NATO, Russia, and East European Security

Mark Kramer

This chapter will discuss the relationship between NATO and the East European countries that formerly belonged to the Warsaw Pact. The focus will be on the four members of the so-called Visegrad Group—Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia—which are the most likely candidates for future admission into NATO. Some references to Bulgaria and Romania, and also to the three Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia), will be included as well. Rather than simply dwelling on transient events, the chapter will place the recent debate about NATO and Eastern Europe into a broader historical perspective. It also will explore the various political and military issues that are likely to determine where the debate eventually leads.

The Emergence of a Security Vacuum, 1990–91

The collapse of communism in East Europe, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, and the demise of the Soviet Union removed the security framework that had been imposed on Eastern Europe for some 45 years. As auspicious as all those developments may have been, they left the region in a kind of security vacuum. The end of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe eliminated the chief source of the region’s periodic crises in the post-war era, but other dangers soon emerged. The new East European governments found themselves having to contend with a number of serious threats without the
benefit of a security framework to replace the one that had collapsed.

Initially, the most salient of the threats confronting the new East European regimes was the continued uncertainty about the political future of the Soviet Union. Even before the reformist trends in Moscow turned sour in late 1990 and early 1991, apprehension about Soviet political developments was readily apparent in most of the East European states. Hungarian Foreign Minister Géza Jeszensky consistently warned in 1990 that events could take a sharp turn for the worse in the Soviet Union, and that any such reversal would have ominous implications for the Warsaw Pact countries:

Only recently has the Soviet Union become a trustworthy partner in efforts to truly liberate the Hungarian people. . . . But there are different trends in Moscow and they are in conflict with one another. . . . Our major problem is that it is difficult to predict the direction of processes in the Soviet Union.2

Polish officials had begun to speak in even gloomier terms by mid-1990 about “the threat of a conservative overthrow” in Moscow, which would cause

the USSR to disintegrate into parts that would not only be riven by internal conflicts, but would also be prone to unleash some sort of external conflict, if only to provide the population with easy victories and conquests. [We cannot] assume there will automatically be peace [with the Soviet Union] in the future.”3

The concerns expressed by these East European officials took on a new sense of urgency after the abrupt resignation of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in December 1990, coupled with his warnings about “reactionary” elements who were pushing the Soviet Union toward a new “dictatorship.”4 This sense of urgency was heightened still further by the violent crackdown in the Baltic republics in January 1991, which prompted all the East European governments to condemn the Soviet Union and to threaten to withdraw immediately from the Warsaw Pact. (The Pact was not due to be abolished formally until July 1991.) A top aide to Polish President Lech Wałęsa warned at the time that the Polish government could “no longer rule out the possibility that Russian generals are thinking about regaining Eastern Europe.”5 Although most East European officials assumed that the Soviet High Command had grudgingly come to accept the demise of the Warsaw Pact, many were still uneasy about what would happen if the Soviet armed forces acquired a larger political role or, worse yet, launched a coup. Even the then Polish foreign minister, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, who had tried to defuse the most extreme speculation about Soviet policy in the region, admitted to a few misgivings about “the Soviet Army’s Stalinist desire to win back territory, expand Soviet borders, and regain a military presence” in central Europe.6

In addition to concerns about a hard-line backlash in Moscow, the wide-
spread feelings of uncertainty that followed the collapse of the Warsaw Pact induced all the East European governments to look for new security arrangements. The general perception, as voiced by the then Polish deputy defense minister, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, was that "we do not know what is going to happen in our part of the world once the straitjacket of the Soviet Army is removed." In the days when the East European countries were strictly subordinated to Soviet control, the Soviet Union could set the whole political agenda for the region. Territorial and other disputes that were so common before 1945, such as those between Poland and Germany, Hungary and Romania, and Bulgaria and Romania, as well as the general phenomenon of "balkanization," ceased to be as important in an era of Soviet domination. But once Soviet hegemony was gone, most East European officials assumed that long-submerged tensions and conflicts would surface more easily, perhaps culminating in outright hostilities between two or more countries. Hungarian defense minister Lajos Für was among those who expressed this view:

Aggressive reflexes have not disappeared from the European countries of various development levels. Unfortunately, wars have always been part of the human struggle for existence. . . . Eternal peace would be a good thing, but I do not believe in it, and I do not trust the infallible politicians who say that a lasting and holy peace will soon emerge in Europe.  

The particular concern among most officials was the possible spread of ethnic violence, which, they feared, might spill over into other countries or provoke outside intervention. Their fears seemed to be borne out by the escalating war in Yugoslavia in the spring and summer of 1991, when all the surrounding states put their military forces on high alert and Austria mobilized some 10,000 troops and dozens of combat aircraft to contain the fighting. Officials in the region were concerned that the situation might eventually induce most of the Balkan states to reopen their long-standing disputes over boundaries and the status of ethnic minorities. 

The impending disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 raised further anxiety among officials in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, who feared that newly independent republics might press irredentist claims. The concern expressed by a senior Polish military officer in late 1990 that the "current nationalist trends in Ukraine and Lithuania" might someday prompt one or both of those republics "to challenge [Poland's] eastern border" was indicative of this line of thought. Indeed, the "possibility that territorial claims will be made against Poland by its neighbors or that nationality clashes will emerge in connection with national minorities and chauvinist groups in neighboring states" was taken seriously enough at the time by top Polish officials that they openly warned it could lead to "the involvement of
our country in an armed conflict, and even in a war.”

In short, there were enough potential dangers around after 1989 to support the Hungarian government’s contention that the “security situation [in East-Central Europe] is not firm enough” in the “completely new situation that is emerging.” Fears of a large-scale East-West war in Europe all but disappeared, but many East European officials believed that a series of smaller conflicts, over time, could be nearly as detrimental to European security. The end result, as Václav Havel put it in the spring of 1991, could be “chaos or even worse.” Although many officials initially hoped to contend with future security threats by relying on a pan-European organization like the CSCE, those hopes proved to be illusory. All the East European governments soon realized that the use of the CSCE for most security functions would be viable only in the longer term, if ever. In the interim, some other arrangement was deemed essential to fill what top East European officials described as the “military vacuum” and “deep political void” created by the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact.

THE INCEPTION OF THE VISEGRAD GROUP

One option that Polish leaders tried to promote was a form of sub-regional security cooperation among Poland, Hungary, and the former Czechoslovakia. Polish officials even spoke hopefully about the possible establishment of an “organized alliance” over the longer term. In April 1990 the leaders of the three (later four) countries held preliminary discussions at Bratislava, but those discussions were almost entirely symbolic and had no specific agenda. Five months later, the deputy foreign and defense ministers from the three sides met near the Czechoslovak-Polish border, in Zakopane, to consider the idea of a trilateral security framework. That session was followed in November 1990 by a higher-level meeting in Budapest, and by another gathering of the deputy foreign ministers in Prague in late December 1990. A fifth session, involving the foreign ministers of the three countries, took place in Budapest in mid-January 1991, and a climactic sixth meeting, which brought together the presidents and prime ministers of the three states, was held in the Hungarian city of Visegrad the following month. That session marked the true beginning of what came to be known as the “Visegrad Triangle” (and then the “Visegrad Group” after the split of Czechoslovakia).

Shortly before the Visegrad summit, Bulgarian and Romanian officials expressed interest in joining a sub-regional organization if one were formed by the other three countries. The Romanian overtures were promptly rebuffed by the Visegrad participants (led by Hungary), but the Bulgarian request encountered a somewhat more favorable response. Even so, Bulgarian leaders were too optimistic in concluding that “the ‘troika’ will eventually expand and become a military alliance.” Both governments were well aware that the joint military cooperation under the CSCE would not bring about significant changes in Polish, Hungarian, or Czech military planning, or the possibility of such an organization ever expanding to include a military approach to joint security.

Nevertheless, the Visegrad Group meant much further limited in scope a significant event of an attack from a single state that the East European security systems much unfulfilled. The bloc of Soviet Union grew much more limited in scope a development since a point at which even the East European governments signed agreements for the integration of their own armed forces. Even Polish officials expressed little interest in pursuing joint military cooperation. A further obstacle came, ironic development seemed...

NATO, Russia, and...
1989 to the situation in Europe all series of European security could be a contention like the other officials ed by the regional partnership of leaders of Bratislava, to continue to work on the following: the third state also began joint air defense operations in early 1991 to make up for the integrated air-defense network they had formerly shared with the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, the Polish government's hopes of taking these arrangements much further by forming a full-fledged security organization went unfulfilled. The bilateral military agreements that the three states signed were limited in scope and contained no provisions for automatic assistance in the event of an attack. Moreover, at no point did either Hungary or Czechoslovakia express interest in merging the treaties into a broad, trilateral military agreement, much less a quadrilateral pact with both Poland and Bulgaria, or a pentagonal arrangement that included Romania as well. On the contrary, Czechoslovak and Hungarian leaders said explicitly at the time that they did not intend to form a "new alliance" or "bloc" at the sub-regional level. Even Polish officials eventually conceded that it was premature to "conclude a military alliance," though they still hoped to "formulate a common approach to questions of security and regional stability."

A further obstacle to military cooperation among the Visegrad countries came, ironically enough, when the Soviet Union broke apart. This development seemed to eliminate, or at least mitigate, the most exigent threat to the East European states, and hence it removed the main incentive for pursuing joint military efforts in the first place. Most East European officials argued that it made far more sense, in those circumstances, to press for membership in NATO rather than trying to make the Visegrad framework
into a quasi-alliance.24 The efficacy of the Visegrad arrangement was also attenuated by the split of Czechoslovakia. Under the leadership of Václav Klaus, the Czech government was wary of developing close ties with the other Visegrad countries, for fear of being held back in its drive to obtain membership in the European Community (now renamed the European Union) and NATO. The Czech Republic’s shift after 1992 toward a “go-it-alone” approach did not obviate the prospects of sub-regional military cooperation altogether, but it certainly cast doubt on the longevity of the Visegrad Group.

Thus, even though officials in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia were still concerned about the security vacuum in East-Central Europe, they all had concluded by 1994 that the only way to fill that vacuum was through an extension of NATO, not through the creation of a mini-alliance system.25 This judgment was especially compelling in light of the military forces deployed by the Visegrad states. Even if the four governments had committed themselves wholeheartedly to a separate military alliance, their combined armies would have been unable to handle anything except relatively low-level threats (see Chart 1). Under the limits imposed by the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty signed in November 1990, the combined military strength of the then three Visegrad states was infinitesimal compared to the Soviet armed forces. This disparity was mitigated somewhat by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but even now the Polish, Hungarian, Czech, and Slovak armies combined are still dwarfed by the Russian army (not to mention the Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian armed forces together).

The disproportion in Moscow’s favor is even greater than it may seem, because the Russian Army has tens of thousands of weapons deployed east of the Urals that are not covered by CFE. Most of those weapons were initially relocated there by the Soviet government in 1990 to ensure that they would be exempt from the treaty’s limits.26 If a severe crisis were to erupt in Europe, much of this equipment could be shifted back to western Russia to augment Russian ground and air forces. The weaponry located east of the Urals thus could vastly magnify the force imbalance in East-Central Europe. Although the process of transporting such large amounts of hardware back to Europe would be very costly and might take as long as several months, the redeployments in 1990 showed that the task is eminently feasible.27 Hence, so long as concern persists about the possible emergence of military dangers “to the east,” the Visegrad states will have an incentive to look to the great powers, both inside and outside Europe, for protection.

**INITIAL EAST EUROPEAN MOVES TOWARD NATO, 1990–91**

Given the lack of satisfactory alternatives, the East European states have looked increasingly to NATO, both implicitly and explicitly, to fill...
### Chart 1

**ARMED FORCES DEPLOYED IN EUROPE: Russia and the Visegrad Group Countries**

**CFE Limits and Actual Holdings (12/93)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Manpower Holding</th>
<th>Limit</th>
<th>Tanks Holding</th>
<th>Limit</th>
<th>ACV Holding</th>
<th>Limit</th>
<th>Arty Holding</th>
<th>Limit</th>
<th>Attack Hel Holding</th>
<th>Limit</th>
<th>Combat Aircraft Holding</th>
<th>Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1,110,578</td>
<td>1,450,000</td>
<td>7,493</td>
<td>6,400</td>
<td>13,466</td>
<td>11,480</td>
<td>6,069</td>
<td>6,415</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>3,921</td>
<td>3,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>92,893</td>
<td>93,333</td>
<td>1,525</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>2,254</td>
<td>1,367</td>
<td>1,620</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>75,294</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>1,191</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>1,645</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>269,670</td>
<td>234,000</td>
<td>2,515</td>
<td>1,730</td>
<td>2,232</td>
<td>2,150</td>
<td>2,151</td>
<td>1,610</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>54,223</td>
<td>46,667</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** The limits and holdings for Russia apply only to forces based west of the Urals. Russian forces east of the Urals are not covered by CFE.


