

NATO Enlargement: Implications For European Security

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Introduction

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established by the Washington Treaty in April 1949, during the beginning of the Cold War. NATO was founded in order to counter the power and influence of the Soviet Union. One of the events that triggered the formation of the Alliance was the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948 and the consequent imposition of Soviet hegemony on the central European countries. The formation of the Transatlantic Alliance began with twelve founding members: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In 1952, NATO became institutionalized as a permanent defense and security apparatus of the European and American Alliance.

The ushering in of the new world order after the break up of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s set the stage for a new set of realities in the international system. Hence, NATO, like any other global actor, was faced with the challenge: "change or die." Enlargement, as an option, became a new realistic policy of adaptation and survival for NATO in the post-Cold War world.

NATO officially declared its intent to admit new members at the Madrid Summit in July 8-9, 1997. At the Madrid Summit, the 16 member Heads of State of NATO invited select states among the new democracies of eastern and central Europe to start accession talks to join the NATO Alliance. The full range of issues addressed by this body included:

- To invite the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to start accession negotiations with the Alliance.
- To conclude the analysis of the resource implications of the forthcoming enlargement.
- To commit NATO to an "open door" policy regarding further accession, and to continue intensive dialogue with nations aspiring to join the Alliance.
- To enhance the Partnership for Peace (PfP) by strengthening political consultation and increasing the role partners play in decision-making.
- To examine the strategic concept, adopted in 1991, to ensure consistency with the new security issues and challenges confronting Europe.

The United States and its NATO allies believed that the admission of the first group of new states by 1999 was part of a broader plan to foster a peaceful, undivided and democratic Europe.

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has taken several steps to reorient its Cold War structures, goals and strategies. These adaptation strategies are designed to enable the international organization to adapt to the new challenges of the twenty-first century. Thus, NATO has taken three main steps to advance this adaptation: Partnership for Peace (PfP), Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) and Enlargement (Expansion).

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Partnership for Peace (PfP)

The purpose of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) was to expand and intensify political and military cooperation among European states. It was also intended to help increase stability, reduce the threat of war and strengthen relationships by promoting mutual cooperation and commitment to democratic principles on which the Alliance stands. The PfP membership was open to all European states with no membership in NATO. Consequently, it aimed to extend participation through cooperation and strengthened relationships with NATO only to those states that embraced democratic principles. Those principals are civilian control of the armed forces, adherence to both the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recognition of existing borders, and commitment to settle disputes by peaceful means. With PfP's offer of bilateral agreements between NATO and each partner state, each individual partnership program is thus provided with varied levels of cooperation. However, PfP attempted to provide consultation with any partner country which considers itself threatened, even though it is not expected to provide security guarantees to them. While about twenty-seven countries have signed the PfP agreements, many still regarded their participation as a first step to full membership in NATO.

The PfP policy enables intensive political and military-to-military cooperation with the new democracies in Europe as well as its former neutrals. With respect to the approximate twenty-seven nations that had joined PfP earlier, the program proved worthwhile in the Bosnian crisis where thirteen PfP partner states substantially contributed to the NATO peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans.

Historically, the PfP was an expansion of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which began in 1990 after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Thereafter, NATO, in its London Summit declaration, enunciated a new set of goals for the Alliance, including changes in its military structure. Also announced was the fact that Russia was no longer an adversary to NATO. The declaration at the London Summit was later reaffirmed by the Alliance's statement in Copenhagen in June 1991, which stated that NATO's main objective was to help create a Europe whole and free.

Consequently, in November 1991, at a summit in Rome, NATO advanced a new strategic concept that reinforced the continuing importance of collective Alliance defense with a strong commitment and orientation toward new security challenges like peacekeeping operations and crisis management. At the summit, NATO launched a new initiative called the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC); which provided an institutional structure or framework for political and security cooperation between NATO and the former communist states. It was not until December 1991 that NATO invited all the former Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) states and all the former Soviet republics to join NACC, whose purpose was to help establish relations between NATO and these countries. Other goals of NACC included the offering of cooperation and dialogue in such functional areas as peace keeping, security aspects of economic development and regional security issues for the sole purpose of projecting security eastwards without offering any collective security guarantees. In May 1997, the NACC held its final meeting, which culminated in the inauguration of a successor organization, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC).

