded as one of the most successful collective defense organizations ever created. As previously discussed, NATO was established in 1949 for the purpose of containing Soviet military and political expansion into Western Europe. Since that time and up to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, NATO successfully served that purpose.

In discussing the arguments in favor of NATO expansion several are seen as the most prominent. It is believed by many that enlargement of NATO to include Eastern European nations will promote democratic reform and stability there, provide stronger collective defense and an improved ability to address new security
concerns, improve relations among the Eastern and Central European states, foster a more stable climate for economic reform, trade, and foreign investment, and finally, improve NATO’s ability to operate as a cooperative security organization with broad European security concerns. In short, proponents of NATO expansion like former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright argue that, “the new NATO can do for Europe’s east what the old NATO did for Europe’s west: vanquish old hatreds, promote integration, create a secure environment for prosperity, and deter violence.” The proposed duties of NATO listed above are important because they would take care of problems which have risen only recently and as a direct result of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

As the Cold War ended, the political atmosphere of Europe changed almost overnight. As unpopular communist regimes were swept away after four decades of Soviet oppression, “[all] of Eastern Europe, millions demonstrated their great joy and jubilation.” With the absence of Soviet hegemony, the fixed bi-polar arrangement of political power shared by the Soviet
Union and the United States was replaced by a very unstable multi-polar political environment with many separate nations each pursuing separate national interests. The importance of the Soviet collapse relative to the political stability of Central and Eastern Europe is not to be underestimated. With the absence of Soviet power in the region, ethnic strife once again resurfaced in these countries. While the division of Czechoslovakia proceeded in a peaceful manner, the breakup of Yugoslavia violently illustrates one of the impacts that Soviet disintegration has had on the region. Similarly, the breakup of the Soviet Union into separate republics had much the same effect. In many of the newly independent republics—particularly the Baltic states—Russians now found themselves to be a persecuted minority.

Perhaps the greatest impact of the Soviet disintegration can be found in the formulation of NATO policy. With the disappearance of its raison d'être, some argued that NATO was no longer necessary. Others argued that NATO should continue operating the way that it had been since 1949, and still others believed that
NATO might begin to assume new roles in the security of Europe. In developing new schemes for the security of Europe, NATO leaders (particularly the Germans and the Americans) eventually decided that enlarging NATO by adding new member states offered the best possible solution to the problem of a purpose for NATO, as well as a solution to the problems of political turmoil being experienced by the newly sovereign countries of Central and Eastern Europe previously controlled like political marionettes from the Kremlin.

Predictions of the demise of the North Atlantic Alliance abounded in the years immediately following the end of the Cold War. Most academics inclined toward the tenets of political realism were predicting that, without the threat that led to its creation, NATO would crumble and eventually wither away.\(^3\) While NATO’s future is still seen by some to be uncertain, it seems safer to say that NATO will not continue to exist after the Cold War in the same way that it did during the Cold War. Specifically, some believe that the Alliance will become something more than a mere selective defense organization.
The logic of admitting new member states into NATO finds basis in the fact that it is now assuming a very different role than the one performed during the Cold War. Although the Alliance is still, at heart, a selective defense organization, it is also transforming into what is now being called an organization of "cooperative security". Specifically, political observer Allen G. Sens argues that NATO is indeed undergoing a transformation from a collective defense organization to a cooperative security organization.

Collective defense efforts are typically formed to "protect their members from a specific military threat to their territorial sovereignty." Such arrangements are therefore exclusive, and are directed against threats that are outside the membership of the alliance. With the absence of the Soviet threat, many believed that NATO's collective defense arrangement might give way to a return to the balance of power system in Europe. This scenario was considered by many to be a political nightmare, as such a security system would inevitably lead to a renationalization of defense priorities among the countries of Europe.
Since the Soviet collapse, NATO has been searching for ways to fill this new role. While the Alliance seems to be far more than a collective defense organization, it is also not quite a true collective security organization. Nor has NATO yet become the basis for a new "concert of Europe." According to political scientist Allen G. Sens of the University of British Columbia, the most apt description for NATO seems to be that of a cooperative security organization. While collective defense and collective security are narrowly defined terms, cooperative security is broader and more encompassing.

**Cooperative Security**

According to Sens, cooperative security is described by six main points. First, cooperative security organizations are based on reassurance and engagement, rather than deterrence and containment. As such they are inclusive and aim to incorporate like-minded nations into a larger political framework. Second, the primary activities of cooperative security are not directed against a specific external threat, but rather exist for the achievement of shared security.
objectives. Third, cooperative security is built on a broad conception of security in order to promote military and non-military objectives. Fourth, cooperative security is aimed at transforming and adapting existing security arrangements to fit the needs of the day. Fifth, cooperative security prefers to establish the conditions under which improvised, informal, and flexible patterns of cooperation can develop consistent with existing or traditional modalities and sensibilities. Last, cooperative security recognizes the value and importance of other bilateral or multilateral security arrangements in the maintenance of regional security.  

As Sens goes on to point out, NATO’s actions since the end of the Cold War indicate that it has in fact come to exhibit many of the features of a cooperative security organization. According to Sens, NATO is "now in the business of projecting security and stability through an elaborate process of political engagement and military cooperation with non-member states."
The process of extending security and stability began, for example, with the "hand of friendship" extended to Central and Eastern European countries in the London Declaration of June, 1990. Furthermore, NATO also announced in the Copenhagen Declaration a year later that any coercion aimed at Central Europe would be of direct and material concern to the Alliance. At the Rome Summit of November, 1991, NATO announced a new strategic concept that no longer recognized the former Warsaw Treaty countries as enemies, it de-emphasized the importance of nuclear weaponry, and no longer spoke of "threats" to security but rather of "risks" to stability. In short, this shift in NATO policy represented an "explicit recognition by NATO of the existence of a broadened security agenda." With the assumption, by NATO, of this new role in European security, many argue that the addition of new member states enhances the organization's ability to achieve its new goals. Specifically, many believe that NATO can be used as a tool to incorporate Eastern European countries into the overall European community. Furthermore, NATO could also be used as a military tool.
to maintain peace in the Balkans and other areas of Europe. Indeed, NATO’s interest in Central and Eastern Europe following the end of the Cold War was undoubtedly driven by a desire to extend stability into a politically tumultuous region of Europe.¹⁶

According to many political observers, the best way to encourage stability in East Europe is for NATO to act as an exporter of Western European political values to Eastern Europe.