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vacuum left by the Warsaw Pact. Even before the East European governments started openly pursuing full membership in NATO, they set about establishing firm ties with the alliance and with individual member-states. By 1991, exchanges between top East European political and military officials and their Western counterparts had become so frequent and extensive that they rarely drew more than passing notice. Following the visit of the Polish foreign minister, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, to NATO’s headquarters in Brussels in March 1990, Poland established formal diplomatic contacts with NATO. All the other East European countries promptly followed suit. In addition, a Polish deputy was elected in November 1990 to be a special member of a political commission in the North Atlantic Assembly, the parliamentary body of NATO. This marked the first time that a parliamentarian from a non-member state had been formally elected to participate in the Assembly. That same month, a group of Bulgarian legislators and aides paid a special visit to NATO’s headquarters in Brussels, where they informed Manfred Wörner, the secretary-general of the alliance, that “Bulgaria is in the process of shifting its foreign policy priorities” in favor of NATO. The extent of this shift became evident in January 1991, when 135 of the 400 members of the Bulgarian parliament, who had formed groups known as “Friends of NATO” (Priyateli na NATO) and the “Atlantic Club,” sponsored a bill calling for Bulgaria to seek membership in the Western alliance.

Soon thereafter, in March 1991, Václav Havel became the first East European head of state to visit NATO’s headquarters; a few weeks later, Lech Wałęsa became the second. During their visits the two presidents expressed strong interest in forging much closer ties with NATO, including the possibility of formal membership over the longer term if Western countries would agree. Havel emphasized that the alliance “should not be forever closed” to the East European states, and he expressed hope that Czechoslovakia would eventually become a “regular NATO member” even if it “cannot become one at the moment.” Similar comments were made by the Bulgarian prime minister, Dimitur Popov, during his visit to NATO headquarters in April and May 1991. All these political contacts, and numerous others, were indicative of what the Bulgarian foreign minister described as a widespread desire for “new forms of cooperation between [Eastern Europe] and NATO.”

Equally noteworthy was the expansion of direct military contacts between the East European countries and the Western alliance. Even before the upheavals of 1989, Hungary tentatively began to establish military-diplomatic exchanges with NATO countries. After 1989, such contacts multiplied exponentially and became much more wide-ranging, not only for Hungary, but for all the East European states. The Hungarian and
The Polish state set about reforming its military, and sent officers to military academies in Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and the United States. (The actual training for Hungarian officers began in the fall of 1991.) In turn, officers from those five Western countries were invited to study at military institutions in Hungary and Romania. Poland established similar exchanges with Western military academies, and sought to broaden its military cooperation and “unconventional contacts” with all the major NATO countries. By mid-1991, the Polish government had arranged to send officers to the Royal Naval Academy and Sandhurst military college in Great Britain, to the two main war colleges in France, to a number of Bundeswehr academies in Germany, to West Point and other military colleges in the United States, and to advanced military schools in Italy. Poland also set up exchanges with Austria and with the Higher Land Army Officer School in Sweden.

Czechoslovakia, for its part, arranged to send 20 army officers to Germany's Bundeswehr training academy in Koblenz and a smaller group of officers to the Bundeswehr's university in Neubiberg-Munich. The Czechoslovak government established similar arrangements with other Western countries, including the United States, France, Great Britain, and Italy, and assigned a permanent military representative to NATO. In addition, Czechoslovak leaders proposed formal cooperation with NATO on anti-aircraft defense and civil defense when the chief of NATO's Military Committee, General Vigleik Eide, visited their country in April 1991. Czechoslovakia also sought close bilateral military relations with some of the smaller NATO members, notably Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Bulgaria did the same with Greece, including the signing of a formal pact enabling the two countries to “undertake joint [military] action to remove a threat to peace in the Balkans or to the security of either party.” The Bulgarian government also sought cooperative military links with the larger NATO countries, including exchanges and sharing of data with the United States, Britain, Germany, and Italy. The first group of Bulgarian officers to be trained in the United States received full access to military academies and training facilities upon arriving in June 1991. Other Bulgarian officers were enlisted at NATO's own military schools.

Furthermore, virtually all the East European governments began approaching the United States, Germany, Great Britain, and France about the possibility of obtaining weapons and support equipment in the future. By purchasing Western-made arms, they hoped to eliminate, or at least reduce, their logistical dependence on the former Soviet Union and establish greater commonality with NATO. As early as May 1990 the French government expressed tentative support for French-Polish military coproduction ventures, including joint development, engineering, and manufacturing arrangements, as
well as exchanges of technical knowledge. Later that year the French government also indicated its readiness to “set up arms cooperation and sell military technology” to Hungary.\(^{41}\) Polish and Hungarian officials received nearly as favorable a response when they visited the United States, from which Poland was particularly eager to obtain F-16 fighters.\(^{42}\) Similar overtures (albeit only of an exploratory nature) were made by the other East European governments. Despite severe constraints imposed by shortages of hard currency and lingering export controls, the East European states, by early 1991, had made clear their desire to shift away from former Soviet arms manufacturers toward greater ties with the West.

Equally important, the East European governments sought to establish concrete military cooperation with NATO and to “side with the West” as much as possible on key international issues.\(^{43}\) During the Persian Gulf war in early 1991, all the East European states contributed military personnel and equipment to the American-led multinational force, in contrast to the Soviet Union, which refrained from taking part at all.\(^{44}\) The East European units were placed under direct American and British command (except for some personnel primarily under Saudi command), and they served alongside American soldiers. In addition, several of the East European countries provided use of their air space and air fields to NATO for military purposes before, during, and after the war. Both Hungary and Czechoslovakia gave Germany permission to fly combat aircraft over their territory in early 1991, something that would have been inconceivable when the Warsaw Pact still existed. Those same two East European countries, plus Bulgaria and Romania, allowed the United States to send many hundreds of military transport and cargo flights through their air space during the war itself.\(^{45}\) Hungary also permitted the American planes to land and refuel at Hungarian air bases.

Poland, for its part, provided crucial intelligence support for the war effort. Because Polish construction and engineering firms had done extensive work in Iraq for many years, by 1990 Polish officials were able to supply detailed information about Iraqi military facilities and precise maps of Baghdad to the United States.\(^{46}\) Poland also turned over valuable technical data about Iraq’s air defense systems, tanks, fighter aircraft, and other weaponry, which had been bought mainly from Warsaw Pact countries. Most dramatically of all, Polish intelligence officials masterminded the escape of six key US intelligence agents who had been inadvertently trapped behind Iraqi lines when the crisis broke. The success of this operation, as a senior Polish diplomat later exclaimed, “proved to the Americans that we [in Poland] are a reliable partner who can carry out sensitive, delicate missions on behalf of the American government.”\(^{47}\)

As significant as all these military links between NATO and the East European states had become by mid-1991, they were destined to grow both
SOVIET PRESSURE AND EAST EUROPEAN RESISTANCE

The rapid expansion of NATO’s political and military ties with Eastern Europe in 1990 and 1991 raised the prospect that one or more of the former Warsaw Pact countries would eventually be ready to move further. Havel had already broached the idea of Czechoslovak membership in NATO during his visit to Brussels in March 1991, and the outgoing Hungarian foreign minister, Gyula Horn, was even more explicit in proposing the same status for Hungary. Other countries soon followed suit.

The growing indications by the first half of 1991 that some or all of the East European states might pursue outright membership in NATO provoked dismay in the Soviet Union, where many officials were still not fully reconciled to the loss of Eastern Europe. (Support in Moscow for a tougher stance vis-à-vis Eastern Europe had been growing in any case after the sudden resignation of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in December 1990.) As early as January 1991, the leadership of the CPSU approved a secret report drafted by the CPSU Central Committee’s International Department, which called for “vigorous action to oppose the entry of our former military allies into other military blocs or groupings, above all into NATO—and also possibly into the West European Union (WEU), the nascent military arm of the European Union (EU)—as well as their participation in arrangements that would enable foreign troops to be deployed on their territory.”48 The report, which was published in full in the Central Committee’s main journal in March 1991, stressed that “no matter what, these countries must remain free of foreign bases and armed forces,” and that “under no circumstances must a real or potential threat to the military security of the Soviet Union be permitted to arise in the East European region.”49 Both points were repeated, for special emphasis, in the CPSU leadership’s resolution of approval.

These instructions were quickly translated into action. During the first several months of 1991, senior officials from the CPSU International Department published a series of articles in major Soviet newspapers warning of “dire consequences” if the East European states acted in ways “detrimental to vital Soviet interests.”50 Soviet embassies in the Warsaw Pact countries were instructed to bring all such articles to the attention of their host governments. Following up on this campaign, the Soviet leadership tried to conclude a series of bilateral military treaties that would have explicitly committed the East European states “not to participate in a military-political alliance directed against [the Soviet Union], and not to permit a third country to use the transport and telecommunications systems or the infrastructure of one in number and in scope over the next few years, as the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union disappeared from memory.
[party to the treaty] against the other."

Soviet foreign ministry officials acknowledged that these provisions were intended to prevent the East European countries from joining NATO.Officials in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria immediately rejected the proposed clauses as an “infringement of sovereignty” and an “unacceptable restriction” of their countries’ “freedom to choose to join security alliances.” Hungarian leaders were particularly insistent that “an approach toward NATO is unavoidable,” and that the bilateral agreement with the Soviet Union “must not impede Hungary’s gradual integration into the existing Western security systems,” especially NATO and the WEU:

Hungary will not take upon itself to refrain from joining any other organization. NATO and the Western European Union are now changing…. The Hungarian-Soviet agreement must not hinder us in negotiating and consulting with these organizations, and in joining them.

Hungarian leaders also warned that if the offending clauses were not omitted, they would abrogate their existing state treaty with the Soviet Union and would refuse to sign a new one because “having no treaty at all is better than concluding a bad one.” Hungary’s rejection of the Soviet proposal—and the equally firm rejections by Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Bulgaria—demonstrated, as clearly as anything could, the extent of Eastern Europe’s realignment following the collapse of the Warsaw Pact.

The only partial exception to this trend was in Romania. Although Romanian officials in 1990 and 1991 praised NATO for its “stabilizing influence” in Central Europe and called for the Western alliance to play a “greater role” in “guaranteeing the security of the whole of Europe,” Romania’s ties with NATO were inherently limited by the continued political instability and repression under the post-Ceausescu government. The Romanian authorities were therefore less inclined to push for a formal status in the Western alliance. Moreover, in April 1991 Romania agreed, at Soviet behest, to declare that it would not join a “hostile alliance” in the future, a pledge that all the other East European countries had found unacceptable. To be sure, Romanian leaders denied that the pledge was directed against NATO, saying that it referred to “offensive” alliances, whereas NATO has always been “defensive.” Romanian foreign ministry officials insisted that “Romania retains complete freedom to participate in alliances of a defensive nature,” including NATO. From Moscow’s perspective, however, such distinctions were meaningless. The Soviet government left no doubt that it construed the pledge to be aimed against NATO, regardless of the Romanian interpretation.

Aside from Romania, all the East European states did their best to preserve maximum flexibility vis-à-vis NATO. The Hungarian, Czechoslovak,
Polish, and Bulgarian governments also made clear that even if they could not formally join NATO in the near term, they still hoped to receive security commitments from the alliance, similar to the implicit commitments that non-members like Sweden and Switzerland have long enjoyed. East European leaders were especially eager to receive such commitments from the United States. In early 1991 the then prime minister of Hungary, József Antall, declared that "Hungary and the United States may as well consider each other allies without an alliance," and he urged the US government to "increase its military role in Europe," arguing that this would be the "best guarantee of Hungary's security." Without a strong American military presence, Antall warned, "there can be no assurance of security in Europe." The other East European countries echoed Hungary's support for a continued US military presence in Europe, and also sought to promote the idea of security commitments from NATO. In addition, they began referring more explicitly and more frequently to the possibility of joining NATO. This was especially the case in Czechoslovakia, where Havel and other officials broached the topic as often as they could. For the time being, the East European governments were willing to accept close but informal ties with NATO rather than making a bid for full membership, but they emphasized their hopes of soon joining the alliance outright "if NATO wants us" and "if an expansion of the alliance is needed to preserve a firm American commitment to Europe's security." Even officials who were wary of seeking a formal role in NATO expressed strong backing for solid commitments from the alliance.

NATO's Ambivalent Response

Despite the steadily increasing contacts between the former Warsaw Pact states and NATO, overtures from the East European governments about the possibility of full membership got a mixed reception in allied capitals. On the one hand, the NATO states welcomed East European participation in many of the alliance's activities, and in the spring of 1991 NATO leaders granted the former Warsaw Pact countries "associate" membership in the North Atlantic Assembly. Western governments also agreed to extend "indirect" security commitments to the East European states. On the other hand, the NATO countries quietly discouraged the East European governments from seeking formal membership in the alliance, warning that a drastic realignment of this sort could spark a backlash in the Soviet Union. In June 1991 the then secretary-general of NATO, Manfred Wörner, publicly stated that "granting NATO membership to former Warsaw Treaty members would be a serious obstacle to reaching mutual understanding with the Soviet Union." Although Western leaders were willing to consider East
European membership in the political councils of NATO, they did their best to dissuade the East European states from trying to join the military organs. As the political situation in the Soviet Union took a turn for the worse in late 1990 and early 1991, concerns about the effect of East European admission into NATO were cited ever more frequently.

Following the rebuff of the hard-line coup attempt in Moscow in August 1991 and the disintegration of the whole Soviet state four months later, many of NATO's earlier inhibitions and reservations about its dealings with the East European states ceased to be relevant. Moreover, although the threat from the Soviet Army to the East European countries effectively collapsed along with the Soviet state itself, the former Warsaw Pact governments spoke more openly in late 1991 and 1992 about their hopes of joining NATO. As a result of these two factors—the demise of the Soviet Union, and the continued East European interest in NATO membership—the alliance recast its policy to take somewhat greater account of the East European states' security concerns. The new approach was evident as early as December 1991, when the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) was established with a membership comprising all the NATO countries, all the former Warsaw Pact countries, and all the former Soviet republics. NACC was designed as a post–Cold War multilateral security forum that would enable the East European governments to feel they had a direct cooperative partnership with NATO. Some East European officials initially were wary of joining NACC, believing that the organization was little more than a ploy by NATO to avoid offering full membership, but in the end all the former Warsaw Pact states did enroll.

