NATO'S METAMORPHOSIS AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN POLITICS:
EFFECTS OF ALLIANCE TRANSFORMATION

Daniel N. Nelson and Thomas S. Szayna
ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the effects of NATO's decision to enlarge on several states and populations invited to join or that had wanted to join but were not invited at the Madrid summit: Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, and Romania. Within the larger framework of alliance theory and the overall transformation of NATO, the authors judge the impact of the Madrid summit decisions on the five countries in three areas: domestic politics (who wins and who loses); international behavior (the way that the foreign policy of each country is likely to be affected by the Madrid decisions); and the role that each country is likely to play as an alliance member or as a "close partner." Since the effects of the Madrid decision will vary, the alliance faces different problems in each of the five countries, ranging from overcoming considerable public doubt about the wisdom of NATO membership in the Czech Republic and Hungary to handling the potentially volatile disappointment in Romania. Further politicization of issues of cost of enlargement and the course of NATO's transformation is likely. In other words, the "politics" of NATO enlargement has just begun.
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Daniel N. Nelson and Thomas Szayna*

PRAGMATIC QUESTIONS

NATO’s metamorphosis is underway. In the U.S. and Western Europe, attention has been riveted on the highly politicized process leading to the Alliance’s July 1997 Madrid Summit about enlargement to the east. At the same time, anticipatory concerns have already begun about the ratification debates in sixteen parliaments.

The success or failure of such a transformation will depend on the degree of support and consensus among the current sixteen, on Russia’s acquiescence, and the successful integration of new members. The latter issue, we submit, is the crux of NATO’s transformation—within the new members-to-be. Our focus, therefore, is on the effects of NATO’s enlargement decision on the states and populations invited to join or that had wanted to join but are unlikely to be asked in Madrid.

Alliance enlargement is a political, not primarily military process, and is much more about the future shape of Europe as a whole, not the West’s relationship with Russia. Among elites in Central and Southeastern Europe, the rationales for joining NATO are clear: acceding to an Alliance that is adapting its tasks to post-Cold War threats may ease residual fears among Central and East European populations that their transformations since 1989 could soon be endangered—by their own internal unrest, by an irredentist-driven Russia, or other peril. And, NATO’s enlargement may assuage endemic concerns about German intentions, allowing a “normal relationship” to be established between Berlin and countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic.1 Were NATO’s relations with Russia to be stable and constructive, the Alliance’s extension to the east has the potential to accelerate the integration of Central European

1 That Germany’s effort to fulfill a larger, security-provider role in Euro-Atlantic affairs may be troublesome to some countries and populations has been discussed in detail by Daniel N. Nelson, “Germany and the Balance Between Threats and Capacities in Europe”, International Politics Vol 34, No. 1 (March, 1997).
states into the Atlantic Community and to do so in a manner that erases suspicions and animosities that erupted into armed strife in prior centuries.

We will not have to wait long to see whether these potential benefits of NATO enlargement are realized. The Alliance’s functional and geographic extension are no longer in the realm of theoretical discussion. For the most part, we are concerned with the pragmatic consequences radiating from Madrid. Yet, we are guided in such an examination by a substantial body of theory regarding alliances and security regimes. We will focus on domestic consequences of NATO’s invitations to accede to the Washington Treaty--the Alliance’s founding document dating from 1949--within the several former communist states (and erstwhile Warsaw Pact members) that are sure to be identified at NATO’s July 1997 Madrid Summit as the “chosen.” Further, we consider the ramifications for countries that sought such an invitation but were not included in the first tranche.

Our effort is neither to revisit all-too-familiar questions about the wisdom of NATO’s extension east, nor to assess the vicissitudes of the ratification process in each Western parliament. Instead, we start from certain “givens”: Invitations will certainly be issued to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary; the May 27, 1997 “Founding Document” with Russia has inaugurated a bold, albeit uncertain intimacy with Moscow on NATO’s concerns and actions institutionalized in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council; and, debates about approving an amended Washington Treaty have already commenced in Western capitals. While we assume, at the end of the day, that NATO’s larger and transformed self will elicit a political consensus, our analysis begins with the effects of these NATO debates on and within the states that sought Alliance membership--both the three that are certain to be invited and the “spurned suitors” that came very close but, for now at least, must content themselves with a deeper, enhanced Partnerships for Peace (PfP) relationship.

NATO’s process of ratifying changes in the Washington Treaty should be completed by 1999. Until then, the military and political integration of Warsaw, Prague and Budapest will not be fully underway. Such integration, however, is itself a process with many domestic
consequences. In new members and among states encouraged to move closer to NATO in a super-PfP while waiting for membership, becoming part of the Alliance will generate more, not less, internal debate and heighten public consciousness of their nation’s international role.

During both ratification and integration phases, among both states invited to join and those told to keep trying, two principal issues will be in play—first, the financial and human costs of accession to NATO and, second, the partial loss of sovereignty implied by NATO membership through the Alliance’s integrated command, stationing of foreign troops or weapons, or being required to support Alliance commitments or intervention in distant locales.

On either or both of these dimensions, political parties and personages will stake out positions and seek advantage. But which political parties will gain from accession of central European states into NATO? What fears might be unveiled through the politics of treaty ratification and a period of integration? Which domestic political actors might exploit and capitalize on these fears? And, most broadly, will democracy in the new member states (or those that must wait longer) be well served by the enlargement process?

Financial costs will be particularly contentious even though it might be argued that the political costs of not enlarging are most more “costly” than any budgetary impact. Yet, in what is still economically difficult times for all post-communist states, NATO’s enlargement will be bound up with voters’ questionable willingness to be taxed more heavily for military modernization and standardization necessary for interoperability with the Alliance, or to pay for foreign deployments or other integrative activities. We expect that existing political coalitions in countries asked or not asked to join NATO will be buffeted by Madrid and subsequent intra-NATO debate, and unsettled by the effects of rising defense costs needed for their country’s integration. Socialists and social-democrats, for example, may balk at the high costs of NATO integration, or of a prolonged courtship of NATO (among states not included in the first tranche).

About sovereignty, too, there will be ample debate. NATO of the twenty-first century will become increasingly a power-projecting organization, likely to be involved in disputes in

\(^2\)See, for example, Karl-Heinz Kamp, “The Broader Perspective”, Financial Times (April 54, 1997).
North Africa, the Balkans, and the Middle East. Central European countries regained their sovereignty—i.e., their national control over foreign, domestic and security policies—only as the Soviet/Russian troops departed after 1989. The deployment of other NATO members’ troops on Polish, Czech or Hungarian soil has not been ruled in or out, but membership clearly implies the presence of NATO military training groups and liaison teams on an ongoing basis. And, of course, frequent visits can be expected of units from Western armed forces in numbers larger than the symbolic levels of PfP. How will the citizenry of NATO’s new members react to such a presence only a few years after the withdrawal of Soviet and Russian troops? Or, when an Alliance decision is made in Brussels to commit NATO resources out-of-area, will these same publics object or protest as their sons and daughters are sent, by a supranational authority, into life-threatening assignments in the Middle East or Mediterranean? Of particular concern is the degree to which such debates may weaken or endanger political coalitions, fueling conservative or nationalist parties’ appeal as their rhetoric emphasizes the loss of sovereignty and the use of their soldiers as “cannon fodder” for operations that serve purposes of Washington, London, Paris or Berlin.

Ratification debates in NATO’s current members will be stormy because of costs associated with enlargement and because some of the sixteen will lose as a result of the Alliance’s incorporation of Central European states. Greece, Turkey and Portugal, for example, have been recipients of large amounts of weaponry through “cascading”—the transference, at no cost to recipients, of excess tanks, aircraft, armored personnel carriers and artillery limited in Central Europe by the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty. Such stocks, now much smaller in size, will no doubt be redirected to modernizing Polish, Czech or Hungarian units, thus reducing opportunities for today’s poorer NATO members to obtain cost-free upgrades to their forces.

From American, German, British and other parliaments and media will also reverberate overtly chauvinist comments about the “Europeanness” of candidate countries and their suitability for inclusion in Western institutions. How such crude Western evaluations of Central
Europe will affect politics in candidate states is a matter of considerable importance. What factions will be strengthened or weakened as such derogatory sentiments surface in Western debates about NATO enlargement? Will public support for joining NATO, which had been weak or ambivalent in Hungary and the Czech Republic throughout 1996 and 1997, erode further--perhaps even affecting Poland’s heretofore overwhelming public consensus for NATO membership?

All of these issues may find their way into the highly-polarized context of referendum campaigns in all candidate countries. In a milieu of Western media and politicians’ attacks on the fitness of candidate members or the costs of enlargement to taxpayers, Czechs, Hungarians and Poles may all be confronted by highly volatile referenda--non-binding on policy makers, but with the potential to derail the accession process. Even in Poland, where NATO membership has consistently received overwhelming support in the mid to late 1990s, the specter of a “new Wehrmacht being stationed in Poland with dreams of reincorporating western Poland into Germany” has already surfaced, and might have a stronger appeal than many observers have recognized. The same kind of appeal may be highly successful in the Czech Republic where NATO membership garnered only lukewarm public approval up to the Madrid Summit.

As these domestic consequences surface within Madrid’s “final three,” candidate countries’ international behavior may also be affected. With security no longer a matter of immediate concern, and the incentive of NATO integration hereafter irrelevant, will conciliatory behavior toward neighbors, minorities, or competitors still prevail? Hungarian policies toward its ethnic kin in neighboring countries, the now-dormant issue of Polish minorities (e.g., in Lithuania), and Czech relations with Slovakia may become more troublesome were NATO-provided security to be seen as increasing opportunities or widening options.

Our exploration of these issues will be focused on the individual cases of candidate states in Central Europe, with a further assessment of countries that had expressed keen interest in membership but were not included in the first wave. We will consider each case from three general perspectives--domestic politics, their international policies and relations, and their likely
role with the Alliance. More specifically, we will ask:

Who will be the domestic political winners and losers after the NATO summit, i.e., who will get credit or blame for success or failure in a country’s campaign to enter NATO? For those asked and not asked to join NATO, what will be the electoral consequences for each country next election and how will the decision affect campaigns or affect party alignments? What are the levels of public support for NATO membership, particularly given costs and reduction of sovereignty implicit to membership?

How will international behavior be affected, particularly vis-a-vis neighbors? Will good behavior be enhanced? What issues with neighbors may be exacerbated?

How will a country behave within NATO? How will a country contribute financial or in terms of peace operations to the Alliance?

Such a case study approach should not obscure, however, broader and more fundamental questions at hand. For, as much as NATO’s metamorphosis is a matter for the immediate attention of policymakers, it is also a process with lasting theoretical implications.

