

A Special Report to the Senate Armed Services Committee and House National Security Committee

No. 23

3/1/96

NATO EXPANSION: MYTHS AND REALITIES

By W. Bruce Weinrod¹

Momentum for the admission of new members into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is increasing. NATO may well invite new members to join the alliance before the turn of the century.²

The case for admitting new members to NATO is persuasive. An expanded NATO will reinforce peace and freedom in Europe and thus will support important U.S. interests and objectives. However, crucial decisions related to NATO expansion have yet to be made. Little information is available about the specifics of NATO expansion, and U.S. public and congressional debate on whether NATO should expand has just begun.

Examining the details of the NATO expansion process and its implications for U.S. interests is both inevitable and necessary. Some critics of NATO expansion have raised objections which are spurious, misleading, or inaccurate; others have raised legitimate concerns which deserve consideration.

For the process of NATO expansion to be successful, the American public and Congress will have to sort through the myths and realities of the issue. NATO enlargement raises two broad and interrelated sets of issues: whether NATO expansion as such is a good idea and (assuming NATO expansion occurs) how the expansion process can best proceed.

SHOULD NATO EXPAND?

Critics suggest that there exist no real security threats justifying an increased NATO membership. Therefore, the argument goes, there is no reason to expand. But NATO expansion is important, not primarily to defend against an imminent attack, but rather as a deterrent against potential future security threats and an insurance policy against uncertainties.

1 W. Bruce Weinrod, a Washington, D.C., attorney, served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Policy from 1989 until early 1993. He was Director of Foreign Policy and Defense Studies at The Heritage Foundation from 1984 to 1988.

2 In December 1995, NATO's Foreign Ministers endorsed a *Study on NATO Enlargement*. The report appears to take NATO expansion as a given and considers various issues which NATO will need to address in the course of inviting new members.

Bringing in new members would send a signal to any potential aggressor that it would pay a substantial price for any expansionist ambitions against nations which have become a part of the larger Western community of nations. An expanded NATO also would reinforce the post-World War II effort to envelop Germany in a broader European framework and would make it highly unlikely that the region to NATO's immediate east would emerge as an unstable geopolitical vacuum between Germany and Russia.

As it did for many Western European nations in the early post-World War II years, NATO can reinforce the consolidation of free political and economic institutions in the emerging but fragile democracies of Central Europe. The alliance can do this by providing an overarching security umbrella and a clear symbol that such nations are being welcomed as part of the West.

In any event, while Western Europe is indeed safer and more secure after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the rest of Europe contains instabilities of concern. Most important, if a resurgent extreme nationalist leadership in Russia were to appear, it would be easier to deter if NATO already had formalized membership for nations between Russia and Western Europe.

"New Lines" and European Stability

A major contention of critics of NATO expansion is that adding members to NATO inevitably will create "new lines" of instability in Europe between members and non-members. The argument is that nations not invited to join NATO (it is generally assumed that nations such as Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary would be admitted first) would be discouraged and alienated from NATO and the West. As a result, these uninvited nations might join rival alliances or take other actions which would increase geopolitical instability.

This will not necessarily happen. But in any event, the most important new lines in Europe already have been created as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet empire. Adding new members to NATO would only reflect the new geopolitical realities demonstrated in the preferences of many nations to NATO's east for close political, economic, cultural, and security ties to the West.³

The ultimate NATO objective should be the ending of lines and the extension of the free society throughout Europe. However, from a Western security perspective, if dividing lines are to exist in the near term, it is preferable that these lines be as far to the east as practicable.

Russia and NATO Expansion

Concern has been expressed that admitting new members into NATO will have a negative impact on Russia and its relationship to the West. These critics note comments such as President Boris Yeltsin's September 6, 1995, statement that NATO expansion "would plunge Europe into the flames of war" and a remark by General Alexander Lebed (a potential 1996 candidate for Russian President) that it "would mark the beginning of World War III."⁴

Overheated Russian rhetoric, however, should be kept in perspective. Moscow has changed its position on important NATO-related issues: After initial opposition, Russia acquiesced in NATO bombing in Bosnia; and Russia joined the NATO Partnership for Peace (PFP) after a lengthy period of hesitation. Further, there are forces in Russia which view NATO expansion as a positive development for Russia itself; and even among those opposed to NATO expansion, there are many realists who understand, as

3 At the same time, NATO should anticipate possible negative reactions from disappointed nations. See below, "The Process of NATO Expansion," for discussion.