Why Not Enlarge the EU Instead?

Many opponents of NATO enlargement propose that it is not NATO that should be enlarged for the purpose of greater European stability, but rather that the European Union ought to serve this purpose. Central Europeans do not see the two organizations as alternatives, but as complementary. While some traditionally neutral nations like Sweden, Finland, and Austria have chosen membership in the EU, but opted out of NATO membership, most Central and Eastern European nations see dual membership in these organizations as perfectly logical given that most of Europe considers NATO and the EU to be the main institutions of Western security. In short, Central and
Eastern Europeans are unlikely to be satisfied with EU membership alone.¹⁷

According to Jane M.O. Sharp, three main reasons account for Central and East European dissatisfaction with EU membership by itself. First, unlike the European neutrals who have opted out of NATO membership, especially Finland and Sweden, which undertake substantial investments in military forces to make their neutrality credible, none of the Central European countries can afford similar investments. Rather, these countries recognize that they need to pool their military resources to provide for a credible security posture.¹⁸

Second, Central Europeans find it difficult to see the EU as providing "anything more than economic security given the EU's failure to mediate the crisis in the former Yugoslavia in 1991-1992."¹⁹ A third problem seen by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is that joining the EU means turning one's economic structure and legal system upside down to become compatible with other EU members.
Moreover, Central and Eastern European nations also point out that the standards for EU admittance are much higher than those for NATO membership. In addition to the NATO requirements of democracy, rule of law, human rights, and the protection of minorities within the society, EU membership additionally requires a fully functioning market economy able to withstand the market forces present within the EU. The EU also requires that "its members adhere to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union; and they must adjust their administrative structures to make them compatible with those of the other EU members." Nations seeking NATO membership instead of, or in addition to, EU membership point out that even though the Swedes engaged in a rapid program of EU compliance, it still took five years for them to achieve full compliance.

**Benefits for Eastern Europe**

Many scholars assert that the enlargement of NATO will help to promote democratic reform and peaceful coexistence between the nations of Eastern and Central Europe. While there are certainly arguments that assert the reverse which will be discussed in the subsequent
chapter, many argue that NATO enlargement is likely to ensure continued democratic reforms within the countries seeking membership in the Alliance. Because most every nation of Eastern and Central Europe actively seeks Alliance membership, the pursuit of the requirements for NATO membership have very significant implications for the European community as a whole. If only a few European countries were seeking membership NATO's impact on the region would not be nearly so important.

When NATO admitted Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic 1997, it did so because those countries had achieved a certain level of political and military achievement which corresponded with the prescribed NATO standard. Specifically, in order to be seriously considered for membership, the applicant countries had to achieve genuine pluralistic democracy, develop market economies, as well as demonstrate a healthy respect for the rule of law. While few would argue that such a process will be trouble-free, it is nevertheless a goal that Eastern European countries should strive for.

In attempting to be admitted to NATO, countries are required by the Alliance to pursue democratic reforms.
Former U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry laid out a five point plan to which aspiring NATO members would have to adhere in order to be considered for membership in the Alliance. Points four and five of his outline said the following:

[potential] new members must uphold democracy and free enterprise, respect human rights inside their borders, and must respect sovereignty outside their borders. Fifth, their military forces must be under democratic, civilian control.\textsuperscript{22}

In short, pursuing NATO membership has encouraged many Central and Eastern European nations to put aside their differences and work towards greater freedom within their borders. Specifically, some have accelerated civilian controls over military forces; others have peacefully settled long-standing disputes over minority rights and borders. In January of 1997, the Czech government gave a formal expression of regret for the expulsion of Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia in 1945 and 1946. Similarly, over a number of years Hungary and Romania transformed their relationship with each other, as did Romania, Ukraine, and, to a lesser extent, Hungary and Slovakia.\textsuperscript{23}
Moreover, the Polish government sacked a general in 1997 who was unwilling to accept civilian control over Polish military forces. The Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia, who have historically had problems dealing with their Russian minorities have, in recent years, softened their attitudes and policies toward them.

While many of these reforms have undoubtedly been enacted in order to curry favor with the West, they are nonetheless real advances for liberal democracy in these countries. Many of these countries, however, feel as though Western governments keep moving the goal posts farther and farther away from full membership in the "Western club" by continuously raising standards. It then becomes incumbent upon the nations of the West to offer some type of truly achievable goal as incentive for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe to continue democratic reforms.

Benefits for NATO and the West

Aside from the benefits that democratization offers the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Sharp asserts that stability in Eastern Europe helps to ensure stability in Western Europe and other areas.
Specifically, she points out that today, the nations of Western Europe would never consider settling their disputes via military means, and Western Europe has consequently experienced political and military prosperity since the end of WW II. She further argues, as do most statesmen and national leaders, that this is the state of affairs that greater Europe should strive to achieve. As German Defense Minister Volker Ruhe put it in October of 1993, "[if] we don't export stability we shall import instability."²⁵ In the final analysis

... a wider alliance is but a means to the end of building confidence and security toward which all of NATO's directions are aimed. In an era of profound transformation in transatlantic and European security, there can be no guarantees that the values and strategic outlook of the Alliance can form the foundation for all of Europe. Nevertheless, we do know that the NATO experience has much to offer as we return to the original broad ambition of NATO and embrace a wider community of free peoples.²⁶

NATO enlargement may also prevent the renationalization of military programs in the newly sovereign nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Renationalization is, in fact, something that concerns both Central and Eastern Europe as well as Western Europe and the United States. Serbia's recent efforts
to assert political hegemony over areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina is just one example of this phenomenon. If NATO continues to expand to include new members in Eastern Europe, it seems unlikely that these nations would feel politically compelled to pursue their own independent security arrangements. According to political analyst Jeffrey Simon in his article, "Does Eastern Europe Belong in NATO," the denationalization of defense policies has been one of NATO’s greatest successes.