THEORETICAL GUIDANCE

Alliances are “self-help systems” in which states cooperate to enhance security against actors perceived to pose a threat.\textsuperscript{3} They almost always disband when their unequivocal enemy disappears, or when the objective for which they were created has been attained. At the very least, alliances or coalitions tend to contract in size after victory if “additional gains are to accrue to the remaining participants.”\textsuperscript{4}

NATO, however, looks like it will be an exception to these realist rules and touchstones of alliance theory. NATO’s transformation into a different kind of multilateral grouping, less


focused on purely military responses to threats and more devoted to reducing threat and avoiding conflict, has been underway since, perhaps, the early 1990s. This metamorphosis is unprecedented in the history of alliances, and can be expected to have profound effects on old and new members, and the security environment of the Euro-Atlantic and contiguous regions.

Reasons for NATO’s exceptionalism may include its ideology of liberalism and markets or the political institutions—the North Atlantic Council, the parliamentary assembly, etc.—that long ago broadened NATO well beyond a unidimensional alliance. When a successful alliance such as NATO begins to transform itself from a “latent war community . . .” wherein conflict or the threat of conflict is omnipresent, into less of a war-fighting organization and more of an “international regime,” substantial implications arise for members new and old, or for neighboring states that would like to join. When states seek, or are asked to join an alliance which no longer denotes itself as a response to an unequivocal threat, membership takes on a different character; in NATO’s case, Cold War membership made different demands and required a different level of cohesion than the Alliance may now be willing or able to extract from new members. No longer preparing only or primarily for a coalitional war, NATO is more likely to expect new members to conform to certain domestic behaviors and to participate in multilateral humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. These different expectations, in turn, contribute to alternative consequences among new members, those left in the antechamber, and others who reject the process entirely.

Being invited in 1997 to join NATO, or not receiving such an invitation, will have substantial short and longer-term consequences for Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe. Those countries invited in the first tranche will begin to debate the budgetary and human costs of accession, the civil-military implications required for full integration, and the degree to which accession means renewed constraints on sovereignty. Their principal foreign policy goal


achieved, they will both “turn inward” and test their new found foreign-policy assuredness. Since the general parameters of security policy will no longer be a matter of national debate, the preparedness of the armed forces, relations between civil and military authorities and the economics of defense spending will rush to the forefront. And, as noted earlier, assertiveness may replace conciliatory behavior because the incentive of NATO membership is gone.

Meanwhile, countries told to wait confront a new national dilemma. Although most--the Baltic and Balkan states--were unsurprised by being told “not now,” these states and populations have evinced keen disappointment. Romanian politicians, in particular, raised NATO membership to a matter of extreme urgency and generated unhealthy public expectations. Such countries will necessarily look outward and, while continuing to press for an open door to Brussels, will begin to reassess their neighborhood and options for security-related associations on a bilateral or multilateral basis. Denied a chance to “balance” real or perceived threats via NATO membership, they may try to “bandwagon”--i.e., to align with the source of their perceived danger⁷ and to opt for heightened levels of armaments.⁸ Sober assessments in the Baltics and Balkans see no strategically viable option to NATO, and far too many risks were a NATO-centric policy abandoned. But analyses by military and security elites may not always carry the day. Opportunities might grow for demagogues who reap political profit from threatening scenarios and psychological insecurity, thereby endangering democratic progress made in some countries or regions in the last decade.

Alliance theory is unequivocal in one respect: Alliances form and persist not because of principles but because there are tangible military and political rewards that outweigh costs.⁹ Or, as Liska has suggested, they (alliances) are formed essentially “against, and only derivatively for,


someone or something." With its metamorphosis during the 1990s, NATO has been recast as something other than an alliance arrayed against a foe, and increasingly as a collective entity "for" certain norms, values and behaviors.

For countries of Central, Southeastern or post-Soviet Europe, NATO membership has been sought because the expected benefits--to protect against any revisionist Russian policy, to deter any domestic extremists of left or right, to stimulate prosperity and attract Western investment and trade, and to draw their nation closer to West European culture--are thought to be greater than the costs. No longer do benefits of NATO lie in what it opposes militarily; instead, its association with democratic governance and market economies means that NATO connotes political and economic security in a wider context. One can debate NATO's capacity to do so much for so many; yet, it is unquestionable that the Atlantic Alliance has shed the skin of the old Cold War organization it was.

In the following analysis, we assess the political consequences of NATO's enlargement decision by examining specific countries and their political or security conditions. But, never far from sight is the larger picture--of an alliance being reinvented, becoming something that it was not before, perpetuating itself by creating new tasks for old members and old rewards for new members. The test for such a strategy of metamorphosis lies in the countries we examine.

**POLAND**

Poland is by far the most important country out of all--twelve so far--declared aspirants for NATO membership. In size, geostrategic importance, and quality of the armed forces, it dwarfs all the others. It is also the best prepared and the most serious prospective NATO member, a result of post-1989 Polish policy of forging close links to NATO--in itself a fundamental and widely supported tenet of Polish foreign policy of reintegration into European organizations. The Madrid decision is unlikely to change much in that outlook. Polish

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11A sophisticated exposition of the Polish drive for NATO membership is Andrzej Ananicz, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Henryk Szlajfer, "Poland-NATO," Report of the Discussions at the Euro-Atlantic and Stefan Batory Foundation (Warsaw, September, 1995). As early as 1993, the Poles had prepared a detailed plan dealing with the mechanics of joining the Alliance; see, Krystian Piatowski, "Outline and Timetable for Integration of Poland into
behavior in the region is unlikely to change its constructive nature. Too many incentives are in place to prevent even some residual problems with Poland's neighbors to the east from reappearing.

The invitation to join NATO is also unlikely to have much direct impact on the domestic Polish political scene, since there is near uniformity of opinion, both at the elite and popular levels, about the need to join the alliance. But the Madrid decision is likely to be given a political "spin" in the upcoming elections, with all the major political actors claiming to be better prepared to guide Polish entry into the organization. Poland in the Alliance will become an important member and a contributor of forces significant at the overall alliance level.

**Domestic Politics**

The expected invitation to Poland to begin negotiations on accession to NATO comes at a tumultuous time in Polish politics. Elections to the Polish parliament are scheduled for September 21, 1997, meaning that the accession negotiations and the political campaign will take place at the same time. With such a background, the Madrid invitation will have a resounding impact on Polish politics as all political parties try to use elements of NATO membership to promote their chances in the elections.

The invitation also brings to the forefront the issue of which political forces, if any, stand to gain or lose from the NATO decision. Although the Polish political scene has many parties, the contest boils down to the two main coalitions: the socialist bloc, or the SLD, dominated by the main successor to the communist party, and the Solidarity-led bloc, or AWS, that has brought together most of the conservative, nationalist, clerical, and populist parties. At least three other parties are significant actors in Polish politics, including the liberal-leaning Union of Freedom (UW), the social-democratic Union of Labor (UP), and the protectionist farmers bloc (PSL). Because of electoral thresholds, only these two coalitions and three parties are likely to gain representation in the parliament. With polls showing both the SLD and AWS running neck and neck at about 25% each, and the three individually-running parties all close to 10% each, the

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likely result will be that either the SLD or AWS will be the dominant partner in a future Polish ruling coalition. Any and all of the other three parties could join either of the main blocs in a coalition government.

The Polish political party system has matured greatly since the elections in 1991 that led to dozens of parties and groupings entering the parliament. The 1993 elections, carried out under more stringent electoral rules aimed at cutting back on the number of parties represented in the parliament, led to a stable ruling coalition (comprised of SLD and PSL) that survived for four years despite some scandals and bickering both among and within the coalition partners.\(^\text{12}\) The fall 1997 elections promise the same type of political stability, in the sense of only a few, ideologically clearly-defined parties or blocs winning representation and a ruling coalition that again may persist for another four years. The stakes in the elections are high, for at issue is who in Poland will guide Polish negotiations and integration into NATO and the EU. Although the initial round of accession negotiations into NATO is likely to be carried out by the current government, the new government will steer the initial stage of the integration process into NATO. In addition, if there is a change in the ruling coalition, then the new government may revisit and perhaps revise certain aspects of the agreement to join NATO.

Foreign and defense policies, primarily integration into NATO, are shaping up as two of the top issues in the electoral campaign. In addition, each of the main blocs argues that it is better suited to protect Polish interests in the accession negotiations to both the EU and NATO and each has tried to claim credit for having steered Poland to its currently enviable position of a top central European contender for membership in both institutions. The socialists claim they have pursued market reforms successfully but with compassion and an interest in softening the impact of the reforms in the social realm. In the realm of defense, the socialists claim to have straightened out the problems in civil-military relations\(^\text{13}\), initiated the rebuilding of the Polish


\(^{13}\)Adopting a reorganization plan for the Ministry of Defense and ending General Wilecki’s tenure as Chief of Staff
armed forces for integration into NATO, and achieved good results in actual cooperation with the NATO militaries.

On the other hand, the AWS accuses the socialist government of being a dubious partner for NATO, plays up the supposed pro-Russian proclivities of the socialists, and brings up the "sleaze factor" of the socialists, as allegedly demonstrated by communist-era history of some of the top figures in SLD, and the corruption and scandals that have plagued the ruling coalition over the past four years. Defense has emerged as a top issue in the campaign, based on the AWS charge that the current government has neglected the Polish armed forces and allowed them to fall into a sad shape. In a country where the armed forces consistently score as the most trusted and prestigious national institution, the charge has substantial political weight.

The disunity of the nationalist and conservative political forces led to a debacle in the 1993 elections, with the right being virtually shut out of the parliament. With that experience in mind, the parties that make up the AWS are an embittered and frustrated group, determined not to repeat the past mistakes and to win representation and a voice in governing the country. The bitterness over the past four years also has already given a mean edge to the campaign. In short, the stakes are high and the game is for keeps.

Support for NATO membership is high among the Polish electorate, so it is not surprising that the issue has already come to the fore in the campaign. Virtually all political parties of any significance support entry into NATO, seeing it as an important step on the road to reintegration in early 1997 are the two principal accomplishments that improved Polish civil-military relations and helped to clear the path to NATO. But, transforming civil-military relations is a process dating back to important steps taken by the Solidarity governments. See, for example, Agnieszka Gogolewska, "Civilian Control of the Army and Post-1989 Changes in Polish Legislation," The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs (Winger, 1996), pp. 61-82.

Among many others, an ex-defense official in one of Poland’s Solidarity governments, Radek Sikorski, has accused the Socialists of borrowing too many habits and practices from the pre-1989 era; see his article "How We Lost Poland: Heroes Do Not Make Good Politicians," Foreign Affairs Vol. 75, No. 5 (September-October, 1995), pp. 15-22.

Data concerning these public attitudes are reported in The New European Security Architecture, II (Washington, D.C.: USIA Office of Research and Media Reaction, September, 1996), p. 10 and elsewhere. A large majority of Poles (strongly favored or somewhat favored) support NATO membership and sending Polish troops to defend other NATO countries. Poles, unlike any other population in Central Europe, also accept (by a smaller majority) overflights by NATO aircraft and the stationing of NATO troops in Poland. (see p. 25-26).
the country into "Europe." Indeed, while some parties voice skepticism about Polish membership in the EU, both on economic and nationalistic grounds (because of supposed loss of sovereignty and potential danger from abroad), there is unanimity on the NATO issue. Surveys show that support for NATO decreases somewhat when respondents are confronted with the question of increased costs on defense as a result of Polish membership, but there remains little doubt that any vote on Polish entry into NATO, whether in the parliament or by the whole electorate (in a referendum) would win hands down. A sense of insecurity because of 20th century history of Poland, strong defense awareness, residual suspicion of Russia, as well as pro-U.S. sentiments and the perceived need to break down all barriers and borders still remaining over from the Cold War all add up to a widely-shared pro-NATO sentiment.