Despite this new arrangement, the NATO countries still discouraged the East European states from seeking full membership in the alliance. Although all the East European governments and several of the former Soviet republics (the Baltic States and Ukraine) by mid-1992 had openly proclaimed their hopes of joining NATO, the West's reluctance to admit them seemed, in some respects, even greater than before. The hesitation among Western governments stemmed chiefly from lingering concerns about the effects such a move would have on Russia. Although the Russian government itself occasionally expressed interest in joining NATO, the option of membership was usually discussed in terms of the five (six, after 1992) East European states, and particularly Poland, Hungary, and the Czech/Slovak Republics. US officials were concerned that admitting the East European states into NATO would be construed by Moscow as a step directed against Russia and possibly Ukraine. Because US leaders wanted to avoid giving ammunition to the hard-line opponents of Boris Yel'tsin's reformist government, they sought to avoid even the appearance of a Western security arrangement aimed at surrounding or containing Russia. The emphasis, both then and ever...
then and ever since, has been on strictly equal treatment of the East European states and the former republics of the Soviet Union. In that sense, the relationship between the former communist countries and NATO has been quite different from the relationship between those countries and the EU. So far, NATO has treated all the former Warsaw Pact states equally, admitting each of them into NACC and the Partnership for Peace and declining to speculate about precisely when one or more might become full members. By contrast, the EU has given unambiguous preference to the East European countries, especially the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. The Visegrad states were granted associate membership in the early 1990s, a status that is not envisaged for any of the former Soviet republics other than the three Baltic States. The EU subsequently indicated that the East European countries could be eligible for full membership by the year 2000 if reforms stayed on track, a goal that has been ruled out even more firmly for the former Soviet republics (again, excepting the Baltic States). Although some EU member-states, notably France, have tried to back away from any firm commitment on East European accession to the EU until well into the next century, even the French government has conceded that the Visegrad countries, and perhaps the Baltic States, could eventually be admitted, something that is not under consideration for Russia, Ukraine, or any other members of the CIS.

The different approaches of NATO and the EU can be explained by the simple fact that NATO is a security organization and must act accordingly, whereas the EU is concerned, above all, about the economic and political standing of prospective members. The preferential treatment that the EU has accorded to the East European states merely indicates that the potential for sustained economic growth and political stability in Eastern Europe is much greater than in the former Soviet Union. If NATO were to behave in a similar manner—that is, if it were to treat the former communist states unequally—the implications would be very different. Some officials in the West, especially in Germany, have argued that NATO should treat the ex-Warsaw Pact countries unequally, but at least for now, concerns about a potential backlash in Russia have induced the allied governments and NATO as a whole to abide by a strictly egalitarian approach.

How long this egalitarian approach can be maintained is a different matter. Developments by mid-1994 suggested that the notion of equal treatment might be unviable for more than another year or two. In May 1994 the foreign and defense ministers from all ten member-states of the WEU issued a declaration granting “associate partnership” in the WEU to the four Visegrad countries, the three Baltic republics, Romania, and Bulgaria. This status, according to the WEU’s declaration, was intended to prepare the nine ex-communist countries “for integration into and eventual membership in the European Union.”
Although the declaration did not provide any formal security guarantees to the new partners, it did encourage them to participate in the WEU’s formal meetings and in its peacekeeping and humanitarian activities.

The Western European Union’s decision not to extend associate partnership to any CIS countries (including Russia) was in line with the EU’s earlier decision not to confer associate status on any of the former Soviet republics other than the three Baltic States. In the case of the WEU, however, this unequal approach was more significant because the WEU handles military affairs, and all its members belong to NATO. The organization is identified under the Maastricht Treaty as the future defense mechanism of the EU’s “common foreign and security policy,” but the WEU is also widely regarded as an emerging European “pillar” of NATO. To the extent that the WEU continues to bridge the gap between NATO and the EU in the future, the unequal treatment it has accorded to the former communist countries is bound to affect NATO’s policy as well. This, indeed, is precisely what many East European officials are hoping, as the Polish defense minister explained in March 1994, shortly before the WEU’s action:

Our chances for integration into the WEU are much greater than our chances for direct entry into NATO, but the WEU is a component of NATO and therefore this will be a means of entering the European defense system by the back door rather than the front entrance. It’s a very tempting proposition, which we will certainly take up 100 percent.

Although WEU officials went out of their way in May 1994 to stress that the declaration on associate partnership was not directed against Russia or any other country, the implications of the move did not go unnoticed in Moscow. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs promptly issued a statement alleging that the WEU was trying to “create a new model of a military-political alliance in a limited space in Europe.” Subsequently, Russian military commentators accused the WEU of seeking to “repartition Europe” and of engaging in nefarious “diplomatic ploys” aimed at promoting the “eastward expansion of the North Atlantic bloc.” These complaints, at such an early stage, adumbrate the tensions that may ensue in the latter half of the 1990s, when NATO will have to make firmer decisions about East European membership.

**LINGERING WESTERN CONCERNS**

Russia’s continued opposition to East European membership in NATO has not been the only factor driving Western policy. An expansion of the alliance would raise a host of other thorny security issues that Western governments would prefer not to have to address. In particular, NATO would have to rethink its whole policy vis-à-vis the conflict in the Balkans, something that will be particularly difficult after the fiasco in Bosnia-Herzegovina in late 1994. For now, the only major border between a NATO member and the former Y
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former Yugoslavia is the border between Greece and Macedonia. If Hungary were to become a member of NATO, the alliance's frontline would suddenly be extended to the border with Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia. Similarly, if Bulgaria were admitted into NATO, the alliance would be far more directly involved in any potential fighting in Macedonia, an issue that is complicated enough already in light of Greece's firm—and, many would say, highly obstructive—stance. NATO's reluctance to take on a greater role in the former Yugoslavia was one of the reasons that Albania's formal application to join the alliance in December 1992—the first formal application by any former communist country—was quickly rejected. Western leaders sensed, correctly, that Albanian officials were hoping for a reliable guarantee in case the Serbian government tried to crush ethnic Albanians in Kosovo province and the Albanian government felt compelled to intervene on their behalf.

Even if no problems emerged with the former Yugoslavia, East European membership in NATO could give rise to a number of other highly contentious issues, such as conflicts between Hungary and one or more of its neighbors, notably Romania, Ukraine, or Slovakia (not to mention Serbia). When bloody clashes erupted between ethnic Romanians and Hungarians in the Transylvanian region of Romania in March 1990, Hungary came under pressure to intervene in some way. Such pressure would be likely to re-emerge in the future if the plight of the Hungarians in Transylvania were to deteriorate severely, or if civil war were to engulf Romania. Hungarian leaders would face a similar dilemma if Ukraine were to dissolve into widespread turmoil and the ethnic Hungarians there became scapegoats. Tensions between Hungary and Slovakia abated after Vladimir Mečiar's government fell from power in March 1994, but Mečiar's electoral success in October 1994 raised concerns in Budapest that Hungarian-Slovak relations might again be marked by acrimony. If both countries were members of NATO, the potential for conflict between them would be nearly as disruptive for the alliance as the long-standing tensions between Greece and Turkey have been. At the very least, the NATO governments would be averse to admitting Slovakia and Hungary unless there was good reason to expect that serious internecine disputes could be avoided. Hungarian Defense Minister György Keleti recently acknowledged that long-standing problems with both Slovakia and Romania, if left unresolved, might thwart Hungary's chances of getting into the alliance:

We should not only establish cooperation with NATO members and evince our determination to do so, but should also demonstrate this intention in our relations with neighboring countries. For I am convinced that NATO would not admit countries between whom there is a conflict situation or lack
of understanding, or between whom the level of military trust is not high enough to permit them to be admitted into a joint military organization.\textsuperscript{76}

The extension of NATO membership to Hungary might also raise political hackles unless Hungarian leaders pledged—at least tacitly—not to try to prevent other East European countries like Romania from joining the alliance in the future.\textsuperscript{77}

More generally, the entry of the Visegrad states into NATO would bring to the fore some of the dilemmas that have long bedeviled the alliance. The security guarantee that members of NATO receive under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is, ultimately, a nuclear guarantee.\textsuperscript{78} Although it is difficult at this point to envisage any European conflicts that would risk the use of nuclear weapons, an unforeseen turn for the worse in the former Soviet Union might change that in the future. If nothing else, the NATO governments, especially the United States, will have to think through what extended nuclear deterrence might mean in an alliance of twenty or more members. The NATO countries also will have to consider the types of forces that will be needed to ensure the fulfillment of allied security guarantees, well short of the use of nuclear weapons. It is unclear, for example, whether that task might require the deployment of NATO troops or pre-positioned equipment on East European soil and, if so, whether political difficulties might arise. For example, would Poland and the Czech Republic accept the presence of German troops on their territory if NATO deemed that appropriate? Who would pay for the deployments? Questions of this sort, though by no means intractable, are bound to be used by opponents of NATO enlargement to halt or at least hinder the process.

The admission of several former Warsaw Pact countries into NATO would also raise serious questions about the future of the CFE Treaty. The treaty, as originally conceived during the Cold War, was designed to impose equal limits on heavy weapons deployed by NATO and the Warsaw Pact. By the time the treaty was signed in late 1990, the Warsaw Pact had been gravely weakened, and by the time the document entered into force in July 1992, the Pact had ceased to exist. Before the treaty could be signed, the Soviet Union and the six East European states had to engage in protracted and bitter negotiations to allocate weapons shares.\textsuperscript{79} The basic apportionment that they finally devised in the fall of 1990 has been preserved in subsequent years, even as major adjustments in other areas have been needed to compensate for the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the split of Czechoslovakia. The status of the treaty’s allocations could be undermined, however, if the Visegrad countries formally joined NATO. Even if commensurate reductions were made by existing alliance members to keep the aggregate force levels below CFE limits, NATO already had an obsession gone out of gence. For example, would Poland and the Czech Republic accept the presence of German troops on their territory if NATO deemed that appropriate? Who would pay for the deployments? Questions of this sort, though by no means intractable, are bound to be used by opponents of NATO enlargement to halt or at least hinder the process.
limits, there is little doubt that the entry of the East European states into NATO would require yet another series of adjustments in a treaty that has already undergone drastic and often painful changes.

As important as these other concerns may be, they pose far less of an obstacle to East European membership in NATO than does the Russian government’s opposition. Although Russian President Boris Yeltsin seemed to drop his objections to NATO expansion when he visited Poland in late August 1993, he backed away from that position the following month in a letter to the US, British, and French heads of state warning against any attempts to expand the alliance “at Russia’s expense.” Russian officials followed up on Yeltsin’s retraction with a barrage of articles and interviews claiming that the admission of the Visegrad states into NATO would leave Russia “dangerously isolated” and “keep Russia out of its rightful place in Europe.” Even the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVRR) was called into the act to provide a lengthy public analysis of “The Prospects for NATO Expansion and the Interests of Russia.” Although the SVRR’s report was much less shrill than other pronouncements by the Russian government, it warned that the expansion of NATO could lead, if only inadvertently, to the creation of a new cordon sanitaire in Europe and the disruption of “interstate borders that were fixed by the results of the Second World War.”

The intense Russian campaign against NATO enlargement in the late summer and early fall of 1993, which was reminiscent of the program devised in early 1991 by the CPSU International Department, posed obvious difficulties for Western leaders. The Clinton administration’s willingness to challenge Yeltsin’s position on this matter was not great to begin with, and it diminished even further after two crucial events in Russia in the last few months of 1993: the violent suppression of a hard-line rebellion in early October, and the strong showing of ultranationalist and communist forces in the parliamentary elections in December. Both events confirmed how tenuous and fragile the roots of democracy in Russia still are, and both events seemed to instill Yeltsin’s personal role with even greater importance. Faced with the possibility that virulently anti-democratic forces could take power in Russia if the political situation were to deteriorate, Western leaders were even more inclined to err on the side of caution. The last thing they wanted was to provide an additional grievance for Yeltsin’s hard-line opponents to use. Not until a meeting of the NATO foreign ministers in early December 1994 and a CSCE summit four days later was the United States willing to challenge Russia’s opposition to East European membership in NATO (see below). Even then, the differences between the two sides were mainly—though not entirely—over rhetoric, rather than a fundamental clash of policy.
THE PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

Concerns about Russia were instrumental in NATO’s decision in January 1994 to establish the Partnership for Peace (PfP). Instead of setting a timetable for the admission of the Visegrad states into the alliance, NATO leaders agreed to defer the matter and to create a new body that would enable individual East European countries to prepare themselves for full membership by taking part in NATO’s military exercises, by promoting transparency of military planning, by strengthening civilian control over military forces, and by coordinating their military doctrines, force structures, and operational capabilities and planning with the alliance. In accordance with a “Framework Document,” the PfP was open not only to all the East European countries, but to the former Soviet republics and to West European states outside NATO. It thus was based, once again, on the principle of egalitarianism.