4 As quoted in "The Russian Front Runner," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 22, 1995, p. 26.

the influential Council for Foreign and Defense Policy puts it, that “even in the case of enlargement, the military threat is not likely to increase.”⁵

Another argument is that NATO enlargement would undercut reform forces in Russia and provide a catalyst for the advancement of extreme authoritarian nationalist factions and their anti-Western agenda. However, if authoritarian nationalists come to power again in Russia, it will be due not to increased NATO membership, but to more fundamental systemic factors inside Russia. For example, the issue of NATO expansion was not even a marginal reason for the strong showing of Communist and other anti-Western factions in the December 1995 Russian Parliamentary elections. The reality is that the issue of NATO expansion can have only a marginal effect on whether democracy prevails in post-Communist Russia and on Moscow’s international role.

If authoritarian nationalists take power, their attitude towards the West will not be shaped primarily by whether NATO expands. For such ideologues, the West is the adversary not because of what it does, but because of what it is and what it stands for.

Some critics oppose NATO’s enlargement now but suggest that expansion could be appropriate if and when Russia posed a renewed threat to the West. However, expanding NATO when no threat exists would be a much smoother and more positive action because enlargement in the context of a reassertive Russia inevitably would be criticized as “destabilizing” or “provocative.” Further, it would prove more difficult for NATO members to agree on enlargement should Russia be seen as a renewed threat.

A democratic Russia should accept NATO enlargement for two principal reasons: first, it will encourage the consolidation of democracy in neighboring nations, which in turn will reinforce democracy in Russia; and second, it will make unlikely the kind of regional instability to Russia’s west which would divert attention away from domestic reform.

The West, sensibly, is treating Russia constructively as it did Germany after World War II, rather than vindictively as it did after World War I. It is up to Russia to respond positively to that wise policy.

Security Obligations and Cohesiveness

Critics of NATO expansion suggest that by taking on new security commitments, NATO may be drawn into numerous ethnic or other sub-regional disputes. NATO need not make this a primary mission. NATO can avoid such an outcome by constraining the ability of newly admitted members to draw NATO into localized disputes, and by developing clear criteria for the use of military force.⁶

It has been argued that should NATO grow, its cohesion and sense of common purpose inevitably will dissipate; that a larger NATO, exacerbated by significant cultural and geopolitical differences, will become unmanageable; and that reaching agreement between new and old members on important issues will prove difficult.⁷ But while increasing an organization’s size may present challenges to cohesiveness, NATO’s experience with past enlargement is instructive.

For example, when NATO’s membership was being decided in the late 1940s, the original European members initially rebuffed U.S. efforts to include Norway, Iceland, and Portugal out of concern that these nations were geographically too distant, and that Iceland and Portugal’s “Europeanness” was ques-

5 “Russia and NATO: Thesis of the Council for Foreign and Defense Policy,” paper circulated by Sergei Karaganov, coordinator of the Council’s Working Group on NATO, to the author. The Council is a quasi-governmental body which advises the Russian President on foreign and national security issues.

6 See below, “The Process of NATO Expansion,” for further discussion.

7 Concern is expressed also about the possible impact of a larger NATO on NATO’s military effectiveness. This issue is discussed in “The Process of NATO Expansion.”

tionable. Later, some European NATO members initially opposed admitting Greece and Turkey because they were "distant geographically and culturally from the West."⁸

These and similar concerns have proved groundless. Despite sharp policy differences which have arisen occasionally over the years, NATO in fact developed a real sense of cohesiveness which has enabled it to develop a consensus on actions ranging from the deployment of nuclear-armed missiles in Europe during the 1980s to active cooperation with the international response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait to the deployment of a multinational force in the former Yugoslavia. This cohesiveness reflects the emergence of a common democratic security culture among NATO nations which has enabled even traditional rivals Turkey and Greece to work together, albeit uncomfortably at times, for common NATO objectives.

NATO's new structure allows for some difference of perspective among members, since the alliance already is developing mechanisms which would allow a sub-group of NATO members to take military action. Nonetheless, NATO may need to consider procedural mechanisms, at least for a transitional period, to provide assurance that new members cannot block important NATO decisions.⁹

Enlargement inevitably will bring new perspectives into NATO. But the significant benefits of expansion, including the expansion of the common democratic security culture eastward, easily can outweigh the inevitable disagreements which will occur.