Although there is a good understanding at the elite level of NATO and the responsibilities that go with NATO membership, the same does not appear to be the case at the popular level. The current government has not launched any educational campaign to make the electorate aware of the consequences of NATO membership. It has taken public approval for NATO as a given and an argument against either explaining or debating the consequences of membership in any great detail. Although the view of the government may be accurate (and public understanding of the consequences of or even reasons for NATO membership in Poland probably does not differ all that much from the state of affairs in most current NATO countries), the issue may come back to haunt a future government, in the sense of opposition to increasing the defense budgets sufficiently to proceed with integration into NATO at a fast pace and in potential future deployment of Polish troops to “hot spots” in and around Europe. In short, at the popular level, the high public support for NATO membership has more to do with the "old NATO." But that NATO no longer exists. The elite realizes it but it has not done a good job of explaining the point to the public. Consequently, there is an incongruence between the popular-level Polish aspirations for NATO and the currently existing NATO. Although the realization of this issue is not going to erode drastically the level of support in Poland for NATO, it may diminish the Polish willingness to tolerate the trade-offs between social and defense spending in the future.
In view of the widespread public support for NATO membership in Poland, even if some of this support is based on misperception and ignorance, the Madrid invitation is not likely to be questioned by any of the major parties. Each of the main political blocs will welcome it and try to present itself as better suited to negotiate with NATO and be a better partner for NATO. The same approach is likely to persist after the elections, with the loser of the elections accusing the other of incompetently dealing with Polish security and embarrassing the country in an important international institution. Essentially, the NATO issue is likely to serve as an effective point of departure for support or criticism of the government, depending on one's views toward the government based on other factors.

But in view of the absence of any serious organized opposition to NATO membership in Poland, it is difficult to speak of any winners or losers in Poland from the Madrid decision. The armed forces as an institution are the only guaranteed winner; their budget will increase for the foreseeable future, either at a rapid or moderate pace, and attention to the concerns of the military in the parliament will only grow.16 Conceivably, if economic difficulties emerge, the issue of defense may be revisited and the defense budgets may come under closer scrutiny. But all signs point to continued sustained and robust growth in Poland in what is clearly the main success story of post-communist transformation in central Europe.

**International Behavior**

The invitation to Poland to begin negotiations on accession to NATO would have faced difficulties had not the successive Polish governments since 1989 moved decisively and quickly to establish good relations with all neighbors and eliminate any outstanding issues between them. A series of bilateral treaties with all neighbors settled any residual boundary issues. Currently, Poland is in the enviable position in central Europe of having good or very good relations with all of its neighbors.

Given such a situation, will the prospect of NATO membership change Polish international behavior in the region? It seems unlikely that any Polish government

16Author’s discussions with Polish Ministry of Defense officials, Warsaw (May and July, 1997).
would revisit any boundary or ethnic minority questions in the foreseeable future. One, the bilateral treaties that Poland signed with all the neighbors had strong backing from across the political spectrum and they provoked little controversy. Two, it is in Polish interest--irrespective of the government in place--to have good relations with neighboring countries, especially the countries east of Poland, so as to prevent Poland becoming a "front-line" state in another Cold War-like situation. Three, as part of the NATO enlargement process, countries left out of the first round but aspiring to NATO in the future (Lithuania foremost but also Ukraine) have attempted to make the best of their situation by forging closer links with what is widely perceived as the most important new member of NATO--Poland. The increasingly close Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Lithuanian ties, based on mutual advantages and stemming from a larger geopolitical rationale, act as another constraint against any belligerent Polish behavior in the region.

At a more detailed level, Polish relations with both Germany and the Czech Republic are free of tensions and show all signs of deep trust, as befitting countries that will soon be in the same military alliance. Any residual popular-level national antipathies, as shown in public opinion polls, by Poles toward both the Czechs and Germans, seem of little significance and they are bound to decrease with time. The issue of Polish minorities in the countries east of Poland, and primarily Lithuania, Belarus and, to a lesser extent, Ukraine, has been solved and is unlikely to be revisited. Indeed, even the clear discriminatory Lithuanian policies toward the Polish minority have been ignored by the Polish government. Successive Polish governments have followed the policy of detaching any minority issues from bilateral relations (even though the policy has caused resentment toward the Polish government among the Polish minority organizations in Lithuania) and there is no sign on the horizon that such a policy is going to change.\footnote{Wojciech Zajczkowski, "Polish-Lithuanian Relations: The Complexities of Geopolitics", in Monika Wohlfeld, ed., The Effects of Enlargement on Bilateral Relations in Central and Eastern Europe, Chaillot Paper No. 26 (Institute for Security Studies of the West European Union, June, 1997), pp. 26-42. Also in the same collection, the Polish-Ukrainian issue is discussed by Oleksandr Pavliuk, "Ukrainian-Polish Relations: A Pillar of Regional Stability".}{17} There are also no incentives at the domestic political level for the policy to change,
since the expellees from what used to be eastern Poland have developed permanent ties in
northern and western Poland and their attachments to ancestral homelands are little more than a
memory of a distant era on the part of the elderly.

Polish relations with Belarus and Russia are a function of the Russian policy toward
NATO. With Russia seemingly having become reconciled to Polish membership in that
organization, and with Polish-Russian economic ties developing well, there seems to be no major
problems on the horizon. Should the Belarusian regime continue its authoritarian ways, Poland is
likely to emerge as a center for Belarusian opposition driven into exile. However, in such
circumstances, Polish-Belarusian relations will be no different from Belarusian relations with
other NATO members, such as Germany. There are no outstanding issues between Poland and
Slovakia and, even if some of the authoritarian proclivities in Slovakia continue, Poland is
unlikely to be affected by them directly.

The only partial exception to the above might take place if AWS does surprisingly well in
the elections, so that it could form a coalition government with PSL. In that case, the more
nationalistically-inclined elements in Poland may come to play a more significant role in Polish
foreign policy toward the countries to Poland's east. Under such circumstances, Polish activism
on behalf of Polish minorities would rise, though it would be checked by and combined with a
more strident anti-Russian line and a policy of deepening security cooperation with Ukraine and
the Baltic states (with a specific anti-Russian element as the driving force).

Taken as a whole, there is every indication that Polish policy of good relations and
proactive avoidance of problems with eastern neighbors will continue as Poland engages in
negotiations to enter NATO and then becomes a NATO member. There is consensus across the
Polish political spectrum on the issue and there is no reason to expect that the policy would
change after Polish membership in NATO. Indeed, the incentives would be even stronger then to
continue the policy. The only potential problem for NATO might be Polish activism in
deepening ties with Lithuania and Ukraine, including in the security and military realm. If
driven by a specific anti-Russian impulse, the policy may cause problems for NATO-Russian relations.

**Poland As An Alliance Member**

There are grounds to believe that Poland will be an important alliance member, contributing significant forces to the alliance and taking the responsibilities of an alliance member seriously. Indeed, out of all the countries being considered for alliance membership, Poland stands out as the only country with a long-standing and demonstrated seriousness in collective security, and as one that brings in important assets to the alliance. Far from decreasing in importance, its role in the alliance will only grow with time. For a country similar to Spain in many respects (size of territory and population), Poland is likely to surpass Spain quickly in its importance and contribution to NATO.

The high degree of defense awareness in Poland, the extremely high prestige of the armed forces, and the rapid sustained economic growth (for the past four years and predicted by all economic forecasts for the foreseeable future) all point to the probability of substantial increases in the defense budgets for the foreseeable future and attention to integration of the country into the alliance. Out of the several long-term options for defense spending in the future prepared by the Polish government, all call for increases in the defense budgets, ranging from 1-4% growth annually for the next decade and beyond. Assuming a mid-range option is adopted, a 2-3% annual growth rate in the defense budget, over 10-15 years will amount to a considerable sum of money. Since the current defense budget amounts to approximately $2.3 billion, the starting base is already substantial.

Potential problems in funding the Polish integration effort into the alliance include unforeseen expenditures tied to the integration of Poland into the EU. Polish agriculture especially needs to go through a radical transformation if the country is to enter the EU and, especially if PSL continues to be a member of the ruling coalition, parliamentary debates on budget priorities and trade-offs between defense and social spending might take on an especially nasty edge. However, there are too many incentives in place in favor of a strong defense effort to
slow down substantially the effort to integrate into NATO. A 2.5-3% annual rate of growth in Polish defense budgets for the foreseeable future not only looks feasible but likely. 18

The Polish defense effort, as measured by the percentage of the defense budget to the GDP, stands at approximately 2.4%, which is slightly higher than the European NATO average. Far from a "free rider," Poland is likely to remain an above-average European contributor to NATO as a member. The higher budgets are going to be accompanied by a far-reaching reform of the armed forces, including the probable shrinking of the overall peacetime size of the force to about 180,000. The combination of savings from further personnel cutbacks and increases in the budgets (concentrated in procurement and modernization), if spent efficiently, could produce a high-quality force (especially the ground forces), important at the alliance-wide level by 2010.

Polish participation in peace operations worldwide as well as Polish cooperation in PfP augur well for Polish willingness to contribute forces to NATO operations in the future. In 1996, Poland was the seventh largest contributor of forces to peacekeeping operations in the world and Polish experience in UN peace operations predates the end of the Cold War. Even in operations such as Bosnia-Herzegovina (UNPROFOR, IFOR, and SFOR) and Cambodia, where Polish units suffered some fatalities, no questions surfaced regarding the wisdom of Polish participation in these operations. Moreover, Polish units received high marks for their performance in all of the operations in which they have been involved.

Within PfP, the Polish armed forces quickly emerged as the most important and serious partner for NATO. While Polish interest in PfP was driven partially by the political desire to deepen the cooperation and to achieve compatibility with the NATO militaries, the rationale does not contradict the current goal of Polish integration into NATO. Nor is there any indication that Polish interest in integration and cooperation with NATO has lessened in any way.

THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic has been probably the least controversial of the NATO aspirants. Geostategically secure because of its exposed western location, most developed and prosperous of the former Warsaw Pact states, and having developed quickly into a seeming success story (politically and economically), and with a charismatic and world famous figure as president, the Czech Republic was taken almost for granted to be in the first wave of NATO enlargement.

Interestingly enough, the widespread acceptance of the Czech Republic as a future NATO member went hand in hand with the knowledge that most Czechs did not care about NATO and that many indications were in place that the Czech Republic will increasingly turn toward being a "free rider" once it is a member. The Madrid decision will change little in Czech international behavior in the region. The country will be surrounded by NATO members or aspirants. Other than a different, though not necessarily worse, relationship with Slovakia, the country's relations with neighbors are likely to become better as a result of Czech accession to NATO.