The formation of the PfP was controversial in several respects, not least because it came as a bitter disappointment to many East European officials, who had been hoping that they would receive a more clear-cut assurance of future membership in NATO. Polish President Lech Wałęsa was especially critical of the West’s “timidity” in devising such a “totally inadequate” and “almost useless” response to the “resurgence of imperialist thinking in Moscow.” Czech President Havel was more discreet, but he, too, criticized the West’s actions as “cautious, slow, and perhaps too pragmatic,” and warned that a “new Munich” might be in the offing. Havel renewed his earlier calls for the Visegrad states to be admitted promptly into NATO as a hedge against the “chauvinistic, Great Russian, crypto-Communist, and crypto-totalitarian forces” that might someday gain ascendance in Moscow. Despite these criticisms and many other complaints, all the East European states promptly joined the PfP.

The other major controversy surrounding the PfP in the first half of 1994 was caused by Russia’s reaction. Although the Russian government finally agreed in principle to join the PfP in June 1994 (a decision that was temporarily reversed in December 1994), Russian officials persistently tried to secure formal recognition of a special “great-power” status for their country. By seeking a pre-eminent spot in the PfP, the Russians apparently hoped to gain some sort of veto over NATO’s actions. This same goal was evident in the Russian government’s statements in the first half of 1994, which consistently sought to downgrade NATO’s status as a European security mechanism in favor of CSCE and NACC. Russia’s tentative decision to sign onto the PfP seems to have been motivated less by any real warming toward the organization than by a recognition of how isolated Russia would be if it did not join. Officials in the Russian foreign ministry warned Russian leaders that, without Moscow’s participation, the PfP might even become a direct means for the East European states to obtain full membership in NATO.
Hence, Russia’s chief aim when agreeing to take part in the PfP was to prevent the organization from becoming a vehicle for the East European countries to join the alliance. In all other respects, Moscow obtained relatively little of what it had been seeking. Although Russia was granted recognition of its “unique” status as a “great European, world, and nuclear power,” that designation was conferred in a largely meaningless protocol, rather than in the Partnership agreement itself. Moscow received no veto over NATO’s decisions or over any of its formal consultative mechanisms, nor did it succeed in downgrading NATO’s status relative to the CSCE’s.

In spite of the widespread dissatisfaction with the PfP, the Partnership began to function as planned in 1994. The first large-scale military exercises involving NATO and East European ground and air forces were held in Poland in September 1994. Russian military observers attended the exercise, but did not actually take part. That was also the case during a follow-up exercise aimed at planning for and coordinating peacekeeping missions, staged at the Harskamp Military Training Ground in the Netherlands. The exercise involved platoon-and company-size units from Canada, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Great Britain, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, and the United States. In the first large-scale naval exercise sponsored by the PfP, which was held near a NATO base at Stavanger, Norway in late September and early October 1994, Russian troops did finally participate. Two ships from Russia’s Baltic Fleet, the Neustrashimyi and the Druzhnyi, operated alongside vessels and aircraft from Sweden, Poland, Lithuania, and ten NATO countries, including the United States. The Russian navy also took part in another major naval exercise, Maritime Partner-94, on the Black Sea in late October. This exercise, which included vessels from Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Greece, the United States, and Ukraine as well as Russia, was designed to simulate the enforcement of UN-mandated economic sanctions.

In addition to these four large joint exercises, many other PfP-sponsored military and political activities got underway in 1994 on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, and a program of eighteen multinational and twenty bilateral military exercises was adopted for 1995. Even Albania, which had never before conducted military exercises with foreign countries, began taking part in PfP maneuvers in early 1995, contributing six naval vessels to a joint operation involving the United States, Germany, Italy, and Great Britain. The growing scope and quantity of activities caused some East European officials who had initially been skeptical about the PfP’s merits to begin looking more favorably on the organization. In late 1994 the chairman of Hungary’s parliamentary committee on defense, Imre Mecs, declared that, contrary to his earlier expectations, “it has now become clear that NATO partnership is not an empty phrase or an attention-diverting maneuver, but is a series of real joint endeavors through which we can
achieve full membership in NATO within the foreseeable future."93 Other East European officials were not willing to go that far, but they did acknowledge that the PfP had proven somewhat more useful than they initially had anticipated.

Increasingly, though, it seemed clear that the PfP’s ventures, no matter how worthwhile, would not be enough to meet East European concerns. In the fall of 1994, officials in the Clinton administration acknowledged that the PfP was “inadequate and was oversold when it was first proposed. . . . Much of the rhetoric that was used in the past was empty of substance.”94 According to a senior Defense Department official, Joseph Kruzel, the administration belatedly “recognized that we were making a tactical mistake by emphasizing Partnership for Peace almost to the exclusion of NATO’s expansion.”95 This growing sense of the PfP’s shortcomings prompted the US government to begin exploring ways to accelerate the entry of the Visegrad states, and perhaps other countries, into NATO. The aim, at least at the outset, was to come up with a viable set of proposals by the end of 1995.

The Clinton administration presented its initial findings in early December 1994 to a meeting of the NATO foreign ministers in Brussels and a summit of CSCE leaders in Budapest. Although the preliminary ideas were extremely modest (no timetable for expansion was specified, and no candidates for membership were mentioned) and included a plan to increase the powers and functions of the CSCE, the very fact that NATO was reconsidering the status of the East European countries was enough to spark a hostile reaction in Moscow. Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev immediately warned that “if new members are admitted into NATO, Russia will have to take additional security measures” to compensate.96 He did not specify what these additional security measures might be, but other commentators in Moscow suggested that Russia might have to begin redeploying large quantities of ground-based tactical nuclear weapons (which were supposed to be eliminated under a pledge adopted by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1991, and later reaffirmed by Yeltsin) and might even have to consider bringing back some intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF), which were banned under the 1987 INF Treaty.97

Similar warnings were voiced by Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev at the NATO meeting, where he denounced what he claimed was the “hasty expansion of NATO” and the movement toward “setting an explicit schedule for this process.”98 He declined to give Russia’s final signature to a cooperation agreement with the PfP that had been tentatively approved several months before. That same day, Kozyrev delivered a speech before the WEU’s parliamentary assembly in which he asserted that “the aspirations of the countries of Central Europe to be admitted into NATO should not be stymieed by an attempt to take the Weissmeier initiative and make it into a European policy.”99
should be regarded as nothing more than capriciousness.” He called instead for the “establishment of a new ‘architecture’ for European security” that would eclipse existing institutions, and he implied that the United States was trying to force the idea of NATO enlargement on its allies. “We, the Europeans,” he declared, “must in the first instance look after ourselves.” Kozyrev pledged that Russia was ready to pursue far-reaching military cooperation with the WEU (as opposed to NATO) if the member-states joined Russia in “giving a firm rebuff to violators of UN Security Council resolutions,” a clear reference to the recent US decision to cease enforcing the UN-sponsored arms embargo against Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the CSCE meeting a few days later, President Yeltsin voiced even harsher criticism of the Clinton administration’s new approach to the question of NATO enlargement, accusing the United States of “sowing the seeds of mistrust” and of “threatening to plunge Europe into a cold peace.” Yeltsin maintained that the “alleged expansion of stability,” as proposed by the United States, was really targeted at “undesirable developments in Russia.”

Faced with these criticisms, US officials insisted that “no outside country will be allowed to veto NATO’s expansion,” and they expressed hope that Kozyrev’s and Yeltsin’s comments were intended largely for domestic audiences. Even so, the Russian statements could not help but take their toll. Even before the meetings in Brussels and Budapest, few members of the Clinton administration were inclined to give high priority to the expansion of NATO, in part because of strong resistance within allied councils, especially from France. The increased vehemence of the Russian government’s opposition to proposed moves beyond the PfP merely reinforced the administration’s caution. After Vice President Albert Gore traveled to Moscow and met with Russian leaders in mid-December, the Russian government expressed satisfaction with his “clarifications” of US policy on NATO and Eastern Europe. With parliamentary elections in Russia scheduled for the end of 1995 and presidential elections in both Russia and the United States scheduled for 1996, the US government was clearly averse to taking any steps that might trigger a reaction beneficial to hard-line, xenophobic candidates in Russia. Even when Western leaders protested the widespread bloodshed that Russian troops caused in Chechnya in early 1995, there was no hint that NATO would begin rethinking its policy on near-term expansion. The only concrete form of retaliation taken by the West against Russia was the postponement of expanded trade and economic ties and the deferral of some joint military and political activities.

Dissenting Western Views

NATO’s cautious approach to the issue of enlargement has not won universal approval in the West. A few highly influential commentators outside
Western governments, such as Zbigniew Brzezinski, Leslie Gelb, and Samuel Huntington, have strongly advocated the near-term expansion of the alliance. Even within official NATO circles, pro-enlargement views have by no means been entirely absent. Before the Russian parliamentary elections in December 1993, the German government, especially the defense minister, Volker Rühe, had repeatedly argued that "NATO should not be a closed shop" and that "the time has come to open a more concrete prospect for those countries of Eastern Europe that want to join and that we may consider eligible." More recently, some German leaders, including Prime Minister Helmut Kohl, have sought to downplay that theme, but most officials and non-governmental experts in Germany have continued to advocate the eastward expansion of NATO. Indeed, in August 1994 Defense Minister Rühe went well beyond his previous statements in calling for NATO to make clear that it intended to accept the Visegrad states (and perhaps Bulgaria, Romania, and the Baltic republics) as full members, and did not intend to admit Russia under any circumstances:

Integration and cooperation are necessary for stability for Europe as a whole. Our policy must be clear. It would be wrong to pursue a policy based on the imperative of maintaining "the highest possible degree of ambiguity." Our neighbors in the East, too, are aware that it is part of the logic of the European processes that only future candidates for membership of the European Union are genuine candidates for membership of the Western alliances. Here, I am thinking primarily of the four Visegrad states. It is clear, however, that Russia cannot be integrated—neither into the EU nor into NATO.

Rühe's professed aim was not to isolate Russia from Europe; on the contrary, he urged that NATO "deepen its cooperation with Russia," a process that he believed would expedite rather than impede East European entry into NATO. "The more concrete the content of the strategic partnership between NATO and Russia becomes," he argued, "the more Russia will be prepared to accept the integration of our eastern neighbors."

The goal of near-term membership for the Visegrad states also has been championed by a few prominent American officials, notably the Republican senator from Indiana, Richard Lugar, who previously served as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Since 1992, Lugar has consistently argued that the alliance will disintegrate unless it is willing to admit new members. In June 1993 he warned that "if NATO is not able to respond to situations such as Yugoslavia ... NATO will die. Simply, the rationale for it will not be there." He emphasized that the first step for the alliance in "adjusting to the post-Cold War era" must be to consider "immediate membership" for Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. His views were given extensive and laudatory coverage in the media of the Visegrad states. Although many other members of the US Congress viewed the matter very
differently—claiming that they would oppose any extension of NATO into regions of potential instability and ethnic turmoil—Lugar’s statements carried a good deal of weight because of his expertise and reputation for sound judgment. His position was given a further boost by the decisive victory of the Republican party in the November 1994 Congressional elections, which brought to power a number of legislators who share Lugar’s doubts about the existing value of NATO and who are less willing to defer to Russia’s objections.

Even so, skepticism about the wisdom of enlarging the alliance anytime in the near future still prevailed in 1993 and 1994 in most of the NATO countries, not least the United States. This skepticism hardly seemed likely to diminish in light of the Russian government’s volte-face on the matter in the fall of 1993. If the statement President Yeltsin made during his visit to Poland in August 1993 had been allowed to stand—with the gloss put on it by Polish officials—it would have been much harder for the NATO governments to discourage the Visegrad states from seeking to join the alliance. But Yeltsin’s letter of retraction lent new impetus to the arguments of Western experts and policymakers who believed that the expansion of NATO would be incompatible with a “cooperative security” framework for dealing with Russia. Those arguments have loomed ever larger in the wake of the controversial statements made by Yeltsin and Kozyrev in late 1994. If the Clinton administration’s preliminary and highly circumscribed steps toward the enlargement of NATO could provoke such a harsh reaction, the notion of pressing ahead at a faster pace—as Volker Ruehe advocated—was bound to run into stiff opposition in Washington.

Combined with the views of French leaders, who have been firmly opposed all along to the idea of bringing new members into the alliance, US anxieties about Russia and the Clinton administration’s desire not to be seen as having compounded the “Zhirinovsky factor” will be a significant obstacle to any prospective enlargement of NATO, regardless of official pronouncements that “no outside country will be allowed to veto expansion.” Concerns about Russia also are likely to ensure that most Western leaders will adhere, at least for now, to NATO’s official line of “not automatically excluding any country [that is, Russia] from joining” the alliance. Ruehe’s blunt denial that Russia can ever become a member of NATO may be more realistic, but it is doubtful that NATO will explicitly embrace that position unless circumstances in Moscow take a disastrous turn in the future (for example, if a Zhirinovsky-type figure seizes power).