Implications for Military Effectiveness

It also has been suggested that adding members could dilute NATO's military effectiveness. Enlarging NATO obviously would raise challenges for NATO's military structure and capabilities. Even at NATO's current size, assuring effective military coordination among different military forces requires considerable effort. Issues which the alliance will need to address include coordination of multinational force formations, interoperability of military equipment, maintenance of effective communications among different military forces, and overall quality of military forces.

These challenges cannot be resolved fully in the very short term, and there will not always be smooth interaction between current NATO forces and those of newer members whose quality varies greatly at this point. After all, NATO's Cold War defense structure was developed over many years. However, such concerns can be assuaged if NATO works with potential new members to address military requirements, although no nation should be admitted until it satisfies specified NATO military standards.¹⁰

A separate but related concern is that in taking on new commitments, NATO will be overextended militarily. Again, a review of NATO's past is helpful. For example, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff were uncomfortable with bringing Italy into NATO because it might overextend NATO's abilities in the Mediterranean region.¹¹ In fact, Italy's membership has proved to be a significant military plus for NATO.

Another concern is that the presence of former or current Communists in senior government positions in new member nations could serve as a Trojan Horse and present security problems for NATO and its members. Security leaks to Moscow are of particular concern.

8 Lawrence Kaplan, "Historical Aspects of NATO Enlargement," in Jeffrey Simon, ed., *NATO Enlargement: Opinions and Options* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1995), pp. 22-25.

9 There is nothing that would prohibit NATO from establishing, at least for a transition period, constraints on the ability of new members to impede fundamental NATO activities and objectives. For example, new members could be prohibited from vetoing the admission of other prospective members.

10 See "The Process of NATO Expansion" for details.

11 See Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

Former Communists indeed are making a comeback throughout the former Warsaw Pact nations. This is legitimate cause for worry, although this trend may reverse itself over time. The solution is simple: NATO should monitor this matter very carefully, and refuse to admit a new member if there is a genuine security problem. Of course, it also should take appropriate measures to ensure the security of vital military information and intelligence.

Domestic Political Institutions and Practices

Some have suggested that former Warsaw Pact nations should not be admitted to NATO because their domestic institutions are still not fully democratic. However, in the past, NATO has not made democracy an absolute criterion for membership. Rather, it balanced strategic necessity with political concerns.

Portugal, Turkey, and Greece, for example, were admitted to NATO at a time when they were not democracies. They were admitted because of their perceived military benefit against a clear Soviet threat. Spain, on the other hand, was not admitted for many years because perceived military advantages were considered not sufficient to override its non-democratic political system.

There are hopeful signs of political progress in many former Communist nations, and a return of pre-1989 communism among potential Central European applicants for NATO membership is most unlikely. Nonetheless, the possibility of reversion to authoritarian rule cannot be ruled out, and it is not fully clear at what point some of the nations interested in being considered for NATO membership will consolidate their democratic political experiments.

Further, with no immediate direct security threat to NATO, political standards can be made a higher priority. Indeed, as a practical matter, it would likely prove difficult to obtain endorsement of NATO member legislatures for new members whose governments are not clearly democratic.

Thus, NATO will need to balance the geopolitical benefits of expansion with respect to a specific country against any domestic political flaws. For example, Slovakia's location separating Poland and Hungary argues for its admission to NATO on practical military grounds along with those other two nations. However, its domestic practices at present clearly do not meet democratic standards.¹²

The alliance should apply political criteria with some flexibility. This is because the prospect of NATO membership, as well as the fact of membership, may well have a positive impact on the domestic politics of potential new entrants. NATO membership played a positive role in stabilizing fragile European democracies after World War II, and also helped Spain through a shaky transition period to democracy. Admission of emerging democracies such as Poland and Hungary could well have a similar impact.

Thus, while NATO need not and should not admit new nations solely in order to reinforce democracy, admission to the alliance nonetheless has the potential to produce this important side benefit.

Costs of Expansion

NATO's growth would likely have significant financial costs not only for NATO itself, but also for member nations and any new admittees. Most of these costs would be associated with enhancing military capabilities.