By that time, the NACC membership had grown to embody forty-one states, which incorporated the original sixteen NATO member countries. Other new members included:¹ Albania, Kazakhstan, Slovenia, Armenia, Austria, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Latvia, Belarus, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia, Romania, Turkmenistan, Georgia, Russia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia and Uzbekistan. Other participants however—Australia, Switzerland, Sweden and Finland—maintained their observer status.

Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF)

This initiative, launched in Brussels, Belgium in 1994, was intended to enable NATO forces and military assets to be deployed sparingly in theaters of regional military conflicts, crisis management and peacekeeping operations. It would require all NATO members to provide military assistance whenever necessary to its members under the auspices of the Western European Union.

NATO Enlargement

This third element of NATO adaptation is the central focus of this discussion. The Alliance members embraced this in January 1994, in Brussels, as the basis of admitting new members to the Alliance. It should be noted that the PfP program was also introduced in this forum. This program aimed at enhancing stability and security throughout Europe by focusing on defense related cooperation. It addressed this to all Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) members able and willing to contribute to this program. Also, the PfP goes beyond ordinary dialogue and cooperation to forge a new partnership, which constitutes a permanent feature of the European Security architecture. The Partnership serves a number of functions, among which are:

- To expand and intensify political and military cooperation throughout Europe.
- Increase stability and diminish threats to peace.
- Strengthen relationship by promoting the spirit of practical cooperation and commitment to democratic principles that underpin the Alliance.

NATO leaders also stated that the Washington Treaty remained open to membership for other European states in a way to further the principles of the treaty. The treaty was ratified in Washington on April 4, 1949. There, the states that accepted the invitation to the partnership for Peace, which was signed by the Heads of State and Government of the member states of NATO in Brussels on January 10, 1994, acted to subscribe to the PfP framework document. This document reflected the agreement among the state parties to NATO and the other states participating in the PfP regarding the status of their forces. The basic text of the agreement declares that the Brussels convention:²

1 "The NATO Fact Sheet on North Atlantic Cooperation Council", NR 2, March 1997.; see also, Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, F. Stephen Larrabee, *Survival*, vol. 38, no. 3, Autumn 1996.

2 "NATO Basic Document: PfP SOFA," 19 June 1995, 1-6. ; see also Stephen Camborne, "Will the Senate Endorse NATO's Enlargement?," *Nato Review*, Nov/Dec, 1997.

- Together, constitute the states participating in the Partnership for Peace.
- Considers that the forces of one state party to the present agreement may be sent and received by arrangement into the territory of another state party.
- Bears in mind that the decision to send and to receive forces will continue to be the subject of separate arrangements between the states or parties concerned.
- Aims to define the status of such forces while in the territory of another state party.
- Recalls the agreement between state parties to the North Atlantic Treaty, concerning status of their forces signed in London on June 19, 1951.
- NATO advanced its adaptation goal by commissioning a study published in September 1995 that set forth the Alliance's rationale and process of enlargement of its membership.

The study concludes that:³

- NATO remains a defensive alliance whose fundamental purpose is to preserve peace in the Euro-Atlantic and provide security for its members.
- The purpose of enlargement is to integrate more countries into existing community of values and institutions that will enhance security and stability for all the countries in the Euro-Atlantic region.
- New NATO allies would be full members of the Alliance, with rights and responsibilities equal to those of existing allies.
- Decisions on which nations to admit to NATO would be made exclusively by Alliance members by consensus and on case-by-case basis, with no non-NATO states holding a veto.
- In order to join the Alliance, new members would have to demonstrate support for NATO's principles and policies, adherence to market democracy and civilian control of the military, minimum standards of military interoperability and willingness to meet the full responsibilities of Alliance membership.
- The process of considering and admitting new members would be steady and transparent in order to build confidence in the broader European region and beyond.
- No PfP state would be automatically precluded from consideration for membership, and the Alliance intends to keep its door open to new members in the future.
- The peacetime stationing of forces on the territory of the new states is neither a condition of membership nor foreclosed as an option. All allies must be prepared in principle to deploy their forces outside their territory in the treaty area as part of their contribution to collective defense.
- While new members will enjoy NATO's full security guarantees, NATO countries have no intention, plan or reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members.