**East European Interests and Concerns**

From the outset, East European officials have cited two key benefits they expect to gain from full membership in NATO: a reliable military guarantee against
external threats, and a vehicle for promoting internal political and economic stability and democratization. The first benefit is seen as a crucial hedge against the uncertainties of post–Cold War Europe. Most officials in the region do not perceive any serious military threats to their countries at present, and are hopeful that no such threats will arise in the future. They are concerned, however, that an unforeseeable turn of events, especially in the former Soviet Union, could drastically alter the situation. They also believe that the only way to provide their countries with concrete insurance against these sorts of unexpected developments is through full membership in NATO.\textsuperscript{114} Security commitments that are left vague and ambiguous—the way most officials in the region view the commitments accompanying NACC, PfP, and other forms of association with NATO short of full membership—may well go unfulfilled when the critical moment comes. By contrast, the formal guarantees that would result from full membership in the Western alliance would almost certainly be upheld in time of need. It makes sense, in their view, to hedge against a possible threat well before the threat materializes, since it may be too late to do anything once the danger is at hand, as the Hungarians learned in November 1956 when confronted by a Soviet invasion.

The other benefit of NATO membership often cited by East European officials has been less prominent in recent debates, but is at least as important. More than just a military alliance, NATO has served as a vibrant community of democratic states, helping to nourish and sustain democratic values and institutions among its members.\textsuperscript{115} It played an important role in bolstering democratic systems in Spain, Portugal, and Greece after those countries emerged from many years of dictatorship.\textsuperscript{116} Officials in East-Central Europe now hope that the alliance can serve as an equally effective stabilizer for the democratic changes and sweeping economic reforms under way in their own societies. Leading experts in all four of the Visegrad countries, especially the Czech Republic and Hungary, cite this potential benefit of NATO membership long before they mention any of the military gains.\textsuperscript{117}

To the extent that East European hopes of relying on NATO as a stabilizing influence are well-founded, the implications for European security may be broader—and, from the West’s standpoint, more valuable—than they first seem. The well-established notion that democratic states have never (or almost never) gone to war with other democratic states suggests that NATO membership, by bolstering democracy in individual East European countries, would contribute to peace and stability throughout the region.\textsuperscript{118} This view has been strongly endorsed by the chairman of the Hungarian parliament’s defense committee, Imre Mecs, when he explained why he supported NATO membership not only for Hungary, but for Romania as well:
Hungarian-Romanian relations and the question of joining NATO are of fundamental importance from the standpoint of regional security... If a country wants to become a member of NATO, it will have to ensure that all its policies conform with European norms. These European norms do not permit the use of the army to solve internal ethnic problems. That is why Romania’s rapprochement with the European Union and NATO must be supported. With such a step, the Romanian government’s alleged and unacceptable plans [to have the army intervene against unrest in Transylvania] could no longer be prepared, and the [Hungarian] minority would no longer have to fear that the army would be deployed against them. Those kinds of plans would be incompatible with the image and norms of Europe.119

Echoing that position, leaders of the Hungarian community in Romania have vigorously supported “Romania’s membership in NATO [because it] would be a guarantee that the army would never be used against the civilian population.”120 They acknowledge that democracy alone would not remove ethnic tensions, but they claim it would greatly increase the likelihood that all sides would confront their differences peacefully. This, in turn, they argue, would effectively eliminate the risk of an armed conflict between Hungary and Romania and the potential for a broader regional “spillover.”

NATO’s reluctance to expand its membership has done little to deter the East European states from seeking to join the alliance. All the East European governments, from Albania to Poland, have set NATO membership as the official goal of their countries. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic even have included explicit provisions to this effect in their national security legislation.121 Since 1990, all the East European governments have been designing their military doctrines and restructuring their armed forces with an eye to facilitating eventual membership in NATO. Political and military cooperation between the alliance and the former Warsaw Pact states has been steadily increasing, as evidenced by the joint combat operations they have undertaken in the Persian Gulf and in regions contiguous with the former Yugoslavia. Moreover, even before the PFP was established, the Visegrad states had been taking a direct part in NATO’s high-level military and political deliberations. In June 1993, Hungary became the first non-NATO country to host the alliance’s annual meeting on military security issues and crisis management. Hungary was also the first East European country to establish a bilateral military working group with the United States to deal with all aspects of security issues that might confront NATO. Poland and the Czech Republic quickly followed suit. By now, the military and political ties between NATO and the Visegrad countries have become so close that one can almost begin to speak about de facto membership. Although the de jure
role of the East European states in NATO has been limited primarily to membership in NACC and the PfP, the de facto role that these countries have been taking on is already more important than the contributions of at least a few existing members of the alliance.

Non-governmental experts in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic have been overwhelmingly supportive of their countries' efforts to join NATO, and the same result is evident in public opinion surveys. In Poland, for example, public support for NATO membership has consistently been around 80 percent (with some 5 to 10 percent opposed and the rest undecided) and at times has approached 90 percent. Nearly as strong support is evident in Hungary and the Czech Republic. A few experts in Prague argue that the Czech government's bid for NATO membership is more of a "quick-fix" gimmick than a well-conceived policy, and some specialists in Slovakia maintain that public support for NATO is only lukewarm and the benefits of membership are unclear. Aside from this small number of skeptics, however, experts and ordinary citizens in all the Visegrad states believe that admission into NATO should be the chief foreign policy goal for their countries. The public support for NATO has often been adduced by Polish, Czech, and Hungarian leaders, who contrast these sentiments with the anti-NATO feelings that crop up from time to time in some allied countries, such as Greece. Polish officials also cite opinion surveys showing that most Poles regard NACC and the PfP as little more than vehicles for NATO to dodge the question of expansion. Even ordinary citizens, they argue, understand that the main benefits of establishing ties with NATO can come only through full membership.

East European leaders acknowledge that the entry of their countries into NATO would entail certain risks, but they offer two arguments in response to the points advanced by Western governments: first, that there are even greater risks in keeping their countries out of the alliance; and second, that the effects on Russia would not be as clear-cut as the NATO governments have implied. East European officials maintain that if appropriate guarantees are offered to Russia, it would be possible to enlarge the alliance without creating even the appearance of an anti-Russian grouping. This line of argument has been advanced in its most elaborate form in Poland, where officials point out that since 1993 their country has been surrounded by seven new and potentially unstable (and even hostile) neighbors in an uncertain post-Cold War order. Such factors, they argue, could induce Polish military planners to err on the side of caution by undertaking a military buildup and seeking local alliances, notably with Ukraine. But if Poland could be admitted into NATO, the Polish government would feel much less threatened by Russia (and Germany) and could instead scale back its armed forces and proceed much further with the demilitarization of Polish society.
society. Both results, they add, would be highly favorable to Russia as well as to other neighboring countries. This same reasoning could be applied to all the East European states, whose membership in NATO would enable them to make drastic, permanent cuts in their armed forces and thus (at least south of the Carpathian mountains) be perceived as less of a potential threat by their neighbors. In that sense, an enlargement of NATO can be seen as a way of forestalling the competitive renationalization of armed forces and military policy in Eastern Europe and the instability that would accompany it.

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

Even if Russia’s concerns can be assuaged and the other obstacles to NATO’s eastward expansion can be overcome, the Visegrad governments are aware that their countries will be expected to meet certain stiff criteria, which in some cases may be used by NATO to slow down their bids for membership. These criteria were touched upon at the NATO meeting in Brussels and the CSCE summit in Budapest in late 1994.

Political Compatibility

All the East European governments recognize that democratic political systems will be a prerequisite for future NATO membership. Some nettlesome problems in this regard have persisted in Slovakia, especially under the Mečiar governments; but overall, the Visegrad states have made dramatic progress in consolidating democracy. The Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary are at least as far along as, say, Spain was when it was admitted into NATO. Much the same is true of the three Baltic republics, especially Estonia. The outlook is a good deal more problematic in Bulgaria and particularly Romania, where, despite some impressive gains, democratic institutions are still rudimentary at best. Several more years may be needed before it is clear whether the limited progress in these two countries can be sustained.

It is possible that a few additional complications will emerge for countries like Poland and Hungary, where former communists have been voted back into power. (The same is true of Lithuania and Bulgaria, not to mention Romania, where many top communists never really left power.) This trend need not pose any grave obstacles for Hungary, where the socialists have aligned themselves with the strongly pro-Western Alliance of Free Democrats and have pursued NATO membership even more vigorously than did the nationalist governments under the Hungarian Democratic Forum. In Poland, however, the situation is not quite as clear-cut. Although the leftist coalition government in Warsaw has continued to seek membership in NATO with nearly the same vigor that its Solidarity-led predecessors did, it remains to be seen whether the presence of so many former communists in top political and national security posts will affect
Poland’s chances of getting in.130 Gaffes like the one committed in August 1994, when a notorious communist-era spy, Marian Zacharski, was nominated to direct Poland’s foreign intelligence service, certainly will not inspire confidence about the trustworthiness of some of the “post-communist” leaders. Zacharski’s nomination was quickly withdrawn, but the episode raised questions both inside and outside Poland about the damage it would do to the country’s quest for NATO membership.131 Similar questions were raised in January 1995 when the Polish prime minister, Waldemar Pawlak, proposed that a hard-line communist ideologue, Longin Pastusiak, who had opposed NATO membership, become the new Polish defense minister. The nomination in this case was motivated by political skimming between Pawlak and Lech Wałęsa and was not intended to be taken seriously, but the episode caused adverse political fallout nonetheless. The outgoing Polish foreign minister, Andrzej Olechowski, denounced Pawlak’s action and publicly asked him: “Do you want to join NATO or not?”132

Finally, some glitches may arise from the difficulty that most of the East European states are having in asserting clear-cut civilian control over their military establishments. After 1989 all the Visegrad states appointed civilians as defense ministers (an action reversed by the Slovak government after the split of Czechoslovakia), but the defense ministries in those countries remained predominantly under military control, as they always had been in the past. The process of civilianizing the defense ministries (as opposed to the ministers) is proving to be a good deal slower than expected, in part because of the exiguity of civilians who are well-versed in military affairs. In some countries, notably Hungary, complaints have even arisen that the continued “militarization” of the defense ministry is “weakening civilian control of the army” and thwarting military reform.133 Somewhat different problems have arisen in Poland, where ambiguous lines of authority in civil-military relations have been the subject of intense political dispute.134 Lech Wałęsa’s efforts to consolidate presidential control over the Polish military establishment, and the periodic challenges he has confronted from parliament and other quarters, have contributed to the country’s political turmoil. Many of these problems will disappear if appropriate constitutional mechanisms are adopted and applied by the courts, but the obstacles to orderly civilian control over military establishments in Eastern Europe may well persist for years to come.

Military-Technical Compatibility

At present the armies in the Visegrad states and other former Warsaw Pact countries are equipped almost entirely with weapons of Soviet manufacture or design. Economic constraints will make it extremely difficult in the near to medium term for them to obtain Western-made armaments that are compatible with NATO’s forces, but some efforts to this end have been under way. The Polish Navy, for example, is seeking Western command and fire-
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control systems for the four new frigates it will be procuring, and the Czech national defense ministry recently selected the Rockwell Aerospace Corpora-
tion to design and integrate a new avionics system for the Czech air force's 
72 L-159 multi-role fighter aircraft. The three Baltic countries received 
fast patrol boats and other naval equipment from Norway in 1994, allowing 
them to operate better alongside NATO vessels. In early 1995 the United 
States indicated that it would help establish an integrated airspace manage-
ment system for Eastern Europe and the Baltic States. The radars and con-
trol stations in the proposed network will allow for full compatibility with 
NATO forces. This initiative was inspired by a deal that Hungary struck 
with the United States in late 1992 to buy 118 APX-100 advanced IFF (iden-
tification friend or foe) transponders to modernize its MiG fighters, the first 
time US military equipment had ever been sold to a former Warsaw Pact 
country. As part of the same deal (known as "Peace Pannon"), Hungary also 
received TPX-54 interrogators, GPA-28 antennas, modern surveillance dis-
plays, and computerized work stations to upgrade the four main Hungarian 
ground-based surveillance facilities.

The US-sponsored modernization of Hungary's military air control 
system was offset to some extent by the Hungarian government’s deci-
dion in June 1993 to accept a squadron of MiG-29 fighters from Russia 
to help pay off Russia's large hard-currency debt to Hungary. Subse-
sequently, Moscow arranged a similar transfer of MiG-29s to Slovakia and 
tried, unsuccessfully, to do the same with the Czech Republic. One of 
the main factors cited by Czech leaders when turning down the Russian 
offer was the danger of remaining too dependent on Soviet-made arms. 
They sought instead to obtain F-16s or F-18s from either Belgium or the 
United States, a move that, they hoped, would underscore the Czech 
Republic's commitment to NATO.

Despite the Czech government's hopes of steadily increasing its reli-
ance on Western-made arms and components, its efforts in this particular 
instance may prove to be an aberration, at least in the near term. Purchases 
of major weaponry from NATO countries will require economic tradeoffs 
that may not be feasible anytime soon for any of the East European states, 
including the Czech Republic itself. Moreover, it is not clear that the 
receipt of the MiG-29s will necessarily be a major step backward for 
either Hungary or Slovakia. A leading member of NATO, Germany, has 
been operating three mixed squadrons with 24 MiG-29s since 1990, when it 
inhaired them from the former Nationale Volksarmee. The aircraft have 
been adapted to make them interoperable with NATO forces, and the expe-
rience that the Bundeswehr has gained can easily be transferred to the East 
European countries, as the German defense ministry has promised. In other 
cases, too, the East European armed forces can seek to achieve greater
interoperability with NATO units by relying on modifications, upgrades, and new communications systems, rather than by scrapping all their existing weapons and purchasing an array of costly new equipment.