The invitation to join NATO is unlikely to have much direct impact on the domestic Czech political scene, though it may contribute to a political realignment. But any potential realignment will have more to do with the worsening economic situation and the uneasy post-1996 political balance in the Czech Republic than with NATO, since defense and security issues do not have much resonance among the Czech electorate. As far as the future role of the Czech Republic in the alliance is concerned, it seems likely that the country will be a minor player in the alliance, increasingly tending toward a smaller defense posture and a minor, though still valuable, contribution.

Domestic Politics

The image of the domestic political scene in the Czech Republic, widely seen as a model of the post-communist transition between 1993-96, has gone through a reappraisal since the parliamentary elections in May 1996. The previous strong position of the liberal-led coalition of civic- and Christian-democratic parties, dominated by ODS and led by Vaclav Klaus, scored
surprisingly poorly in the last elections. The coalition's previous dominant position disappeared, replaced instead by a deadlock in the parliament. The gains by the social-democrats and the continued presence of the radical right (the nationalist-populist Republicans) and left (unreformed communists) led to a situation where, if all the parliamentary deputies were present, the coalition would fall one vote short of having a majority. Thus, the expected invitation to the Czech Republic to begin negotiations on accession to NATO comes at a time of an uneasy political balance in the country.

Although the next elections are not scheduled until mid-2000, there is a good chance that early elections will be called, since ruling coalition is vulnerable to votes-of-confidence. While the direct domestic effect of the invitation is unlikely to be far-reaching, it will have larger ramifications that, conceivably, could contribute to the erosion of support for the ruling coalition and lead to a political realignment.

The two main political parties in the Czech Republic are the liberal ODS and the social democrats. Because of the deadlock in the parliament and the ever-present possibility of early elections or a new governing coalition, the political actors have to tread lightly and keep an eye on opinion polls even more than usual. The recently-emergent economic problems have tarnished the record of the Klaus government, further eroded the support for ODS, and strengthened the hand of the social-democrats. Thus, the ruling coalition will conduct accession negotiations with NATO in a politically vulnerable situation. Moreover, support for NATO membership as a whole in the Czech Republic is lukewarm, defense awareness is low, and the possibility of increased costs for defense (as part of integration into NATO) has little if any

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support among the Czech electorate.\textsuperscript{21} The issue of defense and security is of greater concern to
the current ruling coalition than it is to the social-democrats.

If a political realignment does take place and the social-democrats assume a leading role
in the government, they are likely to cut defense spending and de-emphasize the NATO
integration path. The most ardent spokesman for NATO membership in the Czech Republic has
been the president, Vaclav Havel. His high prestige and continued presence is likely to
counteract any Czech government's deemphasis on NATO but the role of the office of the
presidency is secondary to that of the government in running the country. But current trends
indicate that, whether it is Klaus or Zeman (the social-democrat leader) who is the Prime
Minister, interest in NATO is going to decrease, either slightly or substantially.

Security integration and defense issues in general have a low priority and limited
resonance among the Czech electorate. Economic and social issues are of primary importance.
These priorities are evident in the Czech electorate's interest in NATO and the EU. Whereas EU
integration has wide approval, NATO membership has not been able to breach the 50% approval
rating; indeed, it generally receives support of only a third of the population. Most Czechs are
indifferent and a few are opposed to NATO membership, seeing the organization of little
relevance to them. Especially when the issue of increased expenditures on defense in
conjunction with NATO membership is raised, popular support for Czech membership drops
below twenty percent.

There are a number of reasons for such a state of affairs. One, in the post-Cold War era,
and with the breakup of Czechoslovakia, the physical distance between Russia and the Czech
Republic (and even the lack of contiguity between the Czech Republic and the former Soviet
areas) combined with the exposed western location of the country (surrounded by friendly
countries such as Germany, Austria, and Poland) has given the Czechs a sense of security that

\textsuperscript{21}See, for example, data on Czech attitudes reported in The New European Security Architecture, II (Washington,
D.C.; USIA Office of Research and Media Reaction, September, 1996), p. 10 and 27. Czechs "strongly favored" NATO membership less than any other country in Central Europe (17%) in 1996, and were (with Slovakia and Hungary) most opposed to any tradeoff that would increase military expenditures and decrease social spending.
other former Warsaw Pact states lack. Indeed, it is difficult to even think of potential threats to Czech sovereignty in the foreseeable future. Anti-Russian feelings are also not a major factor in the Czech Republic, at least not to the extent they are in Poland, since Czech-Russian relations are not encumbered by the historical grudges that are present in the Polish-Russian relations. In addition, the military has low prestige in the Czech Republic. Indeed, the Czechs are probably among the most pacifistic people in all of Europe, with a substantial portion of the Czech electorate questioning the need to have armed forces at all. Under such circumstances, there are few incentives for politicians to engage in debates on security and the military.

For most of the period since 1993, the Klaus government has shown little interest in defense. Seemingly (and probably correctly) convinced that the best way to gain security for a small country in central Europe is through financial and economic strength, the military was largely ignored by Klaus. NATO integration seemed useful to him only in the sense of furthering the overall goal of EU integration. The military has lacked much clout under Klaus, with the post of minister of defense given to one of the small coalition parties. Only with the realization that the NATO decision was coming up, did Klaus begin paying more attention to issues of defense. The social-democrats are even more indifferent to NATO. After initially opposing Czech membership in NATO, the social democrats changed their position, but they reject any sacrifices--such as increasing the defense budget--tied to membership.

In short, the consensus position across the Czech political spectrum is that NATO membership helps to advance the overall cause of Czech integration into existing European structures (a goal having almost unanimous popular and elite support), though security itself does not rate high on the list of Czech concerns. But there is little incentive for any Czech government to do more on the issue of NATO membership than to make sure that the country enters, as has been widely assumed, in the first round. Were it not in the first round of NATO enlargement, then any Czech government would be accused by the opposition of not promoting Czech integration sufficiently. Other than such a negative incentive, there is little positive
incentive for any Czech government to promote actively Czech membership and take steps to show it treats responsibilities of the membership seriously. The Czech electorate is neither interested nor all that willing to pay the costs of membership or hear all that much about security issues.

Because of the limited attention to security issues in the Czech Republic, there appears to be little understanding of responsibilities that go with NATO membership in the Czech Republic, especially at the popular level but even at some elite levels. And because the issue has little resonance at the popular level, the Klaus coalition has not attempted any educational campaign to make the electorate aware of the consequences of NATO membership. The problem that may emerge as early as 1998-99 is that the parliament may not go along with any increases in the defense budget in order to carry out Czech integration into NATO. It seems unlikely at this stage that either the present coalition or especially the social-democrats will be willing to spend more on defense. If any, the probable effect of such debates may be to give the fringe right and left political ammunition to use against the mainstream parties.

Finally, there is the issue of the referendum. Constitutionally, the issue is murky, with a referendum likely but the results apparently not binding on the government. Since the mainstream parties support membership, a referendum is likely to pass but it may be uncomfortably close, especially if the fringe right and left are successful in mobilizing the electorate on the basis of higher expenditures on defense, visions of Czech draftees dying in minefields in the Balkans, or the specter of "foreign" missiles again based on Czech soil. Because of the limited understanding of what NATO membership implies, these issues are not as far-fetched as it may seem at first.

The Czech armed forces as an institution are the only likely winner, though it is open to dispute how much of a winner they really will be. Eventually, as the Czech military becomes a vehicle for young Czechs to gain exposure to modern equipment and provides a venue for learning English and interaction with other Europeans (including the stationing of Czech officers in NATO's offices throughout Europe), it may be able to increasingly attract bright young men
into the service. Consequently, the prestige of the military and its social standing will rise. But that is a long-term prospect. In the short-term, the Czech military cannot even be assured of increased defense budgets because of integration into NATO. Indeed, given the current economic problems and the decisions taken over the past two years that place the long-term modernization prospects of the Czech military in doubt, the military is in for continued difficult times.

**International Behavior**

The Czech Republic does not have territorial or minority problems of any significance with its neighbors. Czech membership in NATO will not affect this favorable situation. Czech behavior in the region has been constructive and membership in NATO stands only to increase the level of trust and good relations with almost all of Czech neighbors.\(^{22}\)

At a more detailed level, the issue of compensation to the expelled Sudeten Germans has proven more difficult to reconcile than anticipated. However, the problem has to do as much, if not more, with intra-German and Bavarian politics (because of the strong role of an irritant that appears to be close to going away). Even despite this irritant German-Czech relations had developed well over the past seven years and there is simply no question of the issue becoming more than an occasional nuisance.\(^{23}\)

Czech-Polish relations had been marred by some distance, national antipathies, and pre-World War Two tensions. But the post-1989 relations, based on shared concerns and aspirations, and building on extensive personal ties between former dissidents who came to power in both countries after 1989, erased any problems. Joint membership in CEFTA (the Central European Free Trade organization) and especially close ties since 1996--indeed, cooperating in the effort to join NATO--has put an end to any tensions. Czech-Austrian relations have been, for the most part, trouble-free.

\(^{22}\)For an elaboration of Czech views toward neighboring countries, see “Czech National Interests” (Prague: Institute for International Relations, 1993).

Czech-Slovak relations have a special quality about them, because of the fact that both countries had formed one state until the end of 1992. Extensive personal ties between the top politicians and administrators in both countries remain. Depending on their political affiliation, the personal ties lead either to some distrust and even resentment of the others (with Czechs tending to blame the Slovaks for breaking up the country and Slovaks resentful of supposed Czech "big brother" behavior), though close and friendly ties are also just as common. NATO and EU treatment of the Czech Republic since 1993 as a success story and an example for other central European states provokes the ire of some Slovaks.

The treatment contrasts sharply with NATO and EU perception of Slovakia as an increasingly authoritarian state that places limits on free expression, discriminates on an ethnic basis against the ethnic Hungarians, has launched limited reforms in the economic realm, and has looked toward Russia for assistance. The invitation to the Czech Republic to begin accession negotiations to NATO, combined with the falling of Slovakia out of consideration for the first round (and now leading the country to be placed even behind much poorer and less developed Romania in the queue for membership) is bound to accentuate the feelings of "unjust treatment" and conspiratorial thinking in Slovakia. Making the matters worse is the fact that Slovakia had been considered to be a shoo-in for the first round of NATO enlargement in 1993-94 because of its linchpin geographic location among what used to be known as the Visegrad group of countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary). Now, all the other "Visegrad" countries are set to enter NATO in the first round, except for Slovakia.

Although the Czech-Slovak split was as amicable as any divorce can be, no divorce is pretty and some tensions and issues have remained. The two countries have become increasingly differentiated since 1993 and Czech membership in NATO combined with NATO and EU treatment of Slovakia as the "black sheep" of the neighborhood will accentuate and further the differentiation. Up until now Slovaks could treat the Czech Republic as a part of the larger group of post-communist countries. But now, the Czech Republic, and almost all of Slovakia's other neighbors soon will be members of NATO or EU, probably leading to a growing sense of
isolation and differentiation in Slovakia. The Czech-Slovak border changed in nature from a provincial boundary to a national one in 1993, and now it is set to change again from a national boundary to one distinguishing the post-communist transition states and "Western" Europe.