Pursuant to the principles laid down in the December 1995 NATO study, the Alliance began a series of intensive dialogue to induct select countries that had expressed interest in joining. At the time, eleven countries had submitted their letters of intent: Albania, the Czech Republic, Estonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. At a Madrid, Spain summit that

³ Alain Pellerin, "NATO Enlargement: The Way Ahead", Canadian Council for International Peace and Security (CCIPS), February 14, 1998, 1-8.

included the Heads of State of Alliance members, in July of 1997, a number of states from among the group of eleven interested states were invited to begin accession talks for induction into NATO. However, the strategic intent of NATO was to admit one or more new members by 1999.

Arguments In Support Of NATO Expansion

The work of Michael MccGwire shows that NATO enlargement has many credits: ⁴

- Enlargement will promote stability in Europe, secure an environment for new members to consolidate their democracies and help to solidify the end of the Cold War in Europe by bringing new members to the Euro-Atlantic community.
- With Collective Defense at the core of NATO strategy, NATO enlargement sustains American leadership in Europe and will help secure the transatlantic link that many European states pray for.
- Inclusion of European members into NATO will help to deter aggression in the volatile European theater.
- NATO's enlargement as a defensive alliance will not threaten Russia since it has no plan or need to deploy conventional forces or nuclear weapons on the territories of its new members.
- NATO's arrangement under the NATO-Russia Founding Act of May 1997 guarantees consultations with Russia on select issues of enlargement. While it does not give Russia veto power, it does enable the country a voice.
- While enlargement helps to diffuse a potential Russian threat, it provides the Alliance with the much needed strategic presence in the areas surrounding Russia, thereby limiting its sphere of influence.
- Enlargement will guard against the "re-nationalization" of defense in central Europe, as each member of the Alliance pursues a narrow military purpose that serves its strategic goals under the NATO military and collective defense infrastructure.
- The cost of enlargement will be modest in the face of diminished threat. Failure to expand will encourage a new wave of arms race as many central European states, out of fear of potential border disputes and irredentistic sentiments rearm in order to withstand potential stronger enemies.
- The U.S. and Western defense industries will benefit from enlargement as they secure larger markets for their armaments in the newly admitted allied states.

Arguments Against NATO Expansion

The disadvantages of NATO expansion include:⁵

- There is no need for NATO expansion, as it threatens no state. However, enlargement will create new divisions between NATO and Russia as the Alliance creeps into Russia's traditional zone of influence. Also, failure to invite the Baltic States and Romania into the Alliance would not only isolate them, but also push them into the Russian orbit.

⁴ Michael MccGwire, "NATO Expansion and European Security," London Defence Study, no. 37, January 1997.; see also Jane M.O. Sharp, "A Dayton Report Card," *International Security*, Winter 1997/98.

⁵ Ibid.

- The overriding American interest in Europe is to ensure Russia's continued democratization and integration, both economically and politically into the new international system. Enlargement will humiliate Russia and create a "Weimar Russia," vulnerable to Russian nationalist intentions and influences.
- The security of European states in the post-Cold war era will be enhanced, while the economic and democratic institutions of the European States should remain the obligation of the European Union (EU), not NATO.
- The price tag for NATO enlargement is unbearable. In addition, the European allies are not willing to share the cost. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) of the United States estimates the cost of enlargement to be between \$60 billion and \$125 billion over 15 years, depending upon threat levels.
- The American populace, being aware of the threat posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, supported the costs and goals of collective defense. Recently, in the post-Cold War era, with pressing economic and social needs, they are not willing to assume the costs and unnecessary risk of defending central Europe.
- Enlargement is bound to threaten the Alliance by complicating decision-making. Also, the new states for admission into the Alliance have not been able to establish the tradition of democracy or the maturity of civilian control of the military. Even the three candidate states are not capable of contributing meaningfully to the Alliance missions, and particularly on the question of collective defense.
- Enlargement will weaken the Alliance's true mission of collective defense. Its preoccupation with crisis management and peacekeeping will shift its focus away from military to political issues.
- If instability ever develops in central Europe, the United States will have to shoulder the financial and military costs of bringing peace. As the Bosnia crisis has demonstrated, European states are not committed to bearing the cost of bringing peace, even in their own backyard

NATO Expansion And European Security

The enlargement of NATO membership is at the core of the American and European strategic foreign policy goal of achieving a peaceful, democratic, and united Europe. The strategy in its entirety is consistent with an American foreign policy goal since World War II: to safe guard the security of Europe. The end of the Cold War gave impetus to the pursuit of this goal by engendering a new opportunity of transforming the bipolar relations between the United States and the Soviet Union in Europe into a new relationship marked by new security and economic relations built on mutual relationship. By so doing, the United States and its traditional European allies have helped to shape a new Europe that includes Russia and other former Soviet states, turning a number of new democracies in Europe into prosperous nations congenial to the United States' political and economic values: trade and diplomacy.