Denationalization is the process whereby a country’s defense policy is openly shown to its allies, thereby preventing insecurities from arising among neighbors. Should NATO not enlarge to include new member states in Central and Eastern Europe, or worse still wither away into non-existence, many believe that countries may re-nationalize their defense policies resulting in the renewal of old suspicions. The fears of renationalization are particularly problematic to the neighbors of the newly reunified Germany considering the history of German military aggression. Renationalization could also pose significant problems
for relations between current Alliance members Greece and Turkey given their historically tumultuous relationship with one another.

In addition to preventing the renationalization of defense policies of the member states of NATO, the Alliance framework has provided an excellent means by which the members themselves have peacefully settled disputes. In the British/Icelandic "cod-war" of the 1970s, it was NATO's general secretary Joseph Luns who successfully mediated a resolution to the dispute. Similarly, membership in NATO has nominally helped Spain and Great Britain resolve their differences regarding claims of sovereignty over Gibraltar. Although these political problems held great importance to the countries involved, they pale in comparison to the acrimony that has dominated relations between Greece and Turkey for the last forty years. Indeed, all-out war has, on numerous occasions nearly erupted between these two countries. While NATO has certainly done little to address the sources of the strife between Greece and Turkey, their membership in the Atlantic Alliance has at least prevented full-blown war from breaking out between
the two countries.

As events in the former Yugoslavia amply demonstrate, there is great potential for serious political and military turmoil in Central and East Europe. If NATO’s success in preventing all-out war between Greece and Turkey is any indication, it seems likely that the incorporation of Central and East Europe into the NATO family of member states can only improve the political stability of the region.

The Russia Factor

While the Russian reaction to NATO enlargement has generally been very negative as will be thoroughly discussed in the following chapter, some believe that NATO may again be called upon to act as a check upon an expansionist Russia. Specifically, although the Russian reaction to NATO enlargement is generally cited as one argument against the expansion of NATO eastward, some believe that NATO ought to use this opportunity to gain a stronger strategic advantage in Europe. In short, NATO should take full advantage of Russia’s present political weakness in order to ensure a stronger position for NATO in the event that conflict again
develops between Russia and the West.

**Summary**

In developing for itself a new role in European security which some have called cooperative security, NATO is transforming itself into something more than a mere collective defense organization. In assuming this role, NATO has expressed its concern for the stability of Central and Eastern Europe, and committed itself to a strong involvement in the region.

For many political observers, NATO can best encourage political stability in Central and Eastern Europe by bringing these states into the NATO family. As NATO looks forward to another fifty years, it seems likely that it will continue to expand as it sees such expansion to be the best bet for continued Western European prosperity, continued political and economic reform in Central and Eastern Europe, and the development of a greater European security community.
NOTES


2 Todd Sandler, Keith Hartley, The Political Economy of NATO (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 68.


6 Ibid.


8 Ibid., 27.


10 Ibid., 167.

11 Ibid., 170.

12 Ibid.


14 Sens, 171

66

Gerald B. Solomon, "Prizes and pitfalls of NATO's enlargement," *ORBIS* 41 (Spring, 1997): 211.

David, 30.

Ibid.

Ibid., 31.

Ibid.

Ibid., 27.


David, 27.

Ibid., 28.

Ibid.

Solomon, 142.

Jeffrey Simon, "Does Eastern Europe Belong in NATO," *ORBIS* 37 (Winter 1993): 21

Ibid.


Sens, 199.

Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

ARGUMENTS AGAINST NATO EXPANSION

As Europe emerges from the political turmoil of the Cold War, it is re-evaluating its established security arrangements. The most powerful and important of these arrangements for the countries of Western and Central Europe is arguably the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Pursuant to developing a new security arrangement for Europe, NATO solicited applications from European countries for NATO membership beginning in the middle 1990s. For a variety of reasons, NATO member states believe that enlargement through the addition of new member states is the best possible way to achieve NATO’s security objectives.¹

The arguments against the enlargement of NATO are equally numerous as those in favor of enlargement. NATO’s history as a premier selective defense organization, according to many political observers, is no justification to transform it into a larger, more

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United Nations-style international organization. They argue that to redefine the role of NATO to something of this nature is to invite almost certain disaster. As George F. Kennan noted in a recent interview, "the enlargement of NATO would be the most fateful error in American policy in the entire post-Cold War era."\(^2\)

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the major arguments against the expansion of NATO. In treating this issue, we can see at least three major reasons that support a non-expanded NATO: Russia will be antagonized, exclusion of some countries in Eastern Europe may destabilize instead of stabilize the region, and finally, the addition of new member states may prevent NATO from taking the swift and decisive actions that have, for more than fifty years, been largely responsible for the successful security of its member states.

**The Russia Factor**

From the end of the Second World War to its collapse, the Soviet Union played a major role in the politics of the countries of East and Central Europe.\(^3\)
Soviet/Russian hegemony in Eastern Europe began to end, however, when Mikhail Gorbachev instituted his policies of glasnost and perestroika in the 1980s, and officially when the Soviet Union ceased to exist on December 31, 1991. As this influence over Eastern Europe has continued to disappear for the Russians, the West has begun to extend its sphere of influence into this area.

When the West first began contemplating NATO enlargement in 1993, Russia seemed likely not to pose any serious objections, as it was mostly inward-looking and pursuing a pro-Western foreign policy often dubbed "Atlanticism". Since this time, however, the situation has changed. The Russian Republic has replaced Atlanticism with "statism". Statism is a policy whereby the national interests of a state—in this case Russia—are afforded greater importance than those interests of the regional or world community. This is a pragmatic approach to foreign policy that relies on traditional methods of diplomacy and mechanisms of power.

