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NATO's Open Door Policy and the Next Round of Enlargement

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When Bill Clinton became President of the United States in 1993, policymakers and analysts alike questioned NATO's importance and relevance in the post-Cold War world.[1] Without the agreed-upon threat of communism and the Soviet Union's presence, NATO was forced to reevaluate its role and mission in European security. Now, as the Clinton Administration comes to a close, NATO exists as the central pillar of European security and remains vital to the implementation of US foreign policy in the Balkans.

Since 1993, much research has been devoted to NATO's evolution. Analysts have examined NATO's organizational adaptations to the post-Cold War world,[2] its bombing campaign and peace-enforcement operations in Bosnia,[3] and more recently the military activities and peace-enforcement operation in Kosovo.[4] In addition to these deployments and organizational changes, NATO's enlargement has been another defining moment for the alliance since the Cold War's end. At NATO's 1997 Madrid Summit, formal membership invitations were extended to the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. After the invitations, NATO promised that its doors remained open to new members in the future. This commitment was reiterated at NATO's Washington Summit in 1999, when the allies again pledged to revisit the issue of expansion at its next major summit in 2002.

Since NATO's 1999 military campaign in Kosovo, expansion has fallen from NATO's agenda. However, in parts of Europe it remains an issue of critical importance. In the Baltic states, the newly created democracies in the Balkans, and in other states in the Mediterranean region, NATO membership is a central foreign policy objective of many governments. At Vilnius, Lithuania, in May 2000, nine applicant states issued a joint declaration to NATO that enlargement should occur soon and should include many new states. Thus, while in some respects NATO's enlargement has disappeared from the political agenda in the United States and among some allies, the push for expansion continues throughout much of Europe.

This article turns to NATO's promised "open door" policy and examines the prospects for the next round of expansion and the political variables that will likely determine whether NATO proceeds with enlargement. While many diplomatic, military, and political issues will affect when and if NATO expands, judging from the events surrounding the Madrid Summit, NATO's "great powers" will be crucial in determining new membership. Thus, this article focuses on the United States' and other NATO member states' willingness to support expansion, as well as a new dynamic to the enlargement question--the Visegrad states' ability to adapt to NATO's military requirements. Most evidence suggests that enlargement will be a difficult decision for NATO due to vast differences among the allies over how expansion should proceed. This divisive environment does not bode well for the alliance as it assumes a larger role in European security and military affairs.

Before examining these variables, let us first turn to the official policy and underlying political factors that were crucial to NATO's expansion in 1997, which have much bearing on the debates to come as 2002 nears.

NATO Enlargement, 1997

The decision to expand NATO evolved over time and was principally orchestrated by the United States. As the Berlin Wall crumbled and the Soviet Union disbanded, NATO recognized its historic opportunity to forge new relationships with the newly independent countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. At the Rome Summit in 1991, NATO created the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) to serve as a policy forum for these states to develop

a formal dialogue with the alliance. Although expansion was not on NATO's agenda at that time, the NACC represented NATO's first official outreach program to develop more formal relations with its former communist adversaries.[5]

NATO's next major steps toward enlargement took place in 1994. At the Brussels Summit the allies agreed to create the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Upon its creation, PfP was viewed as a means to assist the newly democratized countries of Eastern Europe to professionalize their militaries, and as a precursor and means of preparation for eventual membership in the alliance.[6] By the year's end, 23 states were participating in the PfP.[7] NATO also commissioned a study on enlargement, which was produced in 1995. The study established a set of political and military criteria for aspiring states.[8] By 1997, at its Madrid Summit, NATO extended formal invitations to the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. After ratification by all NATO members' domestic parliaments, these "Visegrad" allies were formally accepted into the alliance on 12 March 1999.