As a result, Czech-Slovak relations probably will take on a more distant form and will lose their "special status" at a faster pace. This is not to say that Czech-Slovak relations will worsen, but they will be different. Although earlier in 1997, the Slovak leadership attempted to block Czech entry into NATO by fomenting problems in Czech-Slovak relations, such actions probably will not be common. As far as the Czech Republic is concerned, the country's membership in NATO is unlikely to change greatly its behavior toward Slovakia. The Czechs will continue to try to keep Slovakia under consideration for future waves of enlargement, for it will be in their interest to keep Slovakia tied to Western institutions as much as possible.

The Czech Republic As An Alliance Member

The Czech Republic is not going to be an alliance member of any great importance. Its small size limits its contribution and role in NATO. The low defense awareness and appreciation for the military by the Czechs act to constrain further the Czech role. But the country may contribute a high quality brigade to NATO reaction forces and the Czech government has demonstrated seriousness in collective security since the end of the Cold War. The Czech Republic is similar to Portugal in many respects (size of territory and population) and the Czech contribution is likely to be close to the Portuguese contribution.

The economic problems that have surfaced in the Czech Republic in 1997 have put a question mark on the likelihood of any increases in the defense budget in the next few years. Defense spending seems likely to remain more or less constant, which is not a favorable sign in view of the expenses connected with integration into NATO. In the longer term, once the country is a NATO member and even if the current economic problems are resolved, substantial increases on defense are also unlikely, since they lack support at the popular level. And once the country is in NATO there will be few incentives for any Czech government to expand political

24 Author's discussions with Czech officials, Prague, May, 1997.
capital and press for such an unpopular move like raising the defense expenditures. The current
defense budget, amounting to about a billion dollars, is high relative to other former saw Pact
states. Especially when computed on a per capita and per soldier levels, the Czech expenditures
are the highest of all the former Warsaw Pact states (thanks to the small size of the armed forces
and relative prosperity of the country). The Czech defense effort, as measured by the percentage
of the defense budget to the GDP, stands at approximately 2.2%, which is just about the
European NATO average.

But the current respectable position of the Czech Republic is likely to erode. Within five
years, the defense effort probably will decline to below 2.0% of the GDP. While not a "free
rider" in the sense of many current NATO members, the Czech Republic is likely to be a below
average contributor. With proper investments and continuing reductions of the armed forces, the
Czech contribution may be a brigade of respectable quality (same as Portugal). That is probably
all that the alliance can reasonably expect from the Czech Republic.

Czech participation in peace operations worldwide and substantial participation in PfP
has evidenced greater Czech attention to collective security than many anticipated. In 1993-94,
Czech contribution to UN peace operations was high by any standard, with over 1% of its armed
forces being assigned to UN missions (a status reached by only a handful of countries in the
world). Some questions about initial Czech performance in IFOR had surfaced but overall the
quality of the Czech forces has been satisfactory. Assuming the continuing trend toward a
smaller armed forces and a greater reliance on motivated volunteers, the Czech armed forces
could be a small but valuable asset to the alliance.

**HUNGARY**

Hungary’s invitation to become one of NATO’s new “eastern” members was never really
in doubt. Although the leverage of NATO accession was used to encourage Budapest to mend
relations with neighbors (especially Romania and Slovakia) during both the Hungarian
Democratic Forum (MDF) government of Antall and Boross and Horn’s socialist government,
Americans and West Europeans were never against Hungarian entry. Since 1994, American
public opinion has been receptive to Hungary’s NATO membership, second only to Poland, but ahead of the Czech Republic, Romania and the Baltic States.  

**Domestic Politics**

Among Hungarian elites, the pursuit of NATO was a consensual position, adopted by a conservative Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) government and implemented since 1994 by Socialist Gyula Horn. Former Foreign Minister Geza Jeszenszky, an ardent proponent of NATO enlargement and equally committed anti-socialist/communist, expressed satisfaction at Prime Minister Horn’s policies towards NATO (although lamenting the performance of his successor, Laszlo Kovacs). Every other responsible national figure and party endorsed accession to NATO, and integration with its military components. At the core of Hungarian elites’ foreign policy consensus, prospects of NATO membership unquestionably pushed leading figures who might otherwise have opposed steps such as the Basic Treaty with Romania to, in the end, vote to approve it in Parliament.

But, after Madrid, such a consensus is likely to fray around the edges because of the country’s dubious military preparedness and because some aspects of Hungary’s international behavior--most notably regarding ethnic Hungarians in neighboring states--may not fit easily within Brussel’s expectations. Again, then, costs and sovereignty will reverberate in the Hungarian political system as consequences of NATO enlargement.

Only the Czech and Slovak populations were less enthusiastic than Hungarians about joining the Atlantic Alliance in 1996 surveys, less than a third were willing to send Hungarian troops to defend another NATO country (the lowest among all former communist states from the Baltic to Balkans), only a quarter agreed that regular or routine exercises by NATO forces should occur in Hungary, and less than one in ten Hungarians would sacrifice any spending on social

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26 Nelson’s interviews with Jeszenszky took place in Budapest in February, 1997 and in the U.S. in April, 1997.

welfare (education and health) for military modernization or NATO integration. From both the standpoint of financial implications and due to an acquired dislike of foreign troops on Hungarian soil for any reason, Hungarians have not embraced NATO warmly.

Despite this palpable reluctance to shoulder any burdens of becoming a NATO member, most (63%) in Hungary thought that their country would nevertheless become a member, and a significant majority (57%) believed that other NATO countries would come to Hungary’s aid if attacked. For many, it seems, NATO membership (regardless of Hungary’s “contribution”) was “...the end-of-the-century historic compensation for Hungary”.

Such a public opinion imbalance between give and take vis-a-vis NATO is highly pronounced in Hungary. Hungarians likewise have a different view about Russia’s role in NATO and European security, being marginally more inclined than any other possible first-round invitee to include Russia in NATO, while being substantially less concerned about the extent of Russian influence on NATO’s enlargement decision. For example, only 31% of a national sample in 1996 thought that Russia’s influence on the enlargement process was “too heavy”, while 44% of Czechs, 45% of Romanians, 50% of Slovenes and 60% of Poles thought Moscow’s interests were weighted too heavily.

None of this public ambivalence and doubt has swayed Hungary’s national security establishment. The uniformed military has made a strenuous effort to present itself in a new fashion--changing style even if there has been very little money with which to modernize

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30 Editorial in Nepszabadsag (June 13, 1997).

weapons or to adapt systems to NATO standards.³² Most obviously, officers skilled in English, with post-graduate education at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, were appointed both as Chief of the General Staff and First Deputy Chief of Staff in 1996; Lt. General Ferenc Vegh (a 1993 graduate of the War College) and Maj. General Lajos Fodor (who went through the same course of study in 1994) were named to those respective posts in a clear and timely step to smooth the accession process.

Hungary’s national security elites are far too few and intellectually incestuous to ensure a safe political foundation for a long-term honeymoon regarding NATO integration. When NATO last enlarged by admitting post-Franco Spain, there was also a gap between elites and public attitudes and initial public opposition to NATO was widespread and vehement. In Spain, that opposition was overcome in part because a rapidly growing economy helped fuel optimism about the role of Spain within Europe and the Atlantic Community and because Spaniards were accustomed to cooperation with the U.S. and NATO (e.g., providing bases) during the Cold War. The Hungarian public will have to be convinced that, despite slow growth, high deficits and other difficult economic indicators, defense expenditures should increase. Further, Hungarians will have to accept that joining NATO means obligations to the Alliance as much as vice versa.

Just below the veneer of elite cohesion, then, may lie considerable uncertainty about Hungarian voters’ willingness to support rapid and full integration with NATO were that to require commitments of scarce resources. In this matter may lie troubled political waters for any Budapest government during the first decade after Madrid.

**International Behavior**

Well before PfP was inaugurated, Hungarian security analysts and scholars discerned that neither regional security efforts nor a new grand design for a European order had much of a

³²Lest the Hungarian military be portrayed in too desperate a condition, some smart steps have helped Budapest modernize some weapons without large budgetary investments. Hungarians have utilized a debt swap with Russia, however, to add a couple dozen highly capable Mig-29s to their air force; with NATO-compatible communications, these aircraft will form the backbone of a small, modern force that will not make NATO commanders unhappy. And, while buying a new main battle tank fleet is out of the question, modernized T-72s, of which Hungary has several hundred, is certainly better than Greek, Turkish or Spanish early model M-60s (or even older M-48s).
chance because of major states’ reticence and opposition. East-Central Europe’s security fortunes required not a new framework or legal mechanism, wrote Laszlo Valki in 1993, “...but a fundamental change in the political approach of the major Western states” to energize NATO....” Valki further wrote that “...the only institution ...capable of providing security for Europe would be an ad hoc coalition based on the well-established organizational framework and infrastructure of NATO.” Indeed, the incremental invention of a new NATO, coupled with a “founding document” between NATO and Russia, seem to be constructing that far-reaching coalition out of NATO’s venerable roots.

For over two years, Assistant Secretary of State (and former U.S. ambassador to Germany) Richard Holbrooke devoted close attention to Hungary, choosing Budapest as the site for some of his principal statements on the region. It was Holbrooke’s strong conviction that Hungary would join the Czech Republic and Poland in the first wave, and this view was aired very early in his role as Assistant Secretary. U.S. Ambassador Donald Blinken has, during his posting in Budapest, taken Hungary’s membership in NATO to be his principal “cause”; his arguments for NATO enlargement mirror the Clinton Administration’s de facto understanding from the outset that the Alliance’s first-round of eastern extension could not exclude Hungary.

The Hungarian government heard and absorbed this optimism. By early 1997, six months prior to the Madrid summit, Hungarian Defense Ministry experts reported that they were already working on the “establishment of its negotiating team” for follow-up discussions after invitations were announced; “The nearly one-hundred member delegation” was being assembled from defense, foreign affairs and other relevant ministries on the assumption that the decision was

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34 Ambassador Morton Abramowitz, then President of the Carnegie Endowment, arranged meetings between Holbrooke and experts on Central and Southeastern Europe in early 1995 at the Endowment’s Washington, D.C. headquarters. Asked about NATO’s potential enlargement at the first of these meetings—then a much less certain notion than when he stepped down at the end of 1996—Holbrooke replied to the effect that NATO should enlarge, and that he saw three likely candidates emerging: Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

“yes” and that delays in Budapest would prolong the entire process.36

But it was unquestionably NATO’s reliance on Hungarian cooperation for Bosnia-related activities that solidified Budapest’s position in the first wave of the NATO membership sweepstakes. At first, NATO AWACS aircraft and other intelligence operations utilized Hungarian airspace beginning in 1993. Then, as the potential for a larger military presence was planned, NATO and the U.S. military explored with Hungarian officials the availability of now-vacant, former Soviet Army and Air Force bases in Hungary. Once the political decision was made to commit substantial American forces to an “implementation force” (IFOR), contingency plans became operational, and a sizable logistics hub for American forces to be stationed in North Bosnia was established at Taszar. While British and French forces used the Adriatic as a route for entry and supply of their forces, Americans were deployed primarily from EUCOM bases in Germany, and Taszar was suitably located at a junction of rail and road routes leading into Croatia and, thereafter, Bosnia.