Evidence of this switch in policy orientations can be seen most notably in the rhetoric of the Russian leaders, the writings of security experts, and the daily
conduct of Russian government in Eurasia, Europe, and elsewhere. While this new policy does not necessarily mean that Russia is again pursuing imperialistic interests, it does mean that Russia is developing a strategic identity and seeking to elevate itself to regional power status. In keeping with the theory of political realism as posited by Hans J. Morgenthau, former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has said that "a state is not rewarded for doing what is right, only what is necessary to survive." 

The changes that statism has brought to the expression of Russian foreign policy have roughly manifested themselves in two political arenas. In Europe, Russia is pursuing greater reintegration with western neighbors Belarus and Ukraine through the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)—very much like an Eastern European Union. In East and Central Europe, Russia is vehemently opposing any enlargement of NATO that would exclude it. In short, Russia is endeavoring to assert its influence in a politically neutral Eastern Europe before it becomes too attached to the West. As it seems likely that statism will remain a key feature
of Russian policy for the near political future, further NATO enlargement will undoubtedly cause further tension between Russia and the West.

As Russia endeavors to create a stable regional system by imprinting its authority in Eurasia and East/Central Europe, its goals are likely to come into conflict with those of the West.

Plagued by economic, political, and social turmoil associated with the changeover from a communist to a free-market capitalist state, Russia has become politically weak in the international community, and it feels that the West's efforts to enlarge NATO by admitting former Soviet ally states is exploiting Russian political weakness at the cost of Russian security.\(^9\)

Although NATO leaders assert that Russia has nothing to fear from NATO enlargement, Russian leaders continue to be concerned.\(^10\) No issue is more central to NATO's goal of building a peaceful political order in Europe than relations with Russia. The issue of NATO enlargement is best examined from six distinct perspectives. These perspectives, which will be
discussed later in the chapter following a broad overview of the Russian reaction to NATO enlargement include the following: the U.S. position of what Russians should think about NATO enlargement, what Russians profess about NATO enlargement, Russian participation in the Partnership for Peace (PFP), Russian views on the possible admittance of former Soviet republics to NATO membership, Russian-NATO deliberations about terms for future relations, and the possibility of Russian membership in NATO. In order to understand fully these perspectives, however, it is first necessary to review briefly the course of Russian politics since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Since the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991, Russia has undergone intense political turmoil and has, at certain times, assumed very different political faces. An examination of these various political trends affords political observers insight to understanding the issues surrounding Russia's reaction to the enlargement of NATO.
The Russian Response To NATO Enlargement

As the Warsaw Treaty Organization began to disintegrate during the years of 1989 to 1991, many Soviet officials believed that NATO, as well, would soon fade away. Eduard Shevardnadze, then the Soviet Foreign Minister, declared in September of 1990 that, "in the future NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization will become component parts of all-European security structures and later will probably be dissolved in them." Other officials went on to say similarly that the U.S. military presence—and above all the nuclear presence—would not remain long after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe.

This assumption by Soviet and later Russian leaders has, however, been proven incorrect. Although Soviet troops were officially withdrawn from Germany by 1994, the United States’ military presence remains. Soviet assumptions regarding the demise of NATO seemed to have been misplaced partly due to a false sense of WTO/NATO parallelism. In effect, they assumed that the WTO equated NATO, and that without one, the other would crumble. The equation of the WTO with NATO proved to be
a rather spurious one, as it grossly underestimated the strength of the foundations of NATO. While the WTO was a creation of Soviet military and political influence that was inspired in a "top down" manner, NATO had been created a full six years prior to the WTO, and done so in a voluntary manner. While the states of the WTO were ostensibly forced into the organization and could not get out (with the exception of Albania in 1968), the North Atlantic Treaty was a purely voluntary agreement arrived at by fully sovereign states.\textsuperscript{13}

The failure of NATO to disintegrate as the Soviet Alliance did in the early 1990s in itself caused much consternation among Russian officials. As is outlined in the following section, the subsequent growth of NATO as a successful international organization has created significant political problems for the Russians, and for the West, as they relate to Russia in the post-Cold War world.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Atlanticism & Statism}

Following the Soviet collapse and the breakup of the empire in 1991, the new republic of Russia looked to the West for economic and political assistance. To this
end, Russian politicians assumed a very accommodating political position relative to the West. This political and diplomatic position came to be known as "Atlanticism." Originally coined by Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, the term "Atlanticism" refers to a two-part Russian foreign policy. Essentially, Atlanticism calls for Russia to do two things: work to establish good relations with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and second, to pursue the establishment of good relations with the West.

Kozyrev, and other likeminded Russian leaders believed that only by forming close ties with the West would Russia be able to overcome the imperial and authoritarian legacy of tsarist Russia to truly become a democratic and "westernized" country. Only by joining the West and becoming like the West, would Russia ever be able to rise to a position of political influence again.

Although Kozyrev's position did reflect a general consensus regarding Russian policy, his views about an Atlanticist foreign policy were not shared by everyone.
Specifically, a growing number of Russian politicians began to think in "more calculating terms." Vladimir Lukin, then ambassador to the United States, represents one member of a school of thinkers that began to place Russian interests more directly above those of the European or world community. In 1992, Lukin published an article in the U.S. journal *Foreign Policy* that expressed a far more guarded Russian political/diplomatic position. In this article, he firmly endorsed Russian cooperation with the United States and West, but did so more for reasons based on political realism than political idealism.