According to a report released by the US Department of State's Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, the United States and its NATO allies have since the end of the Cold War pursued a number of initiatives to advance the American enlargement policy by way of:⁶

⁶ Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs; US Department of State: "Report to Congress on Enlargement of North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Rational, Benefits, Costs and Implications," February 24, 1997.

- Throwing support behind the unification of Germany.
- Providing massive bilateral assistance to support democratic and market reforms in Russia, Ukraine, and other states from Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.
- Negotiation and implementation of the 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) that has resulted in the elimination of vast amounts of weaponry.
- Negotiation and ratification of the START II Strategic Arms Control Treaty that would achieve two-thirds reduction in American and Russian Nuclear arsenals.
- Program to help dismantle nuclear stockpiles and secure nuclear materials in Russia and the newly independent states.
- Support for European efforts to develop a European Security and Defense identity and a stronger European military capability within NATO.
- Efforts to strengthen the capabilities and the roles of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Western European Union and other European regional organizations.
- Active American diplomatic involvement and deployment of American troops as part of NATO-led force to secure peace in former Yugoslavia.
- Cooperation with the European Union in the negotiation of multilateral trade liberalization accords, such as the Uruguay Round of the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

NATO enlargement has had both short and long term impacts on the security of the European States and on the United States. European Security has so far been preserved and maintained by NATO's continued commitment to its stability since World War II. In central and east European states and the Baltic, many of the states have begun to restructure their defense and foreign policy to stay congruent with Alliance values and norms. This process of openness and democratization is being accelerated by the strict requirement for NATO enlargement. Case in point is the requirement for the applicant nation to the Alliance to demonstrate, in good faith, operational signs of a democratic system. This must be based on a functioning market economy; absence of entangling territorial or ethnic disputes; an evident respect for the rights of national minorities, geographical contiguity to the Alliance; constitutionally grounded civilian control over the military; and transparency in defense budgets and policy.⁷

Another benefit of NATO Expansion to European security is the guarantee of democratic reforms and stability. This is achieved by the fact that involvement of new members in the Alliance will induct them into a NATO security umbrella that would integrate them into NATO political norms that eventually provide them with the moral, military and economic incentives to preserve and maintain their democratic achievements. On the issue of stronger collective defense and the ability to address new security challenges, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, while eliminating Cold war problems such as balance of power questions and ideological issues, has engendered new problems and threats. These include weapons proliferation, ethnic conflicts, and terrorism. These factors threaten regional security in Europe and beyond. The NATO expansion therefore brings together the interaction and cooperation of like-minded nations committed to the mutual defense of each other's security and territorial integrity, including a commitment to work together to build and maintain a stable and undivided Europe.

7 Zbigniew Brzezinski, "A Plan for Europe," *Foreign Affairs*, Jan./Feb, 1975. For opposing views on NATO, see Michael E. Brown, "A The Flawed Logic of NATO Expansion," *The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Quarterly*, Spring 1995.

Since the exercises to enlarge NATO in the post Cold War period, a number of new and aspiring entrants to the Alliance have entered into mutual security arrangements and in many instances, concluded and signed agreements. These commitments would eventually help to ensure their stable borders and promote interstate cooperation. The agreements have included the Polish-Lithuanian Treaty of 1994, Hungarian-Slovakia Treaty of 1996, and Czech Republic and Germany on the question of Sudeten in 1996. NATO membership has also been promising in the management of the Greek-Turkish problem; a trend NATO enlargement is bound to enhance in terms of improving relations among central and eastern European states.

Pursuant to the goal of burden sharing and contribution to NATO mission, the enlargement program has involved new members to participation in the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR), a major enforcer of the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This effort has helped to bring relative peace and stability to the Balkans. Through enlargement the alliance is able to recruit new allies willing to share the burdens of protecting Alliance interests, and thus help halt fears of uncertainty about the place of central and east European states in an integrated Europe. This level of stability insurance will eventually foster a more stable climate congenial to economic and political reforms, trade and investment within the European States. Thus, NATO members will be able to further downsize their resources and pursue Alliance goals without diminishing their respective national security.