While the formal decisions are straightforward, a number of key political factors proved crucial in shaping NATO's expansion, and in how new members were chosen. In previous research, consensus exists that the most important factor was the Clinton Administration's desire to see NATO evolve and eventually grow. American leadership--initially through the Partnership for Peace and eventually in its desire to see the alliance expand--was central to NATO's decision to enlarge.[9] James Goldgeier's well-respected research contends that senior-level Clinton officials, including National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Richard Holbrooke, convincingly argued that in order for NATO to adapt to the post-Cold War environment, expansion was necessary. These arguments were supported by a number of American foreign policy elites. Although initial resistance came from the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and, notably, from Strobe Talbott, who had been the Secretary of State's Special Adviser on the New Independent States, by late 1994 the enlargement advocates within the Clinton Administration had won out, and a consensus existed in Europe that enlargement served NATO's interests.[10]

Along with the Clinton Administration's position that expansion served America's national security interests, strong bipartisan domestic political support within the United States also has been important for the politics of expansion. In appealing to various European ethnic political communities, the Republican Party's "Contract with America" in 1994 gave explicit backing for NATO expansion. In 1996, President Clinton and GOP presidential nominee Bob Dole echoed these themes in presidential campaign speeches. While domestic political considerations did not outweigh the real strategic issues at stake, the bipartisan support present should not be discounted as trivial; it provided additional incentives for American politicians to favor expansion.[11]

Another significant factor in explaining expansion was Germany's early support. In 1993, long before the United States signaled its interest in expanding the alliance, German Foreign Minister Volker Ruhe expressed his state's desire for a larger alliance. Germany maintained that a larger alliance was necessary after the Cold War, matching the views of the first supporters of expansion in the United States.[12] With the United States' and Germany's interest in expanding the alliance, along with Great Britain's quiet but nonetheless supportive backing, all other NATO allies followed the great powers' lead in accepting the merits of expansion.[13]

Another variable that ostensibly served as a catalyst for expansion in the United States was the tragedy in Bosnia and the Europeans' inability to peacefully resolve the war. In justifying NATO's expansion, senior Clinton Administration officials noted in testimony to Congress that the United States wanted to avoid "more Bosnias." In their view, NATO enlargement offered the allies a means of stabilizing Europe and consolidating some of the newly created democracies in Central Europe.[14] Thus, American guidance, Germany's leadership in Europe, and the events in Bosnia all proved essential in enlarging the alliance.

In choosing which states would enter the alliance, American leadership again provides much insight on the process. Although NATO developed its set of political and military criteria for aspiring states in 1995, observers noted that among the applicants, Europe's "worst kept secret" was that the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland were the favored three.[15] However, when it came time to formally extend invitations to aspiring member-states, France and Germany began to lobby for Romania's inclusion. Slovenia also gained the support of Italy, Germany, France, and other smaller states in the alliance. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright quashed such debate, however, by announcing that the United States would support the entry of only three new members. In recognizing its own domestic political

limitations, the United States chose to invite only three, but promised to support an open-door policy for the future.[16] While consensus in NATO existed around the "favored three," it was principally American leadership--not NATO's military and political criteria--that set the agenda going into Madrid.[17] Thus, the Clinton Administration's positions during the initial proposal for NATO expansion and in the actual decision to choose allies are central to NATO's expansion history.

NATO's Open Door Policy: The Official Position

After Secretary Albright's veto of the Romanian and Slovenian membership bids, France was especially insistent that NATO's door remain open to another enlargement round. In an effort to appease its disgruntled allies, the United States promised that it would support NATO's acceptance of other members in the future, leaving all states with the understanding that enlargement would take place again in a not-so-distant time.[18] At the Madrid Summit's conclusion, NATO issued a declaration stating that it "remains open to new members. . . . The Alliance expects to extend further invitations in coming years." [19]

When the alliance met again for its 50th Anniversary in Washington, D.C., in April 1999--in the midst of its bombing campaign against Slobodan Milosevic--NATO reaffirmed its commitment to enlargement. To encourage this process, NATO created the Membership Action Plan (MAP), which entails annual reviews of aspiring members' progress toward meeting NATO's membership criteria.[20] At the same time, the allies signaled that no new members would be added until at least its next major summit in 2002. In short, although the decision to enlarge has been postponed, on paper NATO remains firmly committed to expansion.

Less than two years after the Washington Summit, it is already clear that enlargement has been demoted from NATO's agenda and overwhelmed by other events. In major addresses before the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, the Bulgarian National Assembly, and a Defence Week Conference in Brussels, the NATO Secretary General, Lord George Robertson, has not championed the cause of expansion. In addressing NATO's future and role in European security, enlargement has been buried deep in Robertson's talks--with strong signals that enlargement will be conditional upon meeting NATO's explicit criteria.[21] At the Foreign Ministers meetings in Brussels in December 1999, NATO diplomats were also consumed with issues other than enlargement.[22] Moreover, based on the Final Communique from NATO's May 2000 ministerial meeting in Florence, Italy, NATO peacekeeping in Bosnia and Kosovo clearly dominated the agenda. In the communique, the commitment to enlarge was preceded by 33 other concerns, including NATO's pledge to work more closely in building a European Security and Defence Identity--a goal that has countless political, diplomatic, financial, and organizational hurdles to overcome before it comes to fruition.[23] Thus, although the alliance remains committed to expansion officially, movements in this direction have been tentative and overshadowed by events elsewhere.