This shift in Russian policy represents the shift from Atlanticism to a new kind of policy called "statism." The shift to a statist foreign policy represented a major shift in the orientation of Russian foreign policy. Unlike the Atlanticist emphasis on regional and international community concerns, statism is far more concerned with the achievement of goals which offer specific benefit to the state. Statism focuses on the internal integrity of the state. This type of policy judges international ventures based upon
their benefit to the nation. Looking outward, it seeks a secure environment that will allow the state to live safely and prosper; as such it often aspires to dominate the areas near its borders and to exert influence even farther out.\textsuperscript{16}

By 1993, it had become apparent that a potential partnership between Russia and America would take a backseat to the pursuit of separate, and at times competing, interests. The formal proclamation of this new statist position came in Russian President Boris Yeltsin's 1993 State of the Union speech to the Duma and the Federation Council when he asserted that Russian foreign policy would be based on the protection of Russian national interest—even when that interest competed with the West. He further warned of a "Cold Peace" if Russia's interests were trampled by the West.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{Russian Acquiescence and the Permanent Joint Council (PJC)}

Pursuant to the new statist policy of "Russia first," Russian leaders vehemently opposed the enlargement of NATO to include the countries of the
former Warsaw Treaty Organization. While enlargement became fact with the 1997 accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to the North Atlantic Treaty, the Russians did obtain what they felt to be significant concessions from the West.

Specifically, the year 1997 saw the creation of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC). The Council was officially established by the Founding Act, signed by the NATO Allies and Russia on May 27, 1997, in Paris. Under the terms of the Act, the PJC brings together representatives of the nineteen Allies and Russia and provides a venue for consultation and cooperation regarding political and security matters. While Russian leader Boris Yeltsin claimed that the Founding Act offered significant concessions by the West, including a commitment not to allow former Soviet republics into NATO, United States President Bill Clinton claimed that the Founding Act and the creation of the PJC have given Russia only a voice, and not a vote.

The result of the Founding Act is ambiguous, as both sides claim political victory. Most political
scholars believe that the Act simply means that the two sides have agreed to disagree.

The Six Perspectives

As outlined earlier, the issue of NATO enlargement and the Russian reaction to enlargement is perhaps best examined from six distinct perspectives. These perspectives include the following: First, the U.S. position of what Russians should think about NATO enlargement, second, what Russians profess about NATO enlargement, third, Russian participation in the Partnership for Peace (PFP), fourth, Russian views on the possible admittance of former Soviet republics to NATO membership, fifth, Russian-NATO deliberations about terms for future relations, and sixth, the possibility of Russian membership in NATO.

First, the United States has argued that NATO enlargement indeed serves Russian interests because it serves to prolong U.S. involvement in European affairs—thereby promoting the political stability of Eastern Europe, and ensuring that Germany remains committed to broader European security concerns instead of the pursuit of a separate national agenda. As former
Secretary of State Madeleine Albright noted, “Russia, no less than the rest of us, needs stability and prosperity in the center of Europe.”

Albright and others have gone on to assert that Russia should not view European freedom and security as a zero-sum game in which,

Russia must lose if central Europe gains, and central Europe must lose if Russia gains... Russian opposition to NATO enlargement is... a product of old misperceptions about NATO and old ways of thinking about its former satellites in central Europe. Instead of changing our policies to accommodate Russia’s outdated fears, we need to encourage Russia’s more modern aspirations.

Regardless of the problems associated with the Russian response to NATO enlargement, U.S. officials have argued that the Alliance cannot allow its growth to be postponed or prevented by Russian opposition. To do so would give the message that confrontation with the West pays off.

Second, while U.S. and Western European leaders do much to emphasize NATO’s role as a “whole European” collective security organization, Russia has had much difficulty reconciling with their perception of NATO as a Cold War machine devoted to containment of Russian
power. To the Russians, enlargement is a policy "pregnant with disaster." Rather than viewing NATO enlargement as a harmless process dedicated to promoting stability throughout Europe, Russians continue to believe that enlargement is deliberately taking advantage of Russia's political weakness by extending the Alliance's sphere of influence.

U.S. involvement through NATO is also seen by many Russians as proof that the United States is endeavoring to "impose an American-designed European security order." Furthermore, the relegation of Russian troops to de facto U.S. command in the Implementation Force (IFOR) and the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in the former Yugoslavia has been seen by many Russian military leaders as demeaning and humiliating—particularly as the United States has tended to favor the Muslim Bosniaks over the Slavic Serbs.

Moreover, Russians believe the most obvious problem with the enlargement of NATO is that it conveys a continued distrust of Russia by the West. As noted by one Russian official,
...[the] Russophobia openly expressed by the Central and Eastern European leaders and the implied promise to expand NATO membership in the next round to countries bordering Russia strongly suggest that advocates of enlargement have a particular adversary in mind.\textsuperscript{25}

Such perceptions are particularly problematic considering that the Alliance is essentially discussing all matters of European security and is now unopposed in implementing them. As Vladimir Lukin asserted,

...[we] all want European security. But if we are refused room [in NATO] we will have to worry about our own security...politically speaking an attempt is being made to kick Russia like a puppy out of the door of a room where questions of all-European security for the strategic future are being discussed. This kind of kick can trip you up yourself.\textsuperscript{26}

Third, the Partnership for Peace (PFP), originally created in January 1994, offers NATO’s partners the opportunity of cooperating with NATO in various programs and activities, including military exercises and civil emergency relief, as well as military operations such as IFOR and SFOR in Bosnia. By the end of 1996, the PFP had twenty-seven members including, but not limited to, Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Finland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, and Moldova.
Russia's initial reaction to the PFP was positive when it was created in 1994, as the Russians believed that its creation would replace any plans for NATO enlargement. Accordingly, Russia's participation in the PFP was significant for the first year, particularly in programs related to civil emergency planning. Russian participation soon faded though, when Russian leaders came to perceive the PFP as a useless organization--that it would not even serve the purpose of postponing or preventing NATO enlargement.