The utility of this base, and the presence of up to 5,000 U.S. troops (3,500 on average) there, provided an enormous boost to the local economy; the American General Accounting Office (GAO) has estimated that over $100 million was spent by the United States to upgrade Taszar and to operate it during the first year of IFOR. Just prior to a late May, 1997 NATO foreign ministers summit in Portugal Magyar Nemzet carried an editorial that pointed directly to the value of Taszar for Hungary’s NATO membership prospects, while also acknowledging the financial benefit that followed from hosting such a large U.S. military operation.37

From within the Horn government, Defense Minister Gyorgy Keleti (himself a retired colonel) and Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs have often visited the U.S., Brussels, and other NATO capitals in 1996 and 1997. Their message was not so much to convince reluctant NATO members, but rather to reassure and solidify support that had been present since the first

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36The Potomac Foundation reported on this in Potomac Update No. 8 (March 1997), p. 3.
moments of discussion about NATO enlargement to the east. Where possible, Hungary has also utilized discussions about potential arms purchases as a means by which to underscore the benefits of Hungarian membership to current Alliance members. For example, Hungarian discussions with France in 1996-97 included an examination of the French Matra “low altitude missile” for possible purchase by Hungarian air defense forces.

Given fragile public support, and very limited military capacities with which to contribute to NATO, the presence of an issue that would galvanize and coalesce opposition to the Alliance and its role is a distinct possibility. For Hungary, such an issue might be a dispute between Budapest and one or more of its neighbors arising from the more almost three million ethnic Hungarian minorities in Slovakia, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

Urged on by the potential of NATO admission, Hungary completed a series of basic treaties with Ukraine, Slovakia and, finally, Romania. Details about these three treaties are unnecessary here. Yet, it is important to note that all three received broad support in the Hungarian population and among principal political leaders, although the accord with Romania received widespread approval among Budapest elites only after Emil Constantinescu’s victory in Romania’s fall, 1996 elections ushered in a new, coalition government much more accommodating towards ethnic Hungarians and their party in Romania. Opposition to the Hungarian-Romanian treaty was relegated to extremists of the Istvan Csurka-type when the Constantinescu majority formed a coalition government including Marko Belo’s ethnic Hungarian party (UDMR). Still, demonstrations against the treaty were loud and boisterous in Budapest, while conservatives within the Democratic Forum (MDF), as represented in the Lajos Batthyany Foundation, were still questioning the wisdom of voting for treaty ratification after the Constantinescu victory in Romania.38

With Slovakia, Hungary had signed a basic treaty in March, 1995, and ratified it soon thereafter. Hopes that such a treaty would lay to rest bilateral disputes, however, faded before the

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38 One of the present authors, Daniel N. Nelson, spoke at the Batthyany Foundation in November, 1996, and heard from the audience strong reservations about the Romanian treaty and some bitterness about American and West European pressure to accept the accord.
ink was dry. Vladimir Meciar’s governing party, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) maintains a parliamentary alliance with Jan Slota’s Slovak National Party (SNS), the latter representing vehemently anti-minority sentiments that comes perilously close to fascism. Slota and his SNS very likely made acceptance of the Basic Treaty with Hungary contingent on the passage of “...a law that severely curtails freedom of speech and assembly” and “a separate law making Slovak the official language and restricting the right to speak others...”39 The SNS-led campaign against the Basic Treaty continued into 1996, and by late in the year Meciar had returned to his virulence of a few years earlier, rejecting Hungarian minority demands with the pejorative aside that “half of them are Roma anyway”, and with the warning that “Slovakia will not become a guinea pig [presumably with respect to minority rights] for Europe”. 40

This rhetoric implies the depth of antagonistic feeling and suspicion that remains not far from the surface between Slovak nationalists and Hungarians. While cool heads on both sides, and ample pressure from the European Union and elsewhere may avoid violent conflict, this is not a bilateral relationship that will benefit NATO. And, from the perspective of Budapest, any effort from Brussels or Washington to sidestep or avoid “taking sides” on the issue of minority rights in Slovakia (or Romania, if relations should deteriorate when Hungary enters NATO while Romania waits) will be further reason to minimize Hungarian contributions to the Alliance. For many Hungarians, defending the rights of their ethnic kin in neighboring states lies at the core of sovereignty, and a NATO that is very likely to abjure involvement in such disputes will not receive unequivocal loyalty from such Hungarians.

**Hungary As An Alliance Member**

The Hungarian Army and Air Force are qualitatively behind even their northern neighbors in most areas. Even during the communist period when the Soviets dominated the Warsaw Pact, Hungary undertook very limited military effort in comparison with its East

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39The Bratislava daily *Sme* (January 26, 1995) gave detailed coverage of and comments on the Meciar government program as presented in Parliament.

40Meciar’s comments came during an October 30, 1996 television debate as reported in the *OMNI Daily Report* (October 31, 1996).
European “allies”. But, by 1998, Hungary is certain to have the smallest standing military as a proportion of population of any state (aside from mini-states) in Europe. Taken alone, such a condition would not be of great concern to NATO military planners; indeed, a few well-trained battalions available for rapid reaction might be quite welcome; and, from a comparative standpoint, a number of today’s sixteen members can offer little more.

But the low preparedness of Hungary’s remaining forces is of concern. With expenditures (in 1997) about 1.4% of GDP (67 billion forint in the 1997 budget), versus a mean of 2.2% in NATO states, one does not have to look far to see reasons for very low morale and a diminishing capacity to commit and use even 2 brigades--perhaps 10,000 personnel that will constitute “reaction forces”. The remainder of Hungary’s ground forces will be a reserve of “main defense forces”, numbering around 30,000, for whom old or inoperative equipment and minimal training will be standard. How the rest of NATO would perceive such a minimal contribution, particularly if there is further slippage of support for military expenditures, is uncertain. Yet, it seems evident that the ability of Budapest to assume its place in NATO will depend on maintaining an army with a small, effective nucleus in the face of contrary political and economic trends.

In a veiled reference to Hungary and, probably, the Czech Republic, NATO’s principal expert on the transformation of militaries in East-Central and Southeastern Europe, Chris Donnelly, has succinctly raised the dilemma confronting Hungary, and why costs will be so political. “It is no use having armed forces if they are not effective”, writes Donnelly; “...[a]

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42Hungarian analyst Sebastian Gorka estimates that the forces designated for NATO/CJTF cooperation will number about 12,000. See Gorka’s piece, “Hungary Reinvents its Defence Force”, Jane’s Intelligence Review Vol. 9, No. 5 (May, 1997), p. 200.

43Gorka’s assessment, overall, is reassuring regarding Hungary’s contribution within NATO; he has worked as a senior researcher at the Ministry of Defense-affiliated Institute for Strategic and Defence Studies in Budapest. See, Ibid.
country without effective armed forces cannot either assure its sovereignty or make the necessary contribution to an alliance...to date, Western contacts with Central and East European countries have usually skated over painful and difficult issues such as these.\textsuperscript{44}

Hungary’s budgetary de-militarization will be difficult to halt without substantial efforts by the Parliament and the country’s new allies. Given the constituencies of Prime Minister Horn’s socialist-led coalition, slow growth (1 to 2\% versus 5 to 6\% per year in Poland), continued deficits, and stringent IMF guidelines, little chance exists that the Hungarian Army will soon get much more than the $641 million allocated in 1997, up from $520 million in 1996, but less than a half of the Czech Republic’s military expenditures (in a country of similar population, but higher per capita income), and lower per capita ($50) than Turkey (which, among NATO’s current sixteen, spends the least per capita at $90).\textsuperscript{45} Instead, substantial pressure will exist to divert resources to social and economic programs that soften the fallout from Hungary’s free-market transformation. In such circumstances, every forint more for NATO interoperability and modernization--both of which require procurements--would have to come out of some other part of the defense budget. To raise military expenditures from 1996 to 1997, for example, required shortening the length of conscription from 12 to nine months.\textsuperscript{46} That the political system responded to public and group pressures on the budget may be a good sign for Hungary’s democracy, even as such steps reduce the country’s role in NATO.

The temptation to engage in “free-riding”—accepting external security guarantees from a hegemonic power while contributing little—will be subtle but powerful. Several highly critical studies of potential Hungarian contributions to NATO have appeared that pose the question of Hungary’s contribution in unequivocal terms—”[w]hy even want such a military in the alliance?” asks one anonymous author of a U.S. government-sponsored study.\textsuperscript{47} And, because the


\textsuperscript{45}These were reported by Sebastian Gorka,  \textit{op.cit.}, p. 197.

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Jane’s Defense Weekly} (January 15 1997), p. 10.

\textsuperscript{47} Anonymous, “NATO Expansion: The Question of Interoperability and Modernization in the Polish, Czech and
Hungarian drive for NATO membership has been elite-driven with very thin public support, the expectation of waning momentum towards restructuring or modernization after Madrid is plausible.

Prior to Madrid, the Hungarian cognoscenti seemed convinced that “membership in NATO will be more than useful: It will give us a chance to...have a say in international matters”. Indeed, both NATO and the European Union have made it clear that membership in both organizations will be expected; to truly have a key to the club and to “have a say” has made NATO membership essential regardless of any doubts about defense expenditures or foreign commitments. As a member of NATO, however, these issues will recur leaving Hungarians to wonder more not less regarding the place of a small state’s interests in the larger context of a venerable trans-Atlantic Alliance.

ROMANIA

At the NATO foreign ministers’ meeting at Sintra, Portugal in late May, 1997, the U.S. position favoring a “small” enlargement of only three in the first tranche became unequivocal, making public what had long been assumed; the “Visegrad” three had the checkered flag in a race where they had led from the outset. Romania’s strongest support had come from France, Italy, Spain and Greece; but there was very little enthusiasm for a Madrid invitation to Bucharest in Britain or the Alliance’s nordic members. And, once announced, the U.S. position effectively closed the door on quick Romanian entry into NATO. What will be the consequences of such a U.S.-determined decision at Madrid for Romanian domestic politics and international behavior?

Domestic Politics

No government or elite stratum among former communist states has been more focused on accession to NATO than Romania. From Bucharest one heard a steady drumbeat from 1995 through mid-1997 about NATO membership with which was intermingled a not-too-subtle counterpoint—what might happen in Romania if membership is denied.

Hungarian Militaries*, manuscript (Washington, D.C., March, 1997).