¹² The European Union and the United States complained in August 1995 that the Slovakian government has demonstrated a continual pattern of hostility to freedom of expression and a free media.

At this early point, calculations of financial costs must be provisional and depend greatly upon assumptions about such matters as the threat perceptions, military strategy, and force structure of potential new members and NATO itself. Nevertheless, approximate costs, assuming differing levels of military forces, have been estimated.¹³ These totals assume an implementation period of 10 to 15 years, although there will be continuing costs after this period.

- ☛ A least expensive option of around **\$20 billion** would focus on enhancing self-defense for new members by upgrading relevant military capabilities, combined with NATO logistics and communications support.
- ☛ A second approach costing around **\$20 billion to \$30 billion** would include a buildup by new members combined with giving NATO a meaningful capability to project air power.
- ☛ An even more capable option costing around **\$50 billion** would include the same new member buildup, combined with in-region infrastructure and a NATO air and ground force designed for power projection into the region (to include a 10-ground-division, 10-air-wing NATO regional capability); for around \$35 billion, a more modest version of this option with a less ambitious version of this military package could be assembled.
- ☛ Establishing a classic conventional military capability with NATO air and ground forces actually deployed in the new members' region could cost considerably **more than \$50 billion**.¹⁴

These costs are significant. Current NATO members, including the U.S., would have to contribute equitable financial shares. But the new members themselves would have to balance requirements for economic development with the need for military-related expenditures, and thus make real sacrifices during a difficult period of economic development.¹⁵

At the same time, financial requirements should be viewed in context. Over a multi-year period, and broken into shares from NATO nations and new members, the costs to all parties should be manageable. A plausible estimate for a U.S. contribution would be an expenditure of around \$1 billion to \$2 billion per year for 10 to 15 years.

If expansion is in America's and the West's interests, the costs should be manageable and acceptable as a modest supplement to what the U.S. already spends for its own security and that of its allies.

Expansion and U.S. Interests

A secure, stable Europe whose nation-states have free political and economic systems is very much in America's national interest; and bringing qualified and appropriate new members into NATO makes this more likely.¹⁶

13 This discussion of costs is based upon Richard L. Kugler, "Defense Program Requirements," in Simon, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-207, and Mr. Kugler's presentation on "Implications of Expansion for NATO Strategy and Force Structure" at the NATO Expansion Study Group, December 19, 1995.

14 Looked at differently, around \$20 billion would be necessary to upgrade the forces and infrastructure of new members. Additional expenditures would reconfigure NATO forces for defense of new members.

15 For more details on financial issues, see Section II.

16 NATO itself remains relevant and in America's interest to support. See W. Bruce Weinrod, "European Security in the 21st Century," *Heritage Lecture* No. 512, October 6, 1994, and "NATO and U.S. Interests," *Common Sense*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter 1995), pp. 35-48.

U.S. influence and leadership in Europe also can advance American interests. Indeed, it is likely that admission of new members would enhance U.S. influence in NATO. This is because the views of those nations most likely to be offered membership parallel those of the U.S. on most important security issues.

THE PROCESS OF NATO EXPANSION

Even if NATO expansion is a good idea in principle, there are a number of important practical issues which will have to be addressed and resolved for the process of expansion to succeed.

Initial Invitation List

A number of nations have indicated an interest in joining NATO. In the short term at least, only a few will be considered seriously for membership. These nations include the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Slovakia is also mentioned (these four nations together are referred to at times as the "Visegrad Group"). If Austria, Sweden or Finland—all new members of the European Union (EU)—were to seek membership, they would likely go to the top of the list.

At the moment, the Czech Republic is closest to meeting likely NATO standards for membership, while Poland and Hungary are making progress. Slovakia is less likely to be invited at first because of questionable domestic political practices.

Any other admissions to membership probably would be some years away. Plausible future candidates might include Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Baltic nations may meet eligibility criteria as well, but concern about Russian reaction could inhibit NATO's approach.

Pace of Expansion

Some who accept the principle of NATO enlargement nonetheless would prefer a very slow pace. One rationale is that expansion might have a negative impact on Russian policy and give anti-Western candidates in the June 1996 Russian presidential elections a campaign issue.

However, it makes no sense for Russia to be a determining factor in the timing of NATO enlargement. Under such logic, expansion could be delayed indefinitely because for the foreseeable future, the possibility of a negative Russian reaction will always exist. Indeed, it seems more likely that the longer the enlargement process is dragged out, the more potential there is for problems with Russia.