Furthermore, NATO's open-door policy is helping to promote cooperation between the sixteen Alliance members and the new recruits (new democracies) through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and other European Security Institutions like the Atlantic Partnership Council, which continues to play an immense role in the European security scheme, in terms of expanding the Alliance and strengthening Alliance relations with newly inducted democracies that are either absorbed into the Alliance or on the waiting list. This is an important NATO security strategy in Europe because non-NATO members in the region are neither threatened nor alienated. Thus, the Alliance is able to preserve, at worst, the neutrality of those states, which pose no security threat to its members in the interim, as future and potential hostile alliances and actors are at best rendered powerless.

NATO expansion also promotes the security of Europe and the United States through its enhancement of the security interests of Russia. This goal is achieved by the Alliance, by way of fostering democratic reforms in order to restore stability in central and eastern Europe. To further this goal, the Alliance embarked on a long term strategic partnership with Russia, for the purpose of integrating it as a full and constructive participant in Europe's new security architecture, the Partnership for Peace, a proposal to create associated membership for eastern European countries. While this plan falls short of triggering the full obligations of an alliance, it nonetheless, encouraged defense consultation and planning. After long, reluctant and initial negative reactions,

Russia agreed to join the PfP scheme in mid 1994. Early Russian fears came, as it perceived the Alliance moves as an attempt to isolate it and ring its border with hostile neighbors, thereby threatening its national security. The bitter Russian suspicions of American and Allied intentions did not come to light until President Bill Clinton proposed to integrate Poland and other select Eastern European countries into NATO in December 1994. With Russia's loose participation in the PfP arrangement, its potential threat to European security has been compromised, if not co-opted.

Conclusion

In the Post-Cold War world, NATO has pursued three initiatives for its adaptation. These are: Partnership for Peace (PfP), Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF), and Enlargement. The enlargement strategy is intended to transform the bipolar relations of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union into a new relation that is marked by security and economic relations. Essentially, the goal is to shape a new Europe that includes Russia, other former Soviet states and a number of new European democracies that embraces the American political and economic way of life.

With the induction of a new set of countries into NATO, many uncertainties surrounding this enlargement exercise still linger. They include the problems associated with coordination, sovereignty, cultural differences, consensus building, and disparate political and economic development levels between prospective and old members of the Alliance, differences in military readiness, and Russian fears of American and NATO military and political intentions.

The challenge of allaying Russian fears and suspicion about NATO enlargement is the primary way the United States and the Alliance could guarantee long lasting peace and security to Europe. The Alliance has indeed made NATO expansion less threatening to Russia through the pursuit of many policies. One of the policies is that NATO has made the accession process of new entrants a peaceful and incremental one. For example, the "Visegrad Four"- Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia- are being considered to be the first group of entrants into NATO.

Next, NATO's policy is not to allow new members to join its integrated military command structure; and more importantly, its refusal to deploy Alliance forces and weapons in their territories. Also, NATO agreed to make membership into the European Union (EU) available to Russia. It was agreed that Russia would be fully integrated politically and economically into the European politico-economic affairs. By so doing, NATO believed that these steps would help to maintain and sustain the political and economic stability in Russia at a time when democratic and reform movements in Russia are active.

Moreover, by lowering trade barriers and extending more economic assistance to Russia, NATO is able to equally stimulate economic development with the direct effect of dampening ethnic tensions in Eastern Europe. By also using accession conditions into NATO as a bargaining tool with the many non-NATO members for admission, east European states are attracted to EU membership. Thus, they are equally more prone to embrace not just democracy, but international norms that require protection for the rights of their ethnic minorities as well.

Furthermore, the treatment of Moscow as a valued and respected partner helps to strengthen the consultative and planning role of Russia in the Enlargement process. This privilege is embodied in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program documents. In the absence of a non-aggressive treaty, these instruments would reassure Russia with respect to NATO's benign and perceived hostile intentions.

The cogent question is whether there is greater utility to expand or not to expand NATO, given the fact that enlargement is intended to provide stability and security for the entire European continent. It should also be noted that NATO might run more risks if its enlargement exercise is brought to a grinding halt. The reasons are not far fetched. One factor is the fact that much political capital and financial resources have been

committed to the program, making it unwise to consider a withdrawal. Finally, it should be noted that instability in central Europe was greatly attributed to the cause of World Wars I and II, proving that there is great wisdom to suggest that the NATO expansion strategy is a goal worth pursuing to its logical conclusion.