While the official policy is clear, the next round of NATO expansion is already developing into a contentious issue, with differing views among the allies. Judging from the political dynamics of the last enlargement, the positions of the alliance's great powers will be crucial in determining expansion--perhaps most importantly, that of the United States.

Prospects for Enlargement: Allied Support

The United States

As the Clinton Administration spends its last months in office, the signals for future expansion are understandably tentative. At the Washington Summit, the United States indicated its unwillingness to consider new members until the next major summit in 2002. This position may have been due to the intense lobbying efforts required by the Administration to gain the Senate's approval for the Visegrad states' admission in 1998, and due to an unwillingness to fight another major battle with the Senate during a presidential election year. At the Washington Summit, NATO was also engaged in the controversial bombing campaign in Yugoslavia, with the United States leading the military effort. Thus, the Clinton Administration had few domestic political interests served by introducing the controversial issue of expansion during such a precarious time in NATO's life. Whatever the internal reason for the postponement of enlargement, clearly the Clinton Administration saw no strategic or political gain in advocating another expansion round in the near future, and it succeeded in establishing a three-year moratorium on membership.

Since the Washington Summit, senior Clinton officials have been reluctant to express specific positions on NATO enlargement, in part due to their remaining time in office. Senior Administration officials have noted their inability to shape policy in 2002, and thus have remained reserved on any policy specifics on future expansion. Secretary of Defense William Cohen stated on 10 June 2000 that NATO's door remains open, but also that "it is . . . too early to predict what, if any, action [NATO] will then take."^[24] While the Administration's position is commendable, in that it recognizes its inability to determine US foreign and military policy once out of office, at the same time outgoing presidents can take positions in order to enhance the political prospects of their party during a presidential election cycle. The White House press office released one statement on 13 March 2000 indicating its continued support for expansion.^[25] However, the President himself did not articulate this position, and he has waged no other public efforts to advance the cause. Otherwise, most Clinton officials have refrained from any remarks on enlargement and are noncommittal on specific applicants and the prospects of enlargement itself.

Like the Clinton Administration, the major presidential candidates have not prioritized NATO enlargement. Texas Governor George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore both support expansion, but without any specific references to potential member states or the appropriate timetable for expansion. At the meeting in Vilnius, when nine states called for more rapid progress on expansion, both candidates sent letters to the meeting backing future enlargement.^[26] However, unlike the 1996 campaign, the 2000 campaign has been noticeably void of more substantive promises to enlarge NATO. In major campaign addresses in the northeast and midwest in 1996, both Clinton and Dole openly spoke about the need for expansion.^[27] In contrast, Gore and Bush hold essentially the same position, in that they both quietly support expansion while remaining vague on any specifics of the policy.

Unlike the Clinton Administration and the aspiring presidential candidates, members of Congress have already begun to stake positions and build momentum for their favorite applicant states. Prior to the Washington Summit, seven members of the House of Representatives introduced a resolution favoring the Baltic states' admission into the alliance.^[28] At the same time, a slightly larger group in the House called for Slovakia's admittance.^[29] During the summit, a bipartisan coalition of senior Senators, led by Senator Richard Lugar, expressed their feelings that expansion should continue forward.^[30] Since that time, however, only periodic expressions of support have occurred. One strong expansion advocate is Senator Richard Durbin. Of Lithuanian descent, Durbin on more than one occasion has stated his support for all the Baltic states' entrance into the alliance.^[31] The most momentum generated in the United States for any aspiring candidate in 2000 has been for Slovenia. On 23 June 2000, the Senate gave unanimous consent to a resolution supporting Slovenia's accession to NATO.^[32] Although votes are not individually recorded for such a procedure and although it is only a "resolution of support" with no formal legal status, the resolution nonetheless suggests some willingness in the Senate to include Slovenia in NATO's next expansion round.