U.S. leadership is important in catalyzing NATO enlargement, and the pace of expansion should not be constrained artificially. In addition, NATO itself can expedite the process by, for example, appointing an Assistant Secretary General to deal with expansion-related issues, as well as with the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and Partnership for Peace (PFP).¹⁷

Domestic Criteria for Membership

It is likely that, either implicitly or explicitly, NATO will apply political and economic membership standards. Plausible domestic political requirements for prospective members include democratic institutions and practices; a market economy; the rule of law along with institutional and legal protection for

17 The NACC is an entity developed by NATO in 1991 to provide an overall political framework for interaction between the former Communist nations of Europe and Eurasia with NATO. The PFP, currently with 26 members, was launched by NATO in January 1994 as a vehicle for implementing concrete programs (such as joint humanitarian relief exercises) and opening up military-to-military contacts.

minority rights; and civilian democratic control of the military, intelligence agencies, police, and internal security forces.

Legitimate concern exists that NATO might lose its leverage for domestic reform once a nation is admitted to membership. Thus, pressure for continued reform must be maintained after the admission of new members. Indeed, entry into NATO (along with pressure from the European Union) can be a positive force for political change. Spain's admission to NATO in 1982 very likely helped reinforce and consolidate its nascent democratic institutions; and NATO membership undoubtedly was a factor in the consolidation of democracy in Portugal, Greece, and Turkey.

NATO in any event has the option of developing procedures for the suspension or even expulsion of a member whose domestic or international policies fall fundamentally short of NATO expectations.

International Aspects of Membership

NATO can ask new members to meet certain foreign policy standards. For example, new members could be required to renounce all territorial claims on other nations. NATO could also insist that new invitees (for example, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary) implement trans-regional cooperative endeavors, such as common security planning at a sub-regional level.¹⁸ For its own part, NATO could formalize its already implicit policy of not becoming involved militarily in a dispute among NATO member nations.

NATO also might require agreement from new members to submit any disputes with other NATO nations to international arbitration, and new entrants could be asked to shape their militaries for defensive missions only.

NATO certainly should expect commitments from prospective members to assist anti-terrorism efforts, to participate in countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or their delivery systems, and to prohibit the export of arms or militarily applicable technology to rogue nations.

Military Criteria for New Members

NATO should expect that new members will contribute to its overall military capabilities and, conversely, will not undermine its military effectiveness. How each new member should comply with these standards remains to be decided. NATO could require, for example, that new members agree to join its integrated military structure (this is important because this structure fosters smoother and more efficient military operations). New members also could be required to strengthen very quickly—in line with NATO standards—the military capabilities of selected military units, and to work for operational military compatibility with NATO forces over the longer term.

New members could be required to make their territory and military facilities available for NATO use, and otherwise support NATO military requirements, without any unilateral constraints on NATO activities. Moreover, new members could be required to keep their military forces and planning open to view by NATO allies, and to assure the protection of intelligence information.

The structure of the military forces of new members will be a crucial factor in determining the effectiveness and costs of military cooperation between new members and NATO. Also important will be the need to determine exactly how NATO's forces would be structured and deployed in peacetime, as well as at a time of crisis or conflict, to fulfill NATO security commitments to new members.

¹⁸ The suggestion has been offered by former Reagan Administration official Constantine Menges for the establishment of a formal security structure for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. In his view, this would be in lieu of NATO membership, at least in the near term.

Military force structure options for new members range from Swiss-type civilian-based forces to a large standing army. Possibilities must be weighed in the context of such factors as perceived national interests and potential military threats, the relationship of national armed forces to NATO's military structure, costs, and other factors. It also would be advantageous for NATO if new members' forces can contribute in a militarily significant way to any future Persian Gulf-type conflicts.

At a minimum, force structure decisions by prospective members should be taken within the context of maximizing regional (Central or Eastern European) military cooperation and strengths, and also within the context of extensive consultations with NATO. For example, shared arms production and military purchases and assistance should be pursued in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of military capabilities and achieve military economies of scale. Defense cooperation and co-production arrangements (arrangements by two or more nations to join in researching, developing, or producing a technology, system, or weapon), either among prospective new members themselves or with other NATO members (including the U.S.), can reinforce this approach.