Editorial, Magyar Hirlap (June 14, 1997).
Certain pro-NATO arguments have spanned the Romanian political spectrum, from the left-nationalist government of President Ion Iliescu from 1990 through most of 1996, and subsequently the right-center moderate Constantinescu-Ciorbea government.

From many standpoints, Romanians made a strong case. By late spring, 1997, the Romanian public was more fully or more strongly in favor of NATO membership for their country than any population in Europe’s eastern half--including Poland. Seventy-six percent of a national sample in Romania polled by Eurostat, the EU’s statistical wing in Luxembourg, favored NATO membership, while 65% of the Polish citizenry evinced a similarly positive attitudes; Eurostat said that there was a “big gap” between those two states and all the rest.\textsuperscript{49} These findings were mirrored by USIA-commissioned studies in the summer of 1996, which reported that 56% of Romanians surveyed strongly favored their country’s NATO membership--twice the proportion among Poles; and, while in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Bulgaria the percentage highly enthusiastic about NATO dropped between 1995 and 1996, it rose sharply in Romania (from 34% in 1995).\textsuperscript{50} That Romania’s political elites sought to mobilize public opinion, while Czech and Hungarian leaders had been unwilling or unable to mount a similar campaign, accounts for some of this difference. Yet, Romanians’ strong expression of support for integration with the West (and the United States) had been evident long before NATO membership was at issue and cannot be interpreted as consequence of propaganda utilized with an ignorant people.\textsuperscript{51}


\textsuperscript{50} USIA Office of Research and Media Reaction, The New European Security Architecture: Volume II (Washington, D.C.: USIA, September, 1996), p. 10. Fifty-six percent of Albanians were also strongly favorable towards NATO membership, but no longitudinal comparisons are possible because data for earlier years had not been collected. Likewise, Slovene data are for 1996 only (32% “strongly favor”), but no comparisons over time are possible.

\textsuperscript{51} Data gathered by Romania’s Institute for Public Opinion Research (IR SOP) indicated, shortly after the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu in 1990 and 1991, that the developed West was where the Romanian public wanted to head, and that France, the U.S. and Germany were the most positively evaluated countries. See, for example, Petre Datolescu, “Social Change and Changing Public Opinion in Romania After the 1990 Election”, in Daniel N. Nelson, ed. \textit{Romania After Tyranny} (Boulder: Westview, 1992), pp. 140-141.
Romania’s size, population, natural resources, access to the Black Sea, and rather substantial military infrastructure have all, at various times, been incorporated into Bucharest’s arguments. The Romanian Army’s large-scale participation in U.N. peacekeeping operations in Angola (the largest single contingent), and roles in the Middle East and Bosnia were also noted.\(^5\)

The number of high-level visits by Romanian officials to the United States, Brussels and other NATO capitals reflected such an intense effort by both the previous Iliescu government and the new government elected in November, 1996. Ministers, deputy ministers, parliamentary and military delegations from Romania to various Western capitals increased greatly in frequency from late-1995 through early 1997\(^5\), while vigorous efforts were made by Romanian embassies to promote the NATO cause.

Such a diplomatic offensive further reinforced in Partnerships for Peace participation. Romania was very active in PfP exercises, educational exchanges, and a range of co-production arrangements for military-related aircraft and parts. Bell Helicopter Textron’s licensing Romania’s IAR aircraft plant to produce 96 AH-1F Cobra attack helicopters is the largest of the latter agreements.\(^4\)

In the face of such an assiduous effort, Romania’s exclusion from the first group of invitees, will have consequences. Although Foreign Minister Severin and others in spring, 1997 visits to Washington, D.C. made it clear that Bucharest will not abandon its focus on NATO because no offer for membership came from Madrid, he and others in the Constantinescu government expect political fallout.

\(^5\)Romanian Chief of the General Staff, General Degeratu provided a rather full list of these arguments when he spoke to the WEU Colloquy in Athens (March 11-12, 1997) on “Enlarged Security: The Security Problems Posed by the Enlargement of NATO and the European Institutions” (Paris: Assembly of the WEU, 1997).

\(^5\)From journalist accounts alone (principal Romanian media plus indexes of major Western daily newspapers), we estimate that, from January 1996 through May, 1997, Romanian foreign and defense ministers or individuals with deputy minister rank, the chief of the general staff, or parliamentary leaders visited Washington, D.C. more than two dozen times.

\(^5\)Paul Beaver, “Close Links Forged by Helicopter Makers,” Jane’s Intelligence Review and Jane’s Sentinel Pointer (October, 1996), p. 3
Romania’s six-year post-communist, leftist government led by President Ion Iliescu had never been popular in the West, and most emigre Romanians had maintained a distance from Iliescu and his party alleging inadequate democratic credentials. This frequently heard indictment, plus a discernible reluctance to move headlong into an unrestrained market economy, made Romania’s climb towards NATO long and steep. And, it never helped that Romania was poorly known or understood in the West. A pervasive bitterness among elites and masses regarding the West’s alleged failure to “understand” Romania will feed into the political fallout of Madrid.

Romania’s November, 1996 parliamentary and presidential elections provided mandates for change and a parliamentary majority for a coalition of center-right parties (Peasants, Petre Roman’s Democratic Party, the ethnically-based Hungarian party, and the Democratic Convention umbrella organization). With no imminent election, Madrid and NATO enlargement without Romania in the first wave will not, in and of itself, precipitate a political crisis; rival personalities and egos seem likely to accomplish that dubious goal without the NATO issue playing a central role as parties and coalitions fracture and splinter.

Yet, spending for the Romanian Army or for NATO-focused activities while being excluded from the first invitation list, will be grist for the mill of media and politicians. And, eventually, these issues may help define the inevitable split between President Constantinescu and his ally, Petre Roman (now Senate president), who will certainly aim for the presidency.

Heightened criticism from opposition deputies and senators in the Romanian parliament will emerge about expenditures that support exercises with NATO, or the costs of measures meant to improve interoperability. Defense budgets, already a matter of great concern in Romania because of very stringent IMF guidelines meant to slash deficits and jump-start privatization, will come under even greater scrutiny.

During the Iliescu government, the Romanian Army had been able to maintain and slightly increase its budget; from a low estimated to be under $700 million in 1993, about $872
million was spent in 1995, and slightly under $800 million in 1996.\footnote{These estimates are those of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the annual World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers. Romanian sources, however, give lower figures, at under $600 million in 1993, and about $780 million in 1995. For the latter, see Romanian Armed Forces: A Partner For Peace (Bucharest: Ministry of Defense, 1996), p. 30.} If budgetary reductions are to be made from these minimal funds to help meet overall IMF goals, from where will cuts be made? Political opponents of the Constantinescu-Ciorbea government will press for less spending on tasks related to NATO integration while defending expenditures on the Army itself--for manpower, maintenance of indigenous arms industries, and preparedness. Cutting force levels from the current 200,000 plus to 150,000 or less will be sought by the present center-right government so monies can be directed towards PfP training and interoperability; but, these personnel reductions will be resisted by opposition on the left and right who will argue that a larger Army is, without NATO membership, even more essential for Romania’s security.

**International Behavior**

National pride, injured by what Romanians will view as rejection, will exacerbate the argument over sovereignty. Again, there is no tangible alternative for Romanian security in the late 1990s. Influential analysts and political figures in Bucharest nevertheless make the case that a Romania still “out” and a Hungary “in” NATO is an unpalatable scenario, and one that requires greater self-reliance and a search for additional (if not alternative) security guarantees.

Most likely, according to senior Romanian Defense Ministry and intelligence personnel will be purchase and co-production arrangements for weapons of other-than-NATO origin. Prime candidates for such cooperation are Israel, arms industries in Brazil and Argentina, Russia and China. Among these, Israeli contacts are particularly good, and have led to a major agreement for modernization of Romania’s Mig-21 aircraft using Israeli avionics--and the possibility of joint marketing of these planes for export as Romania is able to replace them with newer fighters. Within NATO, support for Romanian membership arising from France and Italy have already encouraged exploration about expanded ties. French helicopters (the Alouette) were manufactured in Romania even during the Ceausescu communist dictatorship; an agreement with
the Franco-German consortium Eurocopter to build eight AS 350 B2 Ecureuil utility helicopters was signed in 1996, paving the way for other opportunities. Discussions with Italians about producing armored vehicles has also begun on a preliminary basis.\textsuperscript{56} Meanwhile, \textit{Romtehnica}, a state-owned defense industry, is vigorously marketing its products abroad, including antitank rocket launchers, automatic grenade launchers and large artillery (130mm towed).\textsuperscript{57}

None of these steps alone suggests heightened Romanian concern about sovereignty and national interests after Madrid. We can, however, expect Bucharest to intensify and broaden discussions about arms deals that would both help to modernize Romanian forces while injecting capital into defense industries that, outside NATO, will be perceived as even more important to the country’s security. And, NATO should anticipate that Romanian interactions with its neighbors, with countries in the Middle East and other regions will exhibit heightened sensitivity to benefits that may accrue to Romania alone. Ties to Iran, Iraq and Libya, which had been developed over the 1970s and 1980s, may now have fewer political constraints. Efforts to generate arms exports (tanks, artillery, modernized Mig-21s, helicopters) will be heightened, with less attention to end users than NATO membership would have required.

Romania will not swerve dramatically from the road towards NATO since no one but the most extreme politicians can imagine a real alternative that would allow any fundamental policy change. But the nuances of policy will be important in the next few years, evident in debates about what ought to be Romania’s priorities when allocating very scarce defense budgets--NATO exercises, interoperability and peacekeeping, or maintaining a fairly robust Romanian military and defense industry? And, perhaps even more acutely than those invited in the first tranche, Romanians will debate the impact on their sovereignty, in all likelihood concluding that there are no alternatives to NATO, but that seeking every opportunity to preserve independent

\textsuperscript{56}Interviews in Bucharest September, 1996 in the Defense Ministry (at that time, Minister Gheorghe Tinca, Chief of the General Staff, General Dumitru Cioflina, and Chief of Military Intelligence Major General Decebal Ilena) and, in February, 1996 with the new Defense Minister, Victor Babic and the Director of the Office of Foreign Intelligence (Dr. Ioan Talpes), and with staff accompanying Defense Minister Victor Babic in the United States in April, 1997.

\textsuperscript{57}Author’s interviews with \textit{Romtehnica} officers, in Bucharest, fall 1996 and spring, 1997.
capabilities is essential after being told to “wait” for membership. Romanians will, as when President Clinton made a short stop in Bucharest after the Madrid Summit, exhibit genuine enthusiasm, warmth and curiosity about the U.S., the West and its institutions. At the same time, harder questions will be asked about what Romania may be “giving up” in order to be accepted in 1999 or thereafter by Washington and its allies.