In the future, the Visegrad states will do their best to procure weapons that can be standardized with NATO, but progress on this matter is bound to be slow and faltering. Even upgrades and modifications can often prove excessively costly. The US decision in February 1995 to lift all remaining restrictions on arms exports to Eastern Europe and the Baltic States is thus likely to have only a minor effect, at least for some time to come. It is worth pointing out, however, that repeated attempts by NATO itself to achieve technical compatibility almost always have fallen well short of the mark, without irreparable damage to the alliance. Hence, this criterion may not be as important a barrier to East European membership as some NATO officials have made it out to be.

Military-Organizational Compatibility

The former Warsaw Pact countries will have to be able to operate effectively alongside NATO units. Progress in this area has been far greater than in the previous category. The Hungarian armed forces already have shifted over to a unified corps-brigade command system, which is eminently suitable for NATO; and the other Visegrad militaries are in the process of doing so. Moreover, the armies in the region have been getting solid experience by taking part in joint military exercises with NATO through PiP and even by cooperating in actual combat, as during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. More recently, Hungary allowed NATO Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft to use Hungarian airspace and refueling bases while monitoring the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and Hungarian MiG fighters were deployed as escorts for the AWACS aircraft to ward off any potential interference by Serbian planes. The Czech, Polish, and Hungarian governments also have cooperated with NATO countries in peacekeeping efforts in Croatia, Kurdistan, Liberia, and elsewhere, and have shown keen interest in contributing troops to other peacekeeping missions that NATO might organize in the central Eurasian region.

Economic Compatibility

Unlike many public goods, the protection afforded by voluntary membership in an alliance does not come cost-free. Prospective applicants for NATO will have to devote substantial funding to allied operations and activities, as the chairman of the Hungarian parliament’s defense committee, Imre Mecs, recently pointed out:

We must accept that membership in NATO will involve considerable extra expenditures. . . . This is in the interest of the entire country, and it is in the
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The East European governments have indicated a willingness to bear the financial costs of allied membership, in part because they sense that over the long run "it would end up being far more expensive for [them] to organize [their] defense independently" of NATO. For now, though, resource stringency already has limited the Visegrad states' scope of action. The pursuit of military-technical compatibility, for example, has clearly been hindered by economic constraints. Military spending has declined precipitously in all the East-Central European countries since 1989, and funds for weapons procurement have been particularly hard hit. Hence, purchases of F-16s and other advanced weaponry may be out of reach for a long time to come. On a more mundane level, budgetary pressures were one of the factors that induced the Hungarian government to forgo participation in the three major PfP-sponsored joint military exercises in 1994. This omission caused widespread apprehension in Budapest that the NATO countries might "hold a grudge" against Hungary and be less enthusiastic about its bid for full membership in the alliance.

Similar economic constraints may arise for the East European states in the future, particularly if they become full members of NATO and are expected to contribute to allied military and peacekeeping operations. Funding issues will be especially controversial if NATO troops or pre-positioned equipment are deployed on East European soil. The existing allied states will not want to admit free-riders into NATO, but at the same time they must take account of economic realities in Eastern Europe. A considerable period may still be needed before any of the Visegrad states are able to claim true economic compatibility with the alliance.

Alluding to these criteria of political, military-technical, military-organizational, and economic compatibility, numerous officials in the Visegrad region have maintained that their countries are already suitable, or nearly suitable, candidates for membership in NATO. The most outspoken has been Prime Minister Václav Klaus of the Czech Republic, who has frequently argued that his country is at least as qualified to be a member of NATO as some existing members are (Luxembourg and Canada, for example, not to mention Iceland, which does not even have an army). Czech leaders also point out that even an important member like France still has not returned to NATO's integrated military command, and that Spain has never been a part of it. Hence, they argue, there should be no real obstacle to Czech membership. Officials in the other three Visegrad countries are not quite as
outspoken as their Czech counterparts, but most of them strongly agree that their countries should be eligible in the near term for NATO membership. A senior Polish official, for example, recently emphasized that “NATO was willing to accept Portugal, Greece, and Turkey, whose armies, at the time they were admitted into the alliance, were much further from Western norms than our army is today.” The WEU’s decision to grant “associate membership” to the East European states and the three Baltic republics in May 1994, with the expectation of eventual membership, has lent further weight to the arguments of the East European governments that their countries should receive analogous treatment from NATO.

A key issue that must still be resolved, however, is just how far the prospective expansion of NATO will actually go. This matter is especially sensitive in Bulgaria, Romania, and the three Baltic republics, where officials are uncertain whether the entry of the Visegrad states into NATO would expedite their own countries’ admission or whether, on the contrary, it would be accompanied by tacit Western assurances to Russia that NATO would be expanded no further.151 If the latter were to happen, Romania and Bulgaria would be kept permanently on a “second tier” in central Europe, and the Baltic States would perceive themselves to be even more firmly relegated to Russia’s sphere of influence and isolated from the very governments—above all in Poland, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries—that they had hoped would serve as their “bridge to Europe.” Thus, the key issue in Romania, Bulgaria, and the Baltic States is not whether NATO should be expanded eastward, but whether the expansion will go far enough.

The situation is even more complex for Ukraine. Until mid-1994, when Ukraine’s relations with Russia were still acrimonious, some Ukrainian officials had supported the prompt admission of the Visegrad states into NATO even if Ukraine were not admitted, because they believed that Russia would oppose any expansion of the alliance. This view became much less prevalent in the latter half of 1994 as a result of the dramatic improvement in Russian-Ukrainian relations following the electoral victory of Leonid Kuchma, an advocate of close ties with Russia. During a visit to Washington in November 1994, Kuchma explicitly warned that “the speeding up of the process [of NATO expansion] would not enhance the security of Europe” because Russia “would not just stand by.”152 Although Kuchma said that the admission of new countries into NATO was needed, he emphasized that the process “must be prolonged in time.” At a press conference during the CSCE summit two weeks later, Kuchma warned that “the rapid admission of East European countries into NATO” would “divide Europe into two halves again” and provoke “discord with Russia.”153 These statements heralded a growing consensus in Kiev that a limited expansion of NATO would be undesirable. Some who espoused this view, including Kuchma,
strongly agree that membership. At "NATO was not an option, at the time Western norms associate much in May 1994, or weight to the countries should not have the other is especially politics, where officials NATO would con­ trary, it would ATO would be and Bulgaria and the new relegated toments—above they had hoped would be expanded mid-1994, when Ukrainian officials into NATO at Russia would less prevalent in Russian—Kuchma, an­ nging up of the security of Eu­ Kuchma said he emphasized difference during the rapid admis­ sion of NATO siding Kuchma, were mainly concerned about preventing a backlash in Russia, whereas others were worried that Ukraine would end up being left outside NATO indefinitely. For whatever reason, the general view of NATO expansion was far more ambivalent in Ukraine by the end of 1994 than it had been earlier in the year.

CONCLUSION

Unless the East European states are granted full membership in NATO, they will have to make do with indirect security commitments from the alliance. The credibility and value of these commitments were temporarily bolstered in early 1991 by the overwhelming military success that the United States and its coalition partners achieved in the Persian Gulf war. Kuwait had no formal military links with any of the Western countries at the time of the Iraqi invasion, but that did not prevent allied leaders from undertaking extreme measures to restore Kuwaiti independence. Although some East European officials, such as Gyula Horn, had predicted that NATO would be reluctant to aid countries outside the alliance, the successful resolution of the Persian Gulf crisis seemed—at least briefly—to prove otherwise. The allies’ decisive stance against Iraq provided temporary reassurance to East European leaders that even if things in Moscow were to go disastrously awry, “the West, especially the United States, would not tolerate Soviet military action against Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Hungary.”

Despite this favorable precedent, the confidence of the East European governments quickly faded. For one thing, they were well aware that their own countries, unlike Kuwait, do not possess large oil reserves, and that Western leaders therefore would have less incentive to come to their aid. More important, they witnessed how little the NATO governments were willing to do about the conflict in Yugoslavia. The dismay that East European leaders felt as they watched the fighting in the Balkans escalate prompted many of them to question whether NATO could truly adjust to the post-Cold War world. Although NATO’s eventual enforcement of a no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina provided a brief ray of hope for the East European governments, NATO’s apparent indifference to a Bosnian Serb victory in late 1994 was clearly a chastening experience for officials who might have hoped that they could rely on indirect commitments alone.

Mindful of such problems, NATO leaders have done their best to persuade the Visegrad governments that regardless of what happens in Moscow, closer East European ties with both NATO and the WEU will “deter any idea” Russian leaders may have of “using force [against an East European country] to gain an advantage.” As early as June 1991, the Western allies were willing to pledge that their “own security is inseparably linked to that of all other states in Europe,” and that NATO will oppose “any form of..."
coercion or intimidation" directed against the East European countries.\(^{158}\) As with previous Western statements, however, the allied declaration failed to specify precisely what NATO would do if events deteriorated and a major threat to East European security actually arose. Statements issued by NATO in subsequent years have done little to clarify the matter.

Although a certain degree of ambiguity has been viewed as necessary in some Western official circles, it has left many East European leaders uneasy. The experience of 1956, when some Hungarians mistakenly assumed they could count on Western military support, illustrates the dangers that ambiguous commitments (or non-commitments) can sometimes create. The hazards of ambiguity were just as evident in the spring of 1991, when the United States openly encouraged the "people of Iraq" to rise up against Saddam Hussein, but then refused to assist the Kurdish and Shiite rebellions, for fear that Iraq would split apart. Given the magnitude of the threat that most of the East European countries would face in a worst-case scenario—an attack by a regional hegemon equipped with nuclear weapons—it is understandable why they are so intent on gaining the concrete security guarantees that full membership in NATO would bring. The mere existence of these guarantees, as a form of credible commitment by the alliance, would probably be enough to deter any threats of external aggression, no matter what direction events in Moscow take.

Even if the worst-case threats never materialize and the allied security guarantees prove unnecessary, membership in NATO will be a vital stabilizing influence for the new democracies in Eastern Europe. In the past, the alliance was crucial in helping to sustain and consolidate democratic institutions in countries like Spain and Portugal, and it can now perform this same function in the former Warsaw Pact countries. The preservation of democratic systems in Eastern Europe will be immensely beneficial for European security as well as for Western values and traditions. Up to now democratic countries have not gone to war with other democratic countries, and there is little reason to expect that this pattern will change in the future. Hence, the likelihood of interstate conflict in Eastern Europe is bound to diminish if democracy takes firm root. The stabilizing role of NATO membership for individual countries will therefore yield much wider security benefits.

There is obviously some risk that the entry of former Warsaw Pact countries into NATO will antagonize Russia and provoke a backlash in Moscow; but these concerns may not be as acute as often thought. An analogous situation from the recent past is instructive to recall here. From the mid-1950s until the late 1980s, most Western analysts assumed that the Soviet Union would never permit Germany to be reunified as a non-communist state. Soon after the East German communist regime collapsed
in late 1989, Soviet leaders realized they could no longer forestall eventual German reunification, and the main question was whether Moscow would permit a reunified Germany to be a member of NATO. Once again, many Western observers predicted that no such thing would ever be tolerable for the Soviet leadership. Those predictions corresponded with Moscow’s own position in the first half of 1990, when Soviet officials repeatedly declared that “any attempt to resolve the problem of German reunification by including Germany solely within NATO is out of the question because it would severely disrupt the military-strategic balance in Europe.” For several months, even the staunchest proponents of “new thinking” in Soviet foreign policy, such as Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and Gorbachev himself, warned that the inclusion of a reunified Germany within NATO would be “unacceptable to the Soviet people” and would inspire a hard-line backlash. Then suddenly, in July 1990, Gorbachev agreed that Germany could remain a member of NATO after reunification, and the thing that had long seemed inconceivable came to be regarded as natural and perfectly routine. The public in the Soviet Union barely took any notice of the outcome, and no hard-line backlash resulted.

It is possible, though by no means certain, that Russia’s opposition to the entry of the Visegrad states into NATO could prove equally ephemeral. Proposals for the admission of the Central European states have sparked vehement objections from the Russian government. If the proposals were actually put into effect, however, and concrete reassurances were offered to Moscow (in the form of close political and military cooperation with NATO and an increased peacekeeping and security role for the renamed CSCE), the whole matter might quickly fade and the expansion of NATO into Central Europe might eventually seem as logical and proper as Germany’s status in NATO now does.

If this scenario is at all plausible, the trick in achieving it will be a carefully designed policy on the part of the NATO countries, especially the United States. US persistence in backing German reunification in 1990 while taking account of legitimate Soviet concerns was crucial in persuading Gorbachev to change course. Much the same will be true in the future with regard to the expansion of NATO. In addition to offering stronger NATO ties with Russia (so long as democratization continues) and a much-enlarged role for the CSCE, the NATO countries might agree to consider some of Russia’s demands for modifications to the sub-regional limits of the CFE Treaty. The treaty, in its current form, prevents the Russian Army from redeploying most of its ground forces from the Central European part of Russia to the turbulent areas along the country’s southern flank. Russian military officials have frequently called for the elimination of the treaty’s “flank” limitations so that Russia can have greater flexibility to cope with
large-scale disturbances in the Caucasus. The NATO governments have been unwilling to go along with Moscow’s request, in part because it would require significant changes in the treaty that might give other states a wedge to press for adjustments of their own, and in part because Turkey has strongly opposed Russia’s efforts to establish a greater presence in the Caucasus. The massive Russian incursion into Chechnya in December 1994 has made the whole issue even more sensitive.