Fourth, the most vehement objections voiced by Russian officials about the enlargement of NATO have been regarding the possible admittance of former Soviet republics to the Alliance. The Baltic republics of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia as well as Ukraine, for example, have expressed interest in becoming NATO members. While former Russian president Boris Yeltsin believed that the signature of the Founding Act in 1997 included an indirect pledge by the United States not to include any former Soviet republics in subsequent waves of enlargement, Russians continue to doubt NATO intentions regarding this issue.
While some contend that the Baltic republics of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia might be added to the Alliance without severe Russian discontent, others believe that their admittance to NATO would cause catastrophic feelings of humiliation and outrage within Russia. To understand the potential for this reaction it is important to note how much Russia wishes to retain a politically neutral "buffer zone." Should NATO choose to maintain an open-ended admission process, and initiate moves to admit former Soviet republics into the Alliance, many political observers warn that anti-western voices in Russia could come to power and move Russia into a decidedly adversarial position relative to Western interests.

Fifth, despite the enlargement that NATO has ultimately undertaken, Alliance leaders have nevertheless endeavored to remain sensitive to the Russian desire to have input in decisions regarding European security. In 1996, for example, the North Atlantic Council reiterated its "commitment to a strong, stable, and enduring security partnership between NATO and Russia." Former U.S. Defense Secretary William
Cohen noted that when important security issues about Europe are being decided, it is important "to have Russia in the loop, and not out of the loop."³⁰

The United States and other Western leaders also hope that NATO's continued efforts to include Russia in European security decisions will help to convince them of NATO's benign intentions. One of the most overt gestures to this end has been the reiteration by NATO leaders that they do not intend to alter NATO's nuclear deployment stance—specifically that they do not intend to deploy nuclear weapons on the soil of newly added NATO member states.

Sixth, one of the reasons for Russian opposition to NATO enlargement has been the tacit understanding that Russia is not being considered, by NATO, for Alliance membership anytime in the near future. It has, in fact, remained an unresolved question.

Although the new mission for NATO as the pan-European collective security organization does not, by definition, preclude the possibility of Russian admittance into NATO, the "Atlantic" nature of the Alliance would require a major revision if Russia were
admitted. In the event of Russian admittance, NATO's military and political responsibilities would extend all the way to the Russian/Chinese border, and on to the Pacific Ocean—something that the NATO member countries may not be entirely willing to do. Indeed, as former U.S. Secretary of State and eminent political scholar Henry Kissinger noted, "[n]o European NATO country considers Russia's size, territorial extent, and distant non-European frontiers compatible with NATO membership."\textsuperscript{31}

The European members of NATO generally consider U.S. rhetoric that conceives of eventual Russian membership in NATO unwise. From the perspective of these states, three arguments against Russian membership stand out.

First, Russian membership may mean abandoning NATO's role as an instrument of collective defense and turning the Alliance into a very ineffective, and cumbersome security regime for the entire Eurasian region—not unlike a smaller, regionally-oriented United Nations. Second, Russian membership in NATO could upset existing patterns of influence in the Alliance, and in
fact could render the European NATO members subordinate to a potential U.S.-Russia dyad of power. Last, if NATO retained its role as an instrument of collective defense, Russian membership would make the Alliance responsible for protecting Russia against China and other powers. Although the prospect of gaining Russia as an ally against China is appealing to many U.S. military strategists, such a pursuit is not of much interest to the European members of NATO.

In short, potential Russian membership in NATO offers some very interesting political dilemmas for both Russia and the NATO member states. While Russia would most likely welcome an invitation to join NATO, the Alliance seems unwilling to go so far at present. As Czech Republic president Vaclav Havel has said, "...an enlarged NATO should consider Russia not an enemy, but a partner...[but] Russia is nonetheless a Eurasian superpower, so influential that it is hard to imagine it could become an intrinsic part of NATO without flooding the Alliance with the busy agenda of Russian interests."
Enlargement Perceived as a Russian Defeat

Irrespective of Russia’s original and continuous objections to NATO enlargement, political observers can already see the damage that NATO enlargement has wreaked on relations between Russia and the West. Specifically, enlargement has created four major problems for future Russian political power in Europe and in the world.

First, enlargement has proven to be a disastrous defeat for Russian diplomacy. In spite of Russia’s protestations and advancement of an alternate security organization called the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), NATO has proceeded with its plan for growth through the addition of new members.

Second, NATO enlargement symbolizes Russia’s sharply reduced influence in international affairs. It is the most visible sign of Russian decline, and essentially confirms the fact that Russia’s political influence stops at the western Ukrainian border.

Third, enlargement signifies a defeat for Yeltsin’s policy of engagement with the West. Originally seen as Russia’s path to salvation, good relations with the West have not proven sufficiently fruitful in the eyes of
Russian leaders. Indeed, Russians see NATO enlargement without their inclusion as a signal that they do not belong in the Western world. Such conceptions in Russia also tend to undermine efforts at Western democratic reforms.³³

Last, the growth of NATO would seem to signify a defeat for Yeltsin’s policies vis-à-vis the near abroad and Eastern Europe. Following the breakup of the USSR, many Russian leaders felt that Russia would serve as a political and economic leader to the former WTO members of Eastern Europe in much the same way the United States interacts with Latin America. When such a relationship failed to develop, and Eastern European nations looked west instead of east for political and economic guidance, Russian pride suffered a severe blow. The last thing that anyone should want is a reawakening of authoritarianism in Russia and the development of a renewed adversarial relationship between the two countries “marked out by the will of heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe.”³⁴

The Problems of Consensus and Exclusion

In addition to the significant problems surrounding
Russia’s reaction to the NATO enlargement, the addition of new member states also poses potential dangers for the cohesion of the Alliance itself. Furthermore, enlargement may also contain political risks for Central and Eastern Europe.

Exclusion

While many advocates of NATO expansion assert that the enlargement of NATO into Eastern Europe will help to foster the success of democratic regimes and promote the general political stability of the region, NATO enlargement thus far has only included a few select states in the region. Specifically, in 1997, the countries of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were added to the NATO family. While this inclusion into NATO has undoubtedly allayed the security concerns of these three countries, other countries in the region have been excluded from the benefits of NATO membership.