SLOVENIA

As the Madrid Summit approached in the early summer of 1997, Slovenia (with Romania) received substantial support among Mediterranean NATO members led by Italy and France, with some additional endorsements from Canada, Belgium and Luxembourg. Slovene Foreign Minister Zoran Thaler, and Chief of Staff Col. General Albin Gutman were particularly active in promoting their country’s case in diplomatic and military circles, respectively, during late 1996 and early 1997.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright telegraphed the Clinton Administration position, however, at the late May NATO Foreign Ministers meeting at Sintra, Portugal; even to the French, it seemed clear that Ljubljana was not on the American first-tranche list. This was a bitter pill for Slovenes, not because they contemplate any alternative for their security or because they anticipate external threats. Rather, the disappointment arose from Slovenes’ conviction that they are fully divorced from remnants of communism or socialism, have fully integrated their economy with the EU and a wider global market, and have consolidated a competitive democracy. Their confidence in being part of “the West”, then, does not square well with being told to wait longer before entering NATO.

Domestic Politics

In the Slovene population, support for NATO membership was, in 1996, considerably stronger than in Hungary or the Czech Republic, and about on par with Poland. Such ample popular support was reflected in other data that show Slovenes to be very confident of their

58Pierre Bocev, Central/East European correspondent, reported on the Sintra meeting by noting that Albright’s comments clearly did not include Bucharest and Ljubljana. See Le Figaro (May 30, 1997).
country’s admission into NATO within the next five years (70%), which was higher than Hungarian, Czech or Polish publics.\footnote{These data are reported in The New Security Architecture: II, op.cit., p. 10.}

Opinion-makers were cognizant that “no guarantee for Slovenia to join NATO in the first wave...” existed\footnote{See the commentary by Robert Mecilo\v sek, editor, in Republika (May 3, 1997).}. At the same time, other Slovene observers worried that “…our security is unfeasible without NATO”.\footnote{Sass Vidmajer in Delo (April 30, 1997).} But, perhaps the most revealing comment about Ljubljana’s attitude was that of a senior Slovene diplomat posted with the United Nations who said, quite frankly, that “No informed Slovene has any security fears for our country in the foreseeable future, in or out of NATO; we simply can’t imagine why NATO would reject us since we’re already as ‘western’ as the Dutch”\footnote{Author’s interview with Slovene diplomat, January, 1997.}

Thus, when the U.S. position became known publicly at Sintra at the end of May, 1997, domestic commentary in Slovenia was particularly harsh. Ignac Golob, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, spoke of the “…dark, cold shadow of former Yugoslavia…” descending on Slovenia, “…despite everything we have done--and we have done a lot”. He further indicted the “…strict hand of Mrs. Albright...behind all this”.\footnote{Ignac Golob in Dnevnik (June 14, 1997).} Yet more bitter was Goradzd Bohте’s commentary in Delo (a socialist daily) in which he characterized President Clinton’s announcement as a “…unitary decision...[that] humiliated the European Allies”: “He [Clinton] couldn’t let Chirac, Kohl, Blair and others, not even to mention Solana, know in a more harsh and tactless way that their words aren’t worth a cent. A national faux pas without equal. Clinton...is more concerned about Whitewater and Paula Jones [and] relies on his Secretary of State Madeleine Albright....Bill Clinton, the president without a foreign policy vision, relies on Madeleine Albright, the secretary of state without a vision...Poor America, poor Europe, poor world.”\footnote{Bohte’s commentary in Delo (June 14, 1997) appeared, in translation, in the USIA Media Reaction report of June 18, 1997.}
Unlike Romanians who at least perceive that they might have alternatives to immediate NATO membership, Slovenes will have to direct their disappoint within their own political system. Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek's minority Liberal Democratic (LDS) government, then, is more not less vulnerable in the aftermath of a decision at Madrid that was interpreted as a debacle for Ljubljana. Both the resignation of Tit Turnsek, the defense minister, and an early departure of the Drnovsek government could occur were the outcome at Madrid seen as a failure of this leadership.

That Drnovsek's cabinet might be seen as responsible for not doing all that was needed to promote the country's interests in NATO capitals--especially Washington--is certainly understood. The failure to establish full representation in Brussels is but one indictment being leveled against the Prime Minister and his national security team. The loss of a few parliamentary supporters (since his own party holds only 25 seats in the lower house) will lead to an accelerated electoral timetable. President Milan Kucan, who faces an election in December, 1997, may be hurt, too, if his relative inaction--as compared with Vaclav Havel, for example--becomes a campaign issue. That the European Union in mid-July, 1997 named Slovenia (with the Visegrad three plus Estonia) among countries with which it will open negotiations for membership, however, may blunt some of the political damage.

International Behavior

There are no alternatives for Slovene defense and foreign policy that are truly palatable. The Central European Initiative in which Slovenia is a participant has no security component and is unlikely to develop much beyond economic and cultural cooperation. Slovene military capabilities are limited greatly by population, size, and location, and a tiny active-duty force (fewer than 10,000 personnel, with negligible heavy weapons, a one-boat navy, and no fixed wing combat aircraft\(^5\)) will not encourage others to see Ljubljana as a security partner since Slovenia would be a dependent not a contributor in any bilateral or multilateral arrangement.

While Slovenes are correct that NATO has smaller, less-militarily endowed members

(Luxembourg and Iceland), it is also true that Slovenia is not viewed as politically critical or strategically vital.

Slovenia had, with the element of surprise, utilized ad hoc defense units and an assortment of light arms to thwart an incursion of Yugoslav federal troops sent in June, 1991 to prevent Ljubljana’s assertion of independence. That success did not, as Slovenes want to forget, move their small country’s geographic location. To Slovenians, Sintra, and then Madrid offered harsh reminders that their country was still regarded by Washington as part of the “...region of instability” as opposed to NATO’s “region of stability”.

This sense of being cast off, consigned to “Balkan scenarios”, and with the NATO decision even impeding Slovene membership in the EU, was a recurrent theme in Ljubljana’s newspapers in mid-1997.66 Prominent Slovene politicians such as Defense Minister Turnsek were also quick to evaluate Ljubljana’s post-Madrid situation in dire terms, suggesting that “Nobody has helped us, and we cannot count on anybody to help us...We are now alone”.67 And, notwithstanding Madeleine Albright’s visit meant to convey support and encouragement, some Ljubljana dailies interpreted the American attention less positively; although denied an entrance ticket into NATO, Slovenia (and Romania) “...have not been excluded from the perverse American pleasure of meddling in others’ affairs”.68 Slovenia’s international options will not change simply because of the country’s evident disappointment and bitterness. But the fallout from Madrid will disturb Slovene politics for some time.

CONCLUSION: ENLARGEMENT’S REAL TEST

NATO’s metamorphosis has somewhat to do with enlargement. But there has been, and will continue to be, much more. NATO’s reinvention of itself involves new functions, new members, new capacities and new challenges.

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66 See, for example, “Finally Alone, Unfortunately”, Delo (June 13, 1997).
67 Quoted by Martin Sieff, “Rejected Slovenia May Close to the West”, Washington Times (July 15, 1997).
68 An editorial in Dnevnik (July 10, 1997) commenting on Secretary Albright’s arrival a few days thereafter.
Such an unprecedented transformation of an alliance for common defense towards a structure for collective security stretches the envelope of existing theory and poses vexing policy dilemmas. Changes in what an “alliance” is, and NATO’s adaptability, add up to a new phenomenon. That NATO may persevere and evolve after the Cold War evoked skepticism from political scientists who write on alliance theory. Stephen Walt, for example, has argued that enlargement should be delayed because it will lead to NATO’s dissolution.69

But, NATO’s principal members—especially the United States—rejected any shift from the primacy of the Alliance after the Cold War, e.g., to a pan-European collective security organization. Instead, NATO has incorporated elements of collective security, extending its functions and membership. From an instrument of realism, NATO is becoming an institution imbued with idealism. From an enterprise devoted to deterrence and, if necessary, war-fighting, the North Atlantic Alliance has moved irrevocably into arenas of peacemaking (Bosnia), civil-military socialization (via PfP), confidence-building (through efforts to ensure resolution of tensions between neighbors), and other collective endeavors.

But, perhaps NATO’s boldest gamble is its extension east to include post-communist states once members of the Warsaw Pact. Intra-“Sixteen” squabbles about whether to enlarge “big” (five, including Romania and Slovenia) or “small” (three) occupied NATO capitals leading up to the Madrid Summit, symptomatic of both longstanding French-U.S. tensions about Euro-Atlantic security and more recent concerns about the Balkans and Mediterranean (i.e., “southern”) stability. Such discord, while almost to be expected, was exacerbated by a crescendo of European voices favoring the large option, and an abrupt Clinton Administration “no” to five invitations. NATO’s enlargement—the geographic component of its metamorphosis—has already begun to stretch the Alliance’s sinews.

That which NATO is becoming, however, will be tested even more by the challenge of effectively integrating new members, while ameliorating strained relations or domestic instabilities within those states not included in a first tranche of enlargement.

Our quick survey tests no hypothesis, but does point strongly to the crucible that the Alliance confronts in each new member, overcoming (in cases such as the Czech Republic and Hungary) considerable public doubt about the wisdom of membership, or handling potentially volatile disappointment in other cases when the country’s candidacy was not now accepted at Madrid.

As anticipated, issues of cost and sovereignty are recurrent themes. While nuances in each case make cross-national comparisons imprecise, citizens want little of costly new initiatives and are not anxious to see a new “hegemon” exert control over the nation’s armed forces or foreign policy. Only the Polish public seems ready to accept NATO membership fully--i.e., including all costs and obligations in foreseeable scenarios. Referenda and the interests of politicians and parties will keep costs and sovereignty issues alive in the Czech Republic and Hungary, with “free-riding” behavior a plausible consequence. Bitter disappointment in Romania and Slovenia will be manifest in different ways. Budgetary and policy objections mounted by opposition (left and right) parties will be evident in Romania, coupled with heightened attempts to market and import weapons and technology. Electoral consequences are more likely in Slovenia, where no security alternatives are even imagined.

And, in the Baltics, Balkans, and Slovakia, the lure of NATO membership will continue to hold elite interest while eliciting public uncertainty. In some cases such as Slovakia, a kind of “security envy” has already been evident as the Meciar government sought not to promote its own doubtful case for NATO membership but rather to raise questions about Prague’s entry.\(^{70}\) The Baltic states, left out despite their clear need for security guarantees because of Moscow’s sensitivities, will certainly explore bilateral and regional (Baltic) security ties. For Bulgaria’s new non-socialist government elected in spring, 1997, reasserting the country’s strong desire to enter NATO will continue, but mass ambivalence about the Alliance is unlikely to abate.

With the exception of Poland, then, NATO’s enlargement will generate questions about the Alliance’s transformation. These are not insurmountable challenges, but they involve

fundamental questions about the purpose of a post-Cold War alliance. Guarantees made to new members invoke mutual defense responsibilities, financial and in-kind contributions, and expectations that democratic norms and consensual behavior will be maintained. Particularly now that there is no unequivocal adversary, such an “exchange” is implicit in joining NATO. We have found, however, that the most widespread and likely consequences of NATO’s enlargement involve further politicization of these matters both among the members-to-be and those excluded from the first tranche. The “politics” of NATO’s enlargement has, in other words, just begun.

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