Nevertheless, the entry of the Visegrad countries into NATO is bound to raise questions about the CFE Treaty anyway, and thus the Western governments may have considerable leeway to make some sort of tacit exchange with Russia by allowing greater flexibility on the flanks. NATO will have to avoid any deal that would leave the three Transcaucasus republics (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia) under permanent Russian military sway, and will have to ensure that armed intervention by the Russian Army against separatist groups within Russia does not become a regular practice. These two goals may prove to be infeasible, but if there is any hope of achieving them, delicate trade-offs will be needed, and close coordination with Turkey and Norway (the two NATO countries on Russia’s flanks) will be essential throughout. Despite the many obstacles, NATO should at least be willing to consider the possibility of easing the flank limitations in return for Moscow’s acquiescence in the admission of East European states into the alliance.

There is no guarantee that such steps will be enough to overcome Russian objections, but that in itself should not be a cause for paralysis. Ultimately, NATO’s policy vis-à-vis the East European states must be based on its own merits, without interference from outside. As Václav Havel recently stated:

If East and West live in proper harmony, it should not bother anyone when a country becomes a NATO member. The Commonwealth of Independent States, too, is a security structure, and it would be absurd if anyone [outside the CIS] were to decide who should or should not belong to it. Similarly, Russia cannot impose anything on NATO... . Everyone has the right to decide on which side to stand. This right, which is based on individual nations’ will and is not imposed by some powerful nation, must be respected. Havel affirmed the need for a “permanent dialogue at several levels with Moscow” to ensure that Russian leaders “understand that NATO’s eastward expansion does not threaten their interests,” but he emphasized that “Russia does not have the right to dictate to other countries which alliances they can belong to.” Assuming that political reforms stay more or less on course in Russia—which may be a dubious assumption—the multi-level dialogue that Havel recommended and the other steps mentioned above will go as far as possible toward alleviating Russian concerns.

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NATO should not act with undue haste, but neither should it delay indefinitely. Unless Western governments adopt a clear-cut policy soon, additional pretexts for doing nothing are bound to arise. The alliance’s failure in August 1993 to welcome and take prompt action on Yeltsin’s comments to Lech Wałęsa enabled the hard-line anti-NATO forces in Moscow to regroup and consolidate their influence over the policy debate. Moderate Russian officials who would have been willing to accept the enlargement of NATO under certain conditions were put on the defensive; and they are likely to be even more isolated if NATO continues to defer taking action. Once a new policy has been enunciated, some tensions with the Russian government may persist for a while; but over time, as any lingering doubts in Moscow are removed about the West’s desire to bolster prosperity and democratic change in Russia, the controversy surrounding the admission of the East European states into NATO should rapidly abate. If so, an expanded alliance not only would guarantee Western military security, but would help ensure democracy and stability throughout Europe.

NOTES

1. Although the large majority of NATO governments and outside observers regard the Visegrad states as the most plausible candidates for near-term membership in the alliance, a few dissenting views have been expressed. Officials in both Italy and Greece have maintained that highest priority should be given to southeastern Europe—and specifically to Bulgaria and Romania—to ensure greater stability for the Balkans in the wake of the Yugoslav tragedy. Turkey, by contrast, has been very leery of suggestions that Bulgaria be admitted anytime in the near future. Within the alliance, the greatest opposition to accepting new members has come from France. The French government has not ruled out the possibility of expansion, but has sought to discourage it as much as possible.

2. Interview in Magyar Nemzet (Budapest), 13 October 1990, p. 7. Unless noted otherwise, all translations are by the author.


8. Interview with Lajos Für in *Népszava* (Budapest), 7 December 1990, p. 4.


13. In December 1994 the CSCE was renamed the "Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe," or OSCE. The more familiar acronym will be used here unless otherwise noted.


20. On the Czechoslovak-Hungarian military agreement, see “Smlouva mezi
armádami: Vojenské vztahy s Maďarskem,” Lidové noviny (Prague), 22 January
1991, p. 2. See also “Schůzka ministrů v Budapešti,” Občanský deníc (Prague), 22
January 1991, pp. 1, 7; and the interview with Czechoslovak Defense Minister
Luboš Dobrovský in “Nová vojenská doktrina státu,” Verejnosti (Bratislava), 29
January 1991, p. 6. On the Polish-Hungarian agreement, see “Minister obrony
narodowej zakroczył oficjalną wizytę na Węgrzech,” Polska zbrojna (Warsaw), 21
March 1991, p. 1. On the Polish-Czechoslovak agreement, see “Minister obrony

21. Interview with Piotr Kotodzieczczyk, then-minister of defense in Poland, in

22. Interview with Hungarian foreign ministry state secretary Tamás Katona in

23. “Warszawa-Praga-Budapeszt: Jesteśmy dopiero u progu współpracy,”

24. See, for example, “Rozhovory s NATO,” Pravda (Bratislava), 30 September
1993, p. 2.

25. Barbara Sierzula, “Grupa Wyszehradzka nie istnieje,” Rzeczpospolita (War-
pominula,” Mladá fronta dnes (Prague), 3 November 1994, p. 7; “Česko, Polsko a
Maďarsko jsou na stejné úrovni,” Lidové noviny (Prague), 2 December 1994, p. 7;
“Imrich Andrejčák: Západní orientace Slovenska je nepochybnitelná,” Hospodárské
noviny (Prague), 20 November 1994, p. 4; and the interview with Hungarian
Foreign Minister László Kovacs in Magyar Nemzet (Budapest), 10 December

26. Army-General V. N. Lobov, “Puti realizatsii kontseptsii dostatochnosti dlya
oborony,” Voennaya mysl’ (Moscow), no. 2, February 1991, p. 16. See also the
interview with the military economist V. Litov in “Nasha bezopasnost’ i parizhskii
dogovor,” Sovetskaya Rossiya (Moscow), 9 January 1991, p. 5; the interview with
then-Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in “Edouard Chevardnadze:
‘Notre problème, le votre, c’est de réussir la perestroïka……’,” Le Figaro (Paris),
22-23 December 1990, esp. p. 4; the interview with Col.-General Nikolai Chervov,
deputy chief of the Soviet General Staff, in “Kam sa podeli tanky?” Verejnosti
(Bratislava), 8 January 1991, p. 4; and the interview with Army-General Mikhail
Moiseev, chief of the Soviet General Staff, in “Oborona: Korni i krona,”
Pravitel’stvennyj vestnik (Moscow), No. 9, February 1991, pp. 10-11.

27. The swift redeployments in 1990 were an extremely impressive logistical
feat, but they absorbed so much of the USSR’s rolling stock during the harvest
season that they were one of the main factors behind the near-breakdown of Soviet
food distribution in 1990-91. See “Nasha bezopasnost’ i parizhskii dogovor,” p. 5.

28. “Zmierzch bloków,” p. 3; and interview with Jerzy Nowak of the
Polish foreign ministry, in “Drogą do bezpieczeństwa,” Zobierz rzecezysposoblitę

29. In “Sudurzhatelno

30. Zbliżenie polsko-
17 February 1991,
sky deníc (Prague).
Apolinary Wojtys,
a obronny narodowej
denik (Prague),
26 November 1994,
Hospodtifske
noviny (Prague),
20 November 1994,
p. 4; and the interview with Hungarian
Foreign Minister László Kovacs in Magyar Nemzet (Budapest), 10 December

26. Army-General V. N. Lobov, “Puti realizatsii kontseptsii dostatochnosti dlya
oborony,” Voennaya mysl’ (Moscow), no. 2, February 1991, p. 16. See also the
interview with the military economist V. Litov in “Nasha bezopasnost’ i parizhskii
dogovor,” Sovetskaya Rossiya (Moscow), 9 January 1991, p. 5; the interview with
then-Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in “Edouard Chevardnadze:
‘Notre problème, le votre, c’est de réussir la perestroïka……’,” Le Figaro (Paris),
22-23 December 1990, esp. p. 4; the interview with Col.-General Nikolai Chervov,
deputy chief of the Soviet General Staff, in “Kam sa podeli tanky?” Verejnosti
(Bratislava), 8 January 1991, p. 4; and the interview with Army-General Mikhail
Moiseev, chief of the Soviet General Staff, in “Oborona: Korni i krona,”
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Polish foreign ministry, in “Drogą do bezpieczeństwa,” Zobierz rzecezysposoblitę


40. “Zavrsheniye poseshcheniyo na Grutskiy ministru-predsedateli v Bulgarstvi,” *Duma* (Sofia), 13 January 1991, pp. 1-2. See also the interview with the Greek national defense minister, Ioannis Varvitsiotis, in “Bulgaristvi-Grutskiy: Edinstvo po mnogo problem”, *Narodna armiya* (Sofia), 29 January 1991, p. 3. Although Bulgaria’s diplomatic efforts were aimed mainly at improving military ties with Greece, some attempt was also made to shift the balance towards Russia, according to Anny Generz, a general staff official.

41. Interview in *Népszabadsag* (Budapest).

42. “Bialo-czerwone nasadzi,” both in *Polska zbrojna*.

43. Interview in *Népszabadsag* (Budapest).

44. Hungary contributed two medical specialists for the examination of nearly 100 medical and radiation units because of the delay, which was not acti

45. “Bez mun p. 2; and “Popov, (Sofia), 22 February, roughly.

46. Witold Be we wnętrznych Kr: wewntrznych Kr:


48. “O razvitii Postanovlenie SSSR, no. St-15/2 (SEC dokumentatsii) (M:

49. Ibid., L1. The title, was in Izvest

50. For a typ

51. peremen,” *Pravda,

52. head of the Intern: 1991 report for th
was also made to shore up relations with Turkey. See, for example, “Sutrudnichesstvo s Turtsiya na vuzdukh, susha i more: Dvete strani se integrirat evropeiskite transportni strukturi,” Otechestven vestnik (Sofia), 28 February 1991, p. 1; and the interview with Army General Mehmed Yonder, first deputy commander of the Turkish General Defense Staff, in “Mezhdu Bulgariya i Turtsiya nyama vuprosi, koi to da ni razdelyat,” Otechestven vestnik (Sofia), 22 February 1991, p. 3.

41. Interview with General László Borsits, chief of the Hungarian General Staff, in Népszabadsag (Budapest), 17 December 1990, pp. 1, 5.

42. “Bialo-czerwone F-16—jesz nie teraz” and “Format krótkiej wizyty: Temat naśdzi,” both in Polska zbrojna (Warsaw), 6 December 1990, pp. 2 and 1, respectively.

43. Interview with Hungarian Deputy Foreign Minister Tamás Katona in Népszabadsag (Budapest), 10 January 1991, p. 1.

44. Hungary sent a military medical unit of 37 people to Saudi Arabia; Poland contributed two military vessels with a total of 150 people, plus another 150 medical specialists for two military hospitals in Saudi Arabia; Czechoslovakia sent a regiment of nearly 200 anti-chemical warfare specialists; Romania dispatched a military medical team of 360 specialists and a chemical warfare decontamination unit of 180 people; and Bulgaria agreed to provide two chemical warfare decontamination units with a total of 278 personnel (though Bulgaria’s units were held up because of a delay in receiving a formal invitation from Saudi Arabia, and, therefore, were not actually deployed before the war ended).


49. Ibid., Ll. 1, 7, 8 (emphasis added). The published version, under the same title, was in Izvestiya TsK KPSS (Moscow), no. 3, March 1991, pp. 12-17. According to an inscription at the back of the journal, the issue was sent to press on 27 February, roughly a month after the then secret report was adopted.

50. For a typical article, see V. Musatov, “Vostochnaya Evrope: ‘Taifun’ peremen,” Pravda (Moscow), 13 March 1991, p. 3. Valeri Musatov was the deputy head of the International Department and one of the main authors of the January 1991 report for the CPSU leadership.
51. F. Luk'yanov, “My ne khotim byt’ neitral’nymi, zayavil vengerskii prem’er,” Izvestiya (Moscow), 1 May 1991, p. 4.

52. Interview with Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Yuli Kvitsinski in Népszabadság (Budapest), 29 April 1991, p. 1. See also the interview with Sergei Karaganov, deputy director of the USSR’s European Studies Institute, in Magyar Hírlap (Budapest), 15 June 1991, p. 8.


54. Interview with István Kormendi, head of the European department of the Hungarian foreign ministry, in Magyar Hírlap (Budapest), 28 February 1991, p. 3.


60. Interview with Ognyan Avramov, secretary for the Bulgarian president, in “Ne e shega—ot purvi april-Varshavski dogovor mozhe da bude razpusnat,” Otechestven vestnik (Sofia), 13 February 1991, p. 3.


63. This statement applies only to NATO, not to the Western European Union (WEU). The four Visegrad states, the three Baltic republics, Romania, and Bulgaria were made “associate partners” of the WEU in May 1994, an arrangement that will not be extended to Russia or other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). See the discussion below.


70. Manki Ponomarev, "I nevinnost' soblyusti, i kapital priobresti—vot chem ozabocheno rukovodstvo ZES i NATO," Krasnaya zvezda (Moscow), 25 November 1994, p. 3.

71. A much smaller and less significant border exists between Italy and Slovenia.

72. The issue would become even more delicate if Serbia feared that Hungary's admission into NATO would increase the Hungarian government's willingness to support ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina.

73. Ernő Raffay, a former top official in the Hungarian defense ministry, has even warned that Romania, Slovakia, and Serbia might join in a combined military effort against Hungary. See the interview in Új Demokrata (Budapest), 15 December 1994, pp. 8-9.