Many political observers assert that NATO’s success in promoting stability in Eastern Europe will depend greatly upon how the organization deals with and relates to the countries that have been denied membership. According to Ronald Asmus and F. Stephen Larrabee, two
senior analysts at the RAND institute, how NATO handles the states excluded from membership will directly affect the stability of Europe. The authors contend that, if these countries feel “shut out, a destabilizing backlash could materialize, undercutting support for reform and strengthening nationalist forces within these countries.”

Asmus and Larrabee further contend that if NATO is going to develop an attainable goal for European security, the issue of excluded nations will have to be sufficiently addressed. Managing NATO’s enlargement process—particularly in defining the criteria so as to justify the choice of new members, to prevent destabilizing those not receiving invitations—is a major challenge. Perhaps the biggest fear of Central and Eastern European countries is that they will also not be invited to join the EU.

In short, how NATO and the West deals with the countries excluded from the first round of expansion will have a major impact on the political stability of the region.
Consensus

Although NATO seems, at present to be as politically healthy as it has ever been, many scholars believe that with the loss of its raison d’être, NATO’s future effectiveness may not long endure. Most scholars agree that much of NATO’s success is at least partially attributable to the relative ease by which the member-states reach consensus. Specifically, it is pointed out that fear of Soviet aggression on the part of Western Europe ensured that NATO members were able to put aside their minor differences in order to agree on “big picture” issues.  

Just as the United Nations is widely regarded as an organization too large to take quick and decisive action—as was illustrated during the crises in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s—critics of NATO enlargement contend that increasing the membership of NATO only serves to increase the likelihood that NATO will become too cumbersome to reach fast consensus and take decisive action.

According to political observer Anton Bebler, the decision-making capability of NATO could be seriously
hampered by an increased membership particularly considering the great political differences that exist among the nations of Central and Eastern Europe.  

Summary

Clearly the most important argument against the enlargement of NATO is the Russian reaction. While some argue that expansion now may provide NATO with an upper hand in a potential future conflict, most agree that the expansion of NATO without the actual inclusion of Russia into the Alliance simply increases the likelihood that such a conflict may, some day, occur.

Moreover, if NATO continues to expand, it risks becoming too large to operate with speed and precision—in short, it risks becoming a Euro-Atlantic United Nations. Last, while the inclusion of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic has undoubtedly benefited these countries, those left out of the first wave—particularly Romania, Slovenia, and the Baltic States are left to deal alone with their own political instability.
NOTES


4Dusko Doder and Louise Branson, Gorbachev: Heretic in the Kremlin (New York: Penguin, 1990), 239.


6Ibid., xv.


8Kugler, xv.


13Ibid.


Kugler, 29.

David, 173.

NATO Handbook, 44.

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Yost, 134.

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Yost, 135.

Kugler, 20.


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Ibid., 141.

David, 172.

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34 Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: Random House, 2000), 133.


36 S. Victor Papacosma, Sean Kay and Mark R. Rubin, NATO After Fifty Years (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2001), 123.


CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Review

As NATO emerges from the political tensions of the Cold War, it seems clear that the organization faces new and more far-reaching challenges for European security. Created during a time of political distrust and suspicion, NATO was very much a product of calculated Cold War strategy. To some, NATO is now a soldier without a war to fight.

In Chapter Two this study examined some of the potential historical reasons for the Cold War and outlined the creation of and reason for NATO's existence. This chapter also examined the structure of NATO with emphasis on the collective defense command structure. Chapters Three and Four have endeavored to examine the political environment in which NATO now finds itself as well the two main political paths that NATO now faces. While the expansion of NATO eastward is
now a foregone conclusion with the admittance of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, and future enlargement seems certain,\(^1\) there are still arguments being made that expansion is a bad political move for NATO and its member states.

As this study has endeavored to demonstrate, NATO enlargement has important consequences for European security as well as European political stability. As Europe's principal defense organization, NATO's internal stability and cohesion can have a significant impact on the security of Europe. Furthermore, NATO's continued viability as a successful intergovernmental institution seems likely to play a major role in the progress of Central and Eastern European fledgling democracies. The arguments outlined in this study have all found basis in enlargement's likely impact on NATO and on the security of Europe. While scholars on both sides of the enlargement issue agree that the advancement of democracy in Eastern Europe is a good thing, and that the continued effectiveness of NATO is essential, they still disagree on what effects enlargement is really going to have on NATO and Europe.

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Arguments in Favor of Expansion

Perhaps the most prominent of the arguments in favor of the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is the by so doing, political stability will be “exported” to Eastern Europe. As these countries are only recently emerging from underneath the thumb of Soviet domination, they are experiencing the bittersweet pill of sovereign responsibility. Specifically, countries like Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovenia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are, compared to their Western European neighbors, experiencing serious political instability accompanied with rapid liberal democratic reform. After years of authoritarian rule, these countries are trying to establish firm civilian control over the military, protect the rights of minorities within their borders (particularly in the Baltic states), ensure overall respect for basic human rights, and, at the same time, convert their economies to a competitive market-orientation.

In order for these countries to complete this transition to true democracy, many believe that NATO
needs to extend its umbrella of military and political protection to these countries. Moreover, it is difficult to ignore the fact that political stability in East and Central Europe helps to ensure continued peace and security in Western Europe. As German Defense Minister Volker Ruhe asserted, “if we do not export stability, we shall import instability.”

Furthermore, as NATO has served to prevent open conflict from erupting between such rival countries as Greece and Turkey, it is hoped that NATO can prevent the nationalization of defense policies and resulting military conflicts by expanding to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. As stated earlier, such political analysts as Jane Sharp have pointed out that today the nations of Western Europe do not even "contemplate settling disputes between themselves by force." This is clearly a political reality that Western Europe would like to see extended into Eastern Europe.

Last, as NATO transforms itself from a strictly collective defense organization to a cooperative security organization, enlargement becomes a more
logical course of action to ensure overall European security.