In terms of the Senate's general mood on enlargement, however, NATO expansion has received minimal attention since the Senate's vote to approve the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland in 1998. Moreover, since 1998, some Senators have expressed serious reservations on further NATO expansion. One notable incident occurred at a recent foreign policy forum when Senator Robert Torricelli told a Lithuanian diplomat not to expect NATO membership until it can fully provide for its own defense, and that future NATO expansion is far from certain.^[33] In 1998, 19 Senators voted against enlargement, which included a mix of liberal Democrats, such as Paul Wellstone, and conservative Republicans, such as John Ashcroft. In order to approve a treaty and expand NATO again, the Senate must give two-thirds support to the President. Thus, only 34 Senators could prevent the alliance's further expansion, which requires only 15 more negative votes than were cast in 1998. And when Senators voted in 1998, NATO had experienced a successful bombing campaign in 1995 in Bosnia and had not yet faced the more controversial bombing campaign in Kosovo, nor the subsequent peace-enforcement operation that followed--in which NATO's resolve continues to be tested. Senators also did not have comparative test cases to judge how well new members contribute to the alliance. Before the Visegrad states' entry, NATO's last new member was Spain, which joined in 1982. Consequently, when and if another round of NATO expansion occurs, the members of the Senate have a larger array of military and strategic variables to include in their analysis before casting their votes.

Another less tangible but important factor to consider is the American domestic political environment for enlargement. When the Visegrad states lobbied in the United States for admission, those countries benefited from the political support provided by well-organized ethnic-European political organizations in Washington, especially the Polish American Congress. The Committee to Expand NATO, another interest group, consisting primarily of defense industry

officials, was also active and mobilized to promote the Visegrad states' interests.[34] However, since the Senate's vote in 1998, interest group activity for enlargement has been limited and has generated minimal media attention.[35] Although public opinion polls indicated widespread American approval for enlargement in 1998, the polls also found that most Americans did not know which states were being added to the alliance. Thus, interest group activity in Washington may not be central to building support for enlargement, but a virtual absence of support presents a new dynamic and a potentially threatening development for the next round of expansion.

In sum, with the exception of Slovenia, talk of NATO expansion is limited and generally has been kept off the American foreign policy agenda. Within the Clinton Administration, on the campaign trail, and among most members of Congress, American politicians ostensibly see few domestic interests or other strategic benefits in pushing for additional expansion at this time. Although two years remain before the next summit--and the interim change occasioned by either a Gore or Bush administration--few signals suggest that prospects for enlargement in the United States are strong at this time.

Germany and the United Kingdom

Early German support for expansion in 1993 was likely crucial in building momentum in Europe and in the United States for the alliance's enlargement. Like the United States, Germany continued its support of NATO's open-door policy after Madrid, but after Gerhard Schroeder's election as Chancellor in 1998 Germany has expressed reservations on further enlargement. German Defense Minister Rudolph Scharping noted before the Washington Summit that the "door is open," but aspiring member states have a long way to go before invitations will be extended.[36] Upon a recent visit to Lithuania, a country making notable achievements toward NATO's criteria, Chancellor Schroeder refused to state specifically whether Germany would support its bid for full membership. Analysts have in part attributed Schroeder's tentativeness on expansion to Russia's continuing opposition to enlargement.[37] Like former Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin continues to express his strong opposition to NATO expansion, noting that such a move "would destabilize the situation in Europe and the world." [38] Only days before Schroeder's trip to Lithuania, Putin made his case known to Schroeder in very successful talks between the leaders in June 2000.[39] Yeltsin had expressed similar reservations with former Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Like Schroeder, the German government had appeared receptive to Russian concerns.[40] However, Kohl later became an active supporter of enlargement, calling for full membership of the Visegrad states as well as Romania. Whether Schroeder's position on expansion will evolve like Kohl's is uncertain, but recent evidence suggests that Germany sees no interest in forcing enlargement, preferring to keep the issue on hold for the time being.