In general, the military forces of likely new members will not come close to meeting NATO's standards and requirements for many years. Since full operational integration will not be feasible, a realistic shorter-term objective would be to assure that the troops of the old and new members work together as smoothly as possible. Ways in which this might be accomplished include developing an integrated air defense network, conducting NATO military exercises on new members' territory, prepositioning military supplies; and deploying aircraft to bases on new members' territory at regular intervals (called "dual basing").

At the same time, NATO's own evolving strategies and military capabilities need to undergo further changes in order to accommodate a larger NATO. These changes include:

- ✓ **Continuing revisions in NATO's forces** and command structures and planning processes, both to streamline NATO's military structure and to establish command units specifically responsible for the territory of new members;
- ✓ **Adapting NATO's forces** so that sub-groups of NATO nations, such as the Western European Union (WEU) or ad hoc coalitions, can utilize NATO's military resources when appropriate;¹⁹
- ✓ **Further developing multinational formations** (military units composed of personnel from more than one nation), which will be even more challenging when new members are involved;
- ✓ **Reviewing the role of nuclear deterrence in post-Cold War Europe**, a continuing requirement even with NATO's current membership, because nuclear strategy inevitably will be affected by the addition of new members; and
- ✓ **Assessing and implementing air and theater missile defenses** which take new members into account.

Reassuring Uninvited Nations

NATO expansion may cause at least some short-term sense of exclusion or resentment among those not invited in the first round of admissions. The reaction of uninvited nations could range from bruised feelings to an interest in making alternative security arrangements, and momentum for internal reform in such nations could be slowed.

¹⁹ The WEU is composed of 10 Western European nations who have pledged to protect each other against attack and is envisioned as the military arm of the European Union. The international coalition which responded to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is an example of an ad hoc arrangement which utilizes NATO resources.

NATO should seek to defuse such possibilities. For example, it can make clear that expansion is a process and that NATO remains open to new members even after the first new admissions. The alliance also should increase the involvement of such nations in enhanced Partnership for Peace and North Atlantic Cooperation Council political programs and meetings while encouraging their interaction with other European organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union (EU), as well as bilateral programs.²⁰

NATO can point out that the PFP framework already provides a *de facto* equivalent of NATO's Article Four security relationship to PFP participants. While Article Five addresses the defense of members' territory against armed attack, Article Four calls for consultations against more general security threats against a member.

Finally, the alliance can also reinforce efforts to link relevant NATO members more closely with nations that are not invited to join initially. For example, Scandinavian members can work more closely with Baltic nations, and southern region members can develop closer links with Balkan and Mediterranean countries.

Sequence of Admission

The sequencing of new admissions could have an impact on the reactions of those nations not invited to join. NATO will still have to decide, for example, how eligible nations should be admitted—whether individually or in groups—and in what order.

Inviting nations in groups rather than individually could avoid the tensions caused by admitting some nations before others which also are eligible. At the same time, some suggest it would be best not to invite all eligible members at the same time in order to establish that admitting new members is a process rather than a one-time event.

It is too early in the expansion process to suggest which approach is most appropriate. All that can be said at this time is that if NATO chooses not to invite all eligible nations together, it will need to explain clearly its rationale for implementing the first wave of admissions in phases. NATO also needs to provide a realistic assessment to those nations whose prospects for entry are minimal or nil.

Expansion and Non-NATO Institutions

The growth of NATO will occur within a context of multiple European institutions. Most important is the Western European Union, which is linked to the European Union. All WEU members also participate in NATO, while the EU has several members who are not NATO members.

The WEU has defense obligations to its members and is considering admitting new members. Further, the WEU might assume defense obligations for all EU members. If the WEU admits new members before NATO does, or if it assumes an obligation to defend all EU members, then current WEU (and NATO) members will be taking on new defense obligations to nations which are not NATO members.

This has important implications for NATO. WEU nations could become embroiled in a conflict in order to defend a non-NATO member of the WEU—Austria, Sweden, and Finland recently have been admitted, and other nations such as Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary have applied for membership—or a non-NATO member of the EU. These WEU nations, if counterattacked, might then seek to

20 The OSCE (formerly known as the CSCE) is composed of 53 nations and addresses a variety of areas, including the development of international norms of behavior, institutional support for democracy and human rights, and efforts at confidence-building and conflict resolution. The EU is composed of 15 European nations and is the instrument for efforts to integrate Europe politically and economically.

invoke NATO commitments for their own defense. This would mean, in particular, that the U.S. could be called upon to help defend NATO members in a conflict originally involving an attack on a non-NATO WEU member even though NATO had no obligation to defend the WEU or EU nations which were attacked.