Arguments Against NATO Expansion

Perhaps the most prominent of the arguments against the eastward expansion is the reaction it has elicited from Russia. Specifically, since the final days of Mikhail Gorbachev through the administrations of Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin, Russia has become more and more averse to the prospect of continuing NATO (Western) expansion into its former sphere of influence.

Although it seemed as though Russia would pursue a very "West-friendly" Atlanticist foreign policy during the first few years of the 1990s, by 1993, Russian president Boris Yeltsin was warning of a "Cold Peace" should the West continue to extend its sphere of influence east at the possible expense of Russian interests. Although Russians are still dependent upon Western foreign aid, they have made it clear that NATO's continued pursuit of expansion may risk the relative good relations that currently exist between themselves and the West.
The Russian resistance to NATO enlargement is important for a couple of reasons. One, NATO expansion represents the failure of Russian policy vis-à-vis the near abroad countries of Eastern and Central Europe—namely those that have already been admitted into NATO. Specifically, after the Soviet breakup, the Russians had hoped to be the political leader of the former Warsaw Treaty member states. When this leadership role failed to occur, it represented a severe blow to Russian pride.

Furthermore, NATO expansion eastward symbolizes the fact that Russian political power really ends at the eastern border of Ukraine. As NATO and the West become more politically important to Eastern and Central Europe, Russia becomes less important politically. These defeats for Russian policy have all contributed to a Russian inferiority complex that some believe only exacerbates political and economic instability.

By enlarging, NATO also runs the risk of becoming too cumbersome. While consensus was difficult enough to achieve with the original twelve members and later
sixteen members, the addition of three more members could potentially cause the NATO member states to be less able to agree with one another—particularly given the absence of the external Soviet threat that helped to hold the organization together for more than forty years.

Last, if NATO is to expand eastward with the intent of “exporting” stability through the encouragement of democratic and free-market values, it must successfully develop a plan for dealing with the states seeking admission, but will not be admitted in the near future. While many of these states are working to institute democratic reforms in the hopes of being invited to join NATO, if such an invitation is not forthcoming, reforms may stall, resulting in further political problems.

NATO and the Future

Despite the provocative warning of George F. Kennan that “expanding NATO would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era,” the potential benefits of enlargement would seem to outweigh the possible risks. While the benefits of enlargement should become apparent as the enlargement process

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continues and begins to really work, the risks associated with enlargement can be dealt with through careful planning and diplomatic discourse. For example, the basis for Russian opposition to NATO enlargement rests with their exclusion from the Alliance. Russian fears of enlargement would undoubtedly be allayed if only the member countries of NATO would hold out the possibility of potential Russian membership. This strategy would seem also applicable to any of the other Eastern European countries not currently being added to NATO membership. Although the problem of consensus is still a valid argument against expansion, it would seem to be a small price to pay for the possibility of European military and political unity under the flag of NATO.

Few would have predicted in 1949 that NATO would prove to be as successful as it has been. Indeed, many military analysts, including Dwight Eisenhower, believed in 1949 that if American forces were still in Europe in the mid 1950s helping to provide for its security, the efforts of NATO would have been in vain. On numerous occasions during its history, NATO experienced upheavals
that many believed could have unraveled the Alliance. Examples of these upheavals include the French withdrawal from the joint military command in the 1960s, as well as the Euro-missile crisis of the 1980s. When the process of enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe began, “many analysts again raised the specter of destabilization.”

Despite these and other difficulties, however, NATO has endured and grown strong. Although NATO was originally constructed as a defensive military alliance in the strictest sense of the term, it has continued to survive despite the loss of its foe--contrary to the predictions of those in the camp of political realism. NATO’s continued existence and growth in power, in fact, suggest that a greater and deeper connection exists between the member states.

Despite the warnings of such political scholars as George F. Kennan and others, NATO enlargement seems to offer many potential benefits for both itself as well as Europe overall. While Russia has reacted very strongly to NATO enlargement as it is currently conceived, Russia seems less likely to be politically upset if membership
within the Alliance were seen to be possible. Similarly, the problem of exclusion only exists so long as some countries are admitted while others are left outside the organization with no hope of acceptance.

According the Charles Philippe David, if it is supposed that the underpinnings of NATO’s success extend beyond military reasons, then the future for NATO prosperity seems bright. He offers the following observation:

[first] existing members and aspiring members alike want the benefit of belonging to the hegemonic political camp. Second, the Alliance’s high level of institutionalization yields benefits in terms of continental stability, conflict prevention and management, and coordination of national security policies. These benefits go well beyond geopolitical considerations. Lastly, NATO reflects the existence of a community of nations which share democratic values, practice consultation and collective decision making, and wish to increase the attraction of these values and practices...[this] approach offers a more useful perspective than realism not only on the justification for NATO’s survival and enlargement but indeed on strengthening security in Europe.¹¹

For now, it seems likely that NATO will continue to expand eastward as it attempts to promote stability there, and achieve the development of a broader framework for European security. This study has
endeavored to flesh out the arguments both for and against enlargement not necessarily to prove that one path is necessarily better than the other, but rather to help promote understanding of the issues on both sides. For example, even though Russia is currently opposed to NATO expansion eastward, this position could change if NATO were to consider seriously Russia for NATO membership. Indeed, most scholars agree that if NATO is to survive in the long-term as an institution spreading a “liberal vision” it cannot forever exclude Russia.

The idea of a united Europe is not a new one. While military conquerors like Charlemagne, Napoleon, Hitler, and even Stalin envisioned a Europe united by means of force and oppression, the potential unification of Europe by peaceful, voluntary, and liberal means is indeed a new idea, and is now a real possibility. If NATO’s success at unifying its members in a common purpose to this point is any indication, and if NATO continues its program of expansion to include Central and Eastern Europe, the future for European peace and unity is promising.
NOTES


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6David, 133.


8David, 216.

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10Ibid., 217.

11Ibid.


13Ibid.
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