As Chancellor, Schroeder is under additional pressure to appease the German Green Party, which accounts for a small but still important faction within his ruling majority. When Schroeder assembled his government after the 1998 election, he appointed Green leader Joschka Fisher as Foreign Minister. In the 1990s, rank-and-file Greens have expressed widely different positions on NATO expansion. Philosophically, many Greens have reservations on NATO's existence itself, and prefer strengthening the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Thus, while Fisher supports the "open-door" policy, he and consequently Schroeder must remain attuned to those Greens who could threaten the coalition government.[41]

Like Germany, the United Kingdom also has proven hesitant to push for rapid expansion, ostensibly due to Russian concerns. With the March 2000 election of President Putin, British Prime Minister Tony Blair openly stated his desire to improve relations with Russia. Blair traveled to St. Petersburg prior to the elections to meet with Putin, and British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook was one of the first Western diplomats to meet with Putin in Russia after his victory.[42] Moreover, as briefly addressed above, NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, who previously served as former Defence Secretary for Blair's Labour government and is a close political ally to Blair, has similarly extended warm overtures to Russia and Putin. Robertson has made a concerted effort as Secretary General to repair Russian-NATO relations after the profound disagreements over the military campaign in Kosovo.[43] Secretary Cook has stated that Britain supports Slovakia's admission, but this announcement was made with little fanfare and was downplayed in talks with Russia.[44] Thus, like the United States and Germany, the overall British foreign policy approach toward enlargement is one of restraint.

France, Italy, and Other Allies

In stark contrast to the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom, France and Italy have staked out clear aims to encourage expansion, and speak openly about their preferred candidates. At the top of Italy's list is neighboring Romania, which gained considerable support in 1998.[45] Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini argued recently that Romania deserves NATO membership and would provide geographic balance to the alliance. Italy played a leading role in the alliance during the Kosovo bombings, mostly due to its strategic proximity to Yugoslavia. Italy also plays a leading role in the peacekeeping operation in Albania, and thus should be expected to unequivocally voice its position on enlargement in the next expansion round.

France also will play a leading role at the next summit, in part due to its past failure and diplomatic defeat in attempting to include Romania and Slovenia at Madrid. France has already stated that Romania and Slovakia should be included in the next expansion round, and France is likely to also support Slovenia's bid, as it did in 1998.[46] However, France's future role and its position on NATO enlargement remains difficult to anticipate. France has historically demonstrated much independence from NATO, although in the 1990s it has been generally more cooperative with its allies.[47] At the same time, since 1999 France has pushed boldly for a stronger Common Foreign and Security Policy within the European Union, and it argues for an enhanced European Security Defence Identity within NATO. Thus, although France is signaling its favorite applicant states already, NATO enlargement is ostensibly low on France's foreign policy agenda--making it difficult to determine what issues France will consider paramount in 2002.

According to NATO's Charter, the admission of new members requires unanimous approval. Although the agenda for enlargement was largely set by the "great powers," NATO's smaller allies may potentially also be crucial in the next round. NATO's Nordic states--Iceland, Denmark, and Norway--have been very vocal in supporting the Baltic states' admission.[48] After the Vilnius meeting, Turkey also expressed its support for a large expansion.[49] Moreover, Spain favors NATO's expansion into southern Europe. Thus, from Turkey's unlimited support of expansion, to American, British, and German restraint on the issue, it is clear that vast policy differences are developing as the next round approaches. NATO's military and political membership criteria are largely applied and interpreted on a state-by-state basis, with national interests appearing to determine each ally's favorite candidates. With no consensus at this time, the expansion issue is one that will potentially produce much conflict in the alliance.

Performance of the Visegrad Allies

Whether it is fair or not, the ability of the newest allies to contribute to NATO will be critical in determining expansion. Supporters and detractors of expansion will use the Visegrad allies as important test cases to support their arguments. Ron Asmus, former US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, recently noted: "The performance of the three new members is essential for the future of the process. You will be scrutinized more than any other pupil to see whether you're doing a good or bad job." [50]

The Visegrad states' record thus far is mixed. NATO requires its member states to have interoperable weaponry and specifies that English serve as the common language within the alliance. While it was understood that the Visegrad states would take years to reach the required levels of compliance, early evidence suggests that they have been only partially successful in progressing toward these ends. Critics maintain that this is in part due to a poorly defined term of "interoperability" and due to the limited military training being provided by the United States. A lack of coordination between the new states and the US military is partly to blame for the limited progress. A general concern also exists over the Visegrad states' commitment to meet NATO's standards.[51] Other analysts are divided on the Visegrad's military spending levels thus far, and on the Visegrad states' efforts to restructure and reform their militaries.[52]