In order to avoid such situations, NATO would have to coordinate its expansion process with that of the WEU and the EU. Ideally, nations should become members of both groups at around the same time.

Russia and NATO

NATO expansion should proceed on its own merits and terms. However, as part of the enlargement process, NATO should hold out to Moscow the possibility of a positive or even formal relationship if Russia pursues responsible policies. For example, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, whose members include all NATO nations and all former Warsaw Pact nations and ex-Soviet republics, could be given an enhanced role and responsibility for considering European political and security issues (including Russian involvement in neighboring nations) and developing responses to security problems.

In the short term, NATO should pursue a dual approach. Russian participation in the PFP should be developed through such means as security consultations and humanitarian relief training exercises in order to demonstrate the positive aspects of a new relationship with the West. At the same time, NATO should advise Moscow that any renewed expansionism will end such activities and result in contingency planning against such a Russian approach.

NATO remains, as always, a defensive and transparent alliance. Any reasonable Russian concerns can be addressed; and a NATO-Russia relationship can be institutionalized, up to and including a NATO-Russia agreement defining the terms of the relationship, if Moscow accepts the reality that NATO can expand. Of course, should Russia come under the control of extreme nationalist and expansionist forces, NATO will need to adopt appropriate measures in response.

Ukraine and NATO Enlargement

Ukraine is an especially important part of the European geopolitical equation. Without control of Ukraine, it would be much more difficult for an expansionist Russia to threaten the West directly. Although independent, Kiev still remains sensitive to Russian concerns and thus far has been ambivalent about NATO membership.

A fundamental Western objective should be to assure that Ukraine is not reincorporated into a revived Russian empire. NATO, as well as NATO nations acting bilaterally, will need to make Ukraine a top priority for economic assistance, strengthened political relationships, and security assistance. All this should be implemented with a sensitivity to the challenges posed by Ukraine's balancing act between the West and Moscow.

Financial Costs of Expansion

Most costs incurred by NATO expansion will be to meet military requirements. Current NATO members will have to contribute to the costs of expansion, with the U.S. providing a reasonable financial share. In addition, there should be significant economic assistance from the European Union for economic development so that new members can allocate sufficient resources to improving military capabilities.

At the same time, new members will have to demonstrate a significant financial commitment, which will be a challenge in view of their still early stages of economic development. Creative arrangements, including loans, grants, and even barter arrangements, need to be explored. NATO nations also should consider the sale or lease of excess military items to new members.²¹

In addition, NATO funding for common infrastructure facilities, such as military bases and storage facilities, can be allocated to new members. Costs for military items may be lowered by developing co-production arrangements and taking advantage of economies of scale.

CONCLUSION

The American debate over NATO enlargement, in a fundamental sense, will be over the proper U.S. international role in the post-Cold War world and the continuing relevance of NATO to U.S. interests. If America wishes to protect its security interests beyond the Western Hemisphere and help shape the international environment, and if it is to continue as an international leader, NATO enlargement will further those objectives. The enlargement of NATO also will advance the consolidation of peace and freedom throughout Europe, the expansion of NATO's common democratic security culture, and the protection of U.S. interests in that region and elsewhere.

Many of the arguments raised against NATO expansion are specious or based on inaccurate or exaggerated concerns. At the same time, there are reasonable questions and concerns about how NATO expansion would work. These concerns must be addressed satisfactorily by NATO and by candidates for membership. In particular, prospective members, as well as NATO member nations, will have to contribute their fair share, financially and otherwise.

The continuing importance of NATO is clear. Not only are nations clamoring for admission, but long-standing member France has decided to reinvigorate its participation in the alliance.

NATO has brought in several new members since its inception.²¹ Admission of new members at this point would not be a radical change, but rather a natural progression in NATO's steady growth over the years. Opening the alliance to new members would ratify the expansion of freedom's borders and the reality that new entrants already are a part of the West.

21 The founders of NATO clearly anticipated expansion. Article Ten of the NATO Treaty defines the process for admitting new members.