The Visegrad allies' record in Kosovo also varies considerably by state. Although all the states contributed to NATO's peacekeeping deployment after Milosevic's retreat, military and diplomatic support was mixed during the actual bombings. Hungary and Poland were very supportive of the bombing campaign. Poland's support is especially noteworthy in that it offered military assistance where it could and was willing to deploy ground troops if necessary. Hungary also provided airspace for aircraft and unwavering diplomatic support from the beginning of the campaign. However, the Czech Republic's support varied, depending upon the branch of government examined. Czech President Vaclav Havel strongly backed the operation. In contrast, Prime Minister Milos Zeman referred to NATO as

"warmongers" and "primitive troglodytes" at all stages of the mission. The Czech public, more so than that of any other NATO ally, also condemned the operation and waged public protests to show its opposition.[53] This resistance resulted in a tongue-lashing from NATO Secretary General Javier Solana to the Czech Republic's Ambassador to NATO, Karol Kavanda, and thus added another diplomatic hurdle for the alliance during the operation.[54]

By some measures the Visegrad states advanced NATO's aims in their first test in Kosovo. NATO has officially issued much praise for the allies in the aftermath of Operation Deliberate Force. However, the political reality is that the Czech Republic provided an unwanted diplomatic surprise to the alliance. The high financial costs of advancing and adjusting the Visegrad militaries and the limited progress in other areas of NATO's military and political criteria will work against further expansion. Supporters and opponents of enlargement both have evidence to support their arguments, which implies that the next round of enlargement--particularly among critics in the US Senate--could be especially contentious. A larger alliance has brought new concerns and problems to NATO, which will undoubtedly be scrutinized and highlighted by those who oppose expansion.

Conclusion

Since the Washington Summit and NATO's reiteration that its door remains open, most evidence suggests that the next round of enlargement will be very contentious. At Madrid, the United States' leadership was instrumental in setting the agenda among the allies. However, as the Clinton Administration concludes its final chapter, few signs point toward an American willingness to advance NATO expansion in either a Gore or Bush administration. Both campaigns place NATO enlargement low on their foreign policy agendas. However, whichever candidate wins the presidential election, both will face domestic pressure from Congress to enlarge NATO, as members are already lobbying for their favorite candidates. At the same time, other Senators express concern over enlargement. In 1997 in Madrid, and before, American leadership proved crucial in shaping how NATO would expand. At this time it is difficult to determine what direction the United States, and consequently NATO, will take in 2002 due to the array of American policy proposals.

As demonstrated in the Balkans in varying degrees, NATO's new allies advanced the alliance's interests. Moreover, the Visegrad states' membership further stabilizes democracy throughout Central Europe. In this regard, NATO enlargement advances American security interests and should continue in the future. However, the United States must proceed cautiously at the next summit, ensuring that new applicants have proven records in the Partnership for Peace, that they are financially committed to meeting NATO's military criteria, and that public opinion in the applicant states truly corresponds with the government's desire to join the alliance.

The United States, of course, is only one of 19 members in the alliance. Although the political reality is that the United States will play a critical role in the next enlargement, it alone will not determine alliance membership. NATO's other "great powers" are expected to play significant roles in 2002. At present they differ widely in their policy proposals regarding expansion, with a general hesitance expressed by the United Kingdom and Germany, and with outspoken favoritism for certain applicant states from France and Italy. Even NATO's smaller allies have widely divergent views as to their preferred candidates. Unlike 1997, when at least a modest degree of consensus existed for the Visegrad states, no such agreement exists at this time. As states advance their preferred applicants, with their own national interpretations of NATO's political and military criteria for membership, the alliance will require effective and persuasive leadership in order to overcome the many hurdles now being raised.

Moreover, the Visegrad states' role in the alliance will be an important measuring stick for further expansion. This factor opens NATO to new criticisms that did not exist in 1997 and 1998. The Visegrad states have time to come closer to NATO's military criteria before 2002. However, the Czech Republic's embarrassing opposition with regard to Kosovo, coupled with the considerable financial assistance required to upgrade the Visegrad's militaries, will not sit well with some members of the alliance and other skeptics of enlargement. NATO's performance in Kosovo will also be important.[55] If the mission continues to demand center stage or brings unwanted negative attention to the alliance, NATO is likely to downgrade the enlargement issue as it works to avoid further military and diplomat distress in the Balkans.

In sum, the political environment developing on enlargement looks quite challenging for NATO--just as it assumes a greater role in European affairs. No state or group of states commands a favored position among all allies, although

favorites are clearly developing within most member states. At best, these differences will be overcome by 2002 through strong leadership. At worst, NATO is on a course for its own "family feud" at its next major summit.

NOTES

1. See President Clinton's exchange with the White House press corps in William J. Clinton, "The President's News Conference," *Public Papers of the Presidents*, 17 June 1993, p. 868. See also Jonathan Clarke, "Replacing NATO," *Foreign Policy*, 93 (Winter 1993/1994), 22-40; "Marital Problems," *The Economist*, 3 December 1994, pp. 15-16; "NATO is Obsolete," *New Statesman and Society*, 7 January 1994, p. 5.
2. Robert B. McCalla, "NATO's Persistence after the Cold War," *International Organization*, 50 (No. 3, 1996), 445-75; John S. Duffield, "NATO's Functions after the Cold War," *Political Science Quarterly*, 109 (No. 5, 1994-95), 763-87. See also Sean Kay, *NATO and the Future of European Security* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998).
3. Joyce P. Kauffman, "A Challenge to European Security and Alliance Unity," *World Affairs*, 161 (No. 1, 1998), 22-32; Maynard Glitman, "U.S. Role in Bosnia: Rethinking a Flawed Approach," *Survival*, 38 (Winter 1996-1997); Pauline Neville-Jones, "Dayton, IFOR and Alliance Relations in Bosnia," *Survival*, 38 (Winter 1996-1997).
4. Dov Lynch, "'Walking the Tightrope': The Kosovo Conflict and Russia in European Security," *European Security*, 8 (No. 4, 1999); Viktor Gobarev, "Kosovo Aftermath: Russia-NATO Relations after the Kosovo Crisis: Strategic Implications," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 12 (No. 3, 1999).
5. "The Accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland," NATO Basic Fact Sheet, internet, <http://www.nato.int/docu/facts/2000/access.htm>.
6. See Les Aspin, "New Europe, New NATO," *NATO Review*, 1 February 1994, pp. 12-14.
7. NATO Communique M-NAC-2(92)116, "Final Communique," 1 December 1994.
8. NATO, *Study on NATO Enlargement*, September 1995, internet, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/enl-9502.htm>.
9. David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Role in International Security* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), p. 102; Gale Mattox, "NATO Enlargement and the United States: A Deliberate and Necessary Decision," in *The Future of NATO: Enlargement, Russia and European Security*, ed. Charles-Philippe David and Jacques Levesque (Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1999), p. 81.
10. James Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1999).
11. Ryan C. Hendrickson, "The Enlargement of NATO: The Theory and Politics of NATO Expansion," *European Security*, 8 (No. 4, 1999), 91-94.
12. David G. Haglund, "NATO Expansion: Origins and Evolution of an Idea," in *Will NATO Go East?* ed. David G. Haglund (Ontario, Canada: Center for International Relations, 1996), p. 26; Jonathan Eyal, "NATO's Enlargement: Anatomy of a Decision," *International Affairs*, 74 (No. 4, 1997), 704.
13. France originally expressed some reservations to enlargement, but when it saw that its position was not well supported in Europe, and with strong American leadership, France resigned its opposition and sought to build support for the European Security and Defence Identity. NATO's enlargement also came at a time when France was undergoing much-improved relations with NATO. See Marie-Claude Plantin, "NATO Enlargement as an Obstacle to France's European Designs," in David and Levesque, pp. 79-94.
14. Interview with Department of Defense official, 18 March 1998. Statements from US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and US Secretary of State William Cohen can be found in "Statement before the Senate Appropriations Committee," US Senate Appropriations Committee, 21 October 1997.

15. See Eyal, p. 706.
16. See Hendrickson, "The Enlargement of NATO," p. 89.
17. See Eyal.
18. For a quote from an American official at the summit, see CNN Interactive World News, "On Summit Eve, NATO Divided on New Members," 7 July 1997, internet, <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9707/07/nato.summit/index.html>.
19. NATO Press Release M-1 (97)81, "Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation," 8 July 1997, internet, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1997/p97-081e.htm>.
20. NATO Basic Facts, "NATO's Open Door Policy," internet, <http://www.nato.int/docu/facts/2000/opendoor.htm>.
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