74. Judith Pataki, "The Hungarian Authorities' Reactions to the Violence in
150 Mark Kramer


76. György Kelety, interview on Duna Television, Budapest, 20 November 1994. Similarly, in late 1994 the acting Slovak defense minister, Imrich Andrejčak, emphasized that “a prerequisite for NATO membership will be the dependable, security, and neighborly cooperation of the applicants” (“Západdní orientace Slovenska je nezpochybnitelná”) p. 4 (emphasis added).

77. On this very point, see the news conference with Ambassador Traian Chebeleu, a top aide to Romanian President Ion Iliescu, in Dimineata (Bucharest), 13 December 1994, p. 2.

78. Article 5 affirms that “an armed attack against one or more of [the signatories] in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all, and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them ... will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith ... such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.”

79. For different perspectives on these negotiations, see the interview with István Gyarmati, chief Hungarian delegate to the CFE talks, in “Unzer Ziel ist ein kooperatives Sicherheitssystem in Europa,” Die Presse (Vienna), 24 October 1990, p. 4; the interview with then Czechoslovak defense minister Luboš Dobrovský in “Za šestatřicet měsícu nová armáda,” Mladá fronta dnes (Prague), 13 December 1990, p. 3; “Na nachalakh razumnoi i nadezhnoi dostatochnosti dlya oborony,” Krasnaya zvezda (Moscow), 6 July 1990, p. 2; and “Na Blassstrasse 34 se finisuje: Puvodní rozhovor HN s vedoucim delegace CSFR na viděnkém jednání o konvenčních ozbrojených silách,” Hospodářské noviny (Prague), 15 October 1990, p. 4. For another useful account of these talks, see Douglas L. Clarke, “The CFE Talks: One Against Twenty-Two,” Radio Free Europe Report on Eastern Europe (Munich) 1:40, 5 October 1990, pp. 41-44.


81. Sergei Kalinovski (Moscow).

82. Służba vn Rossii (Moscow).

83. Stanley Smith, NATO, Russia, and the Partners for Peace.

84. “Brak w wywiady prez. Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 8-9 Je jejich národů a st NATO nie jest won.

85. “Walka...Zbyt krótki krok 1994, p. 1; and “E Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 8-9 Je jejich národů a st NATO nie jest won.

86. For an o Russian Security (Munich) 3:33, 2 Security and Coe and the Partners shian government Rossi s NATO, 22-29. Kazantse with NATO.

87. P. E. Smi Politika, Ekonom.
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NA TO, Russia, and East European Security

10 December 1994, p. 1; and Mikhail Karpov, “Voskhod NATO. zakat SBSE? Na
dueli rossiiskogo i amerikanskogo prezidentov iz-za Evropy pobeda dostalas’

81. Sergei Karaganov, “Rasshirenie NATO vedet k isolyatsii Rossii,” Moskovskie
novosti (Moscow), no. 38, 19 September 1993, p. 7.

82. Sluzhba vneshnei razvedki Rossii, Perspektivy rasshireniya NATO i interesy
Rossii (Moscow), November 1993. The report was divided into two main sections:
one focusing on the prospects for NATO’s expansion, and the other dealing with the
implications of such a development for Russian interests. Lengthy excerpts were
published in many of Russia’s leading newspapers. See, for example Krasnaya
zvezda (Moscow), 30 November 1993, p. 3 and Nezavisimaya gazeta
(Moscow), 26 November 1993, pp. 1, 3.

83. Stanley Sloan, “Transatlantic Relations in the Wake of the Brussels Summit,”
NATO Review 42:2, April 1994, pp. 27-31. For an overview of the PfP, see

84. “Brak wizji Europy budzi demony: Udzielone w ostatnim tygodniu
wywiady prezydenta Lecha Wałęsy na temat polityki zagranicznej,”
Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 8-9 January 1994, p. 20; “Prezydent i rząd o NATO:
Zbyt krótki krok we właściwym kierunku,” Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 11 January
1994, p. 1; and “Bez alternatywy: Kontrowersje wokół amerykańskiej propozycji,”

85. “Walka o wejście do sojuszu: Przed szczotem NATO,” Rzeczpospolita
(Warsaw), 8-9 January 1994, p. 21; and “Chci Europy evropskou, Evropu všech
jejich národů a států,” Hospodářské noviny (Prague), 2 December 1994, pp. 1, 23.
At times, Havel has been more pointed in his criticisms, as in the fall of 1993 when
he accused the West of resurrecting the “ghosts of Munich” and of “betraying” the
East European states. See “Politycy przepowiadają długi marsz do NATO,”
Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 23-24 October 1993, pp. 1-2; “Drogą wstecz nie istnieje,”
Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 22 October 1993, pp. 1, 23; and “Havel w Warszawie:
NATO nie jest wrogiem Rosji,” Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 22 October 1993, p. 23.

86. For an overview of this controversy, see Michael Mihalka, “European­Russian Security and NATO’s Partnership for Peace,” RFE/RL Research Report
(Munich) 3:33, 26 August 1994, pp. 34-45. See also US Congress, Commission on
Security and Cooperation in Europe, Russia and NATO: Moscow’s Foreign Policy
and the Partnership for Peace, 103rd Cong., 2nd Sess., May 1994. For the Rus­
sian government’s perspective, see Boris Kazantsev, “Pervye shag i partnerstvu
Rossii s NATO,” Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn’ (Moscow), no. 10, October 1994, pp.
22-29. Kazantsev was a senior foreign ministry official responsible for dealings
with NATO.

87. P. E. Smirnov, “Dreis Vostochnoi Evropy na zapad i interesy Rossii,” SSHA:
Politika, Ekonomika, Ideologiya (Moscow), no. 12, December 1994, p. 29.

89. In mid-1993, before the PfP was formed, Poland took part in joint naval maneuvers in the Baltic Sea with the United States, Germany, and other NATO countries, but the exercises in September 1994 were the first exercises involving ground and air units.


91. For a detailed analysis of this exercise, see Captain V. Pasyakin, “‘Meritaim partner-94’: Partnerstvo ili demonstratsiya prevoshodstva?” Morskoi sbornik (Moscow), no. 1, January 1995, pp. 35-38.


100. Ibid.

101. Throughout the speech Kozyrev played up the recent intra-NATO disputes over the Balkan “illegal” US policy, virtually ideologically splitting Western Europe as a wedge into a more active security policy of experts from the East. With regard that Russia was not enough through its tactical ballistic missile program the shared of WEU, a crucial European country in Vietnam attempts in and as such it was that Kozyrev accused the East European “new-all-Europe prevent the alliance.

102. Vladimir Zhirinovsky, interview in Krasnaya zvezda (Moscow), 6 December 1994, pp. 1, 3.


104. In Eastern Europe, large-scale movement of NATO forces, supported by the Centrum Badan (Moscow), 30 August 1994). Convident even before Bartosz Weglarz saw).
over the Balkans and other matters, and he emphasized that, in contrast to the "illegal" US position, the "Russian and WEU approaches to the Bosnian crisis are virtually identical." Although Kozyrev claimed that he was not seeking to split Western Europe from the United States, he clearly hoped to use the WEU itself as a wedge against NATO expansion. Among other things, he proposed "a more active search for common [Russian-WEU] approaches to the key problems of security in Europe," and called for the establishment of "joint groups of experts from Russia and the WEU to handle all problems of European security." With regard to specific areas of military cooperation, Kozyrev claimed that Russia wanted to pursue "joint military exercises" with the WEU (rather than through NATO mechanisms), "the joint development of a European antia Ballistic missile defense" (implicitly omitting the United States), and the sharing of Russian satellite and aerial reconnaissance information with the WEU, a crucial function that the United States has long performed for the West European countries via NATO. The speech as a whole was reminiscent of Soviet attempts in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s to sow dissension within NATO, and as such it was likely to do little for the Russian cause. Still, to the extent that Kozyrev could stir up even a few extra doubts about the wisdom of admitting the East European states into NATO (as opposed to admitting them into a "new all-European security institution"), he might simply have been hoping to prevent the alliance from reaching a consensus in favor of enlargement.

102. Vladimir Kuzar, "V strecha SBSE na vysshem urovne ischet puti k Evrope XXI veka—kontinentu mira i bezopasnosti," Krasnaya zvezda (Moscow), 6 December 1994, p. 1; Aleksandr Gol’ts, "V dekabre nastupil ‘kholodnyi mir’?" Krasnaya zvezda (Moscow), 7 December 1994, p. 2; and Dmitri Gomostaev, "Rossiya rasschityvaet na uchet svoikh interesov: Boris El’tsin schitaet, chto bloki i koalitsii ne dadut Evrope polnykh garantii bezopasnosti," Nezavisimaya gazeta (Moscow), 6 December 1994, pp. 1-2. For East European reactions to the Russian statements, see Maria Węgrowska, "Rosja grozi zerwaniem wsp³¹pracy z NATO," Polska-Rosja-NATO (Warsaw: CBOS, January 1995). Concern about the implications of Russia’s policy in Chechnya was evident even before the conflict escalated. See, for example, Wojciech Jagielski and Bartosz Węglarczyk, "Propagandowa wojn¹ o Czeczn¹," Gazeta wyborcza (Warsaw), 30 August 1994, pp. 6-7.


109. Ibid.


111. See, for example, Ewa Szymańska, “Minister Onyszkiewicz w Waszyngtonie,” Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 26-27 June 1993, p. 17. See also Sylwester Walczak, “Spór, który podzielił sojusz: Amerykańska dyskusja o członkostwie państw Europy Środkowo-wschodniej w NATO,” Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 22 October 1993, p. 22.

112. On the concept of “cooperative security,” see Janne E. Nolan, ed., Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1994). A related concept that is even more germane in this context is “mutual security,” as developed in Richard Smoke and Andrei Kortunov, eds., Mutual Security: A New Approach to Soviet-American Relations (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990). Some experts in the Visegrad countries claim that certain NATO countries, especially the United States, may have actively encouraged Yeltsin to retract his initial statements. The rationale, in their view, was to get a suitable pretext for deferring consideration indefinitely of full East-Central European membership in NATO. The evidence for these assertions is inconclusive.


115. The record in this regard is not perfect—the breakdown of democracy in Greece in 1967 is the obvious exception—but it comes very close. Although numerous problems remain in Turkey today, those problems are undoubtedly much less severe than they would be if Turkey were not a member of NATO.


118. The view that democratic states do not go to war with one another was first put forth by Immanuel Kant in Perpetual Peace and has recently been developed in more elaborate form, albeit often with strongly Kantian overtones, by several Western political theorists and specialists in international relations. See, for example, the two-part essay by Michael Doyle: "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," Philosophy and Public Affairs 12:3, Summer 1983, pp. 205-235 (Part 1) and 12:4, Fall 1983, pp. 323-353 (Part 2). The empirical evidence for the proposition may not be ironclad, but it is very strong. The only "exceptions" to the rule (for example, the Anglo-American conflict in 1812) depend on highly questionable definitions of "democracy." See James Lee Ray, Democracies and International Conflict (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994); Spencer R. Weart, "Peace Among Democratic and Oligarchic Republics," Journal of Peace Research 31:3, August 1994, pp. 299-316; Nils Petter Gleditsch, "Democracy and Peace," Journal of Peace Research 29:4, November 1992, pp. 369-76; Steve Chan, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall... Are The Democratic States More Pacifist?" Journal of Conflict Resolution 28:2, Spring 1984, pp. 617-48; and Charles Kegley, "The Long Postwar Peace During the Cold War," Jerusalem Journal of International Relations 14:4, December 1992, pp. 1-18.

120. Comments by Csaba Takacs, national executive chairman of the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania, op. cit.

121. See, for example, “Polityka bezpieczeństwa i strategia obronna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej,” Polska zbrojna (Warsaw), 12 November 1992, pp. 1-2; and “Załóżenia polskiej polityki bezpieczeństwa,” Polska zbrojna (Warsaw), 3 November 1992, p. 2.


124. CBOS, “Partnerstwo dla Pokoju i przystąpienie Polski do NATO.” It should be noted, however, that public views of the PPF in Poland have become substantially more favorable over time, though still only a minority regard it positively.


126. See, for example, “Nie drażnić Moskwy: W Kopenhadze o NATO,” Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 12 October 1993, pp. 1, 21.

127. This point has been explicitly mentioned in one of the most insightful Russian analyses of the subject. See Smirnov, “Dreif Ostchoini Evropy na zapad i interesy Rossii,” op. cit., p. 30. In pointing out that Ukraine had earlier proposed the formation of a “Central European Zone of Security” to surround Russia, Smirnov argues that it would be better for Russia if Poland were to join NATO and put an end to any such ideas.

128. Polish experts began raising these arguments at a very early stage; see, for example, Waldemar Piotrowski, “Wojska NATO w Polsce? Szansa w nowej roli,” Życie Warszawy (Warsaw), 1 June 1990, p. 5; and Jan Rylukowski, “Nowe wyzwania, stare odpowiedzi—remanenty polskiej polityki zagranicznej,” Tygodnik Solidarność (Warsaw), no. 37, 14 September 1990, p. 5.


130. On this point, see “Sprawa NATO testem dla postkomunistow,” Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 8 October 1993, p. 22.


133. Imre Mecs, cited in Heti Világgazdaság (Budapest), 12 November 1994, pp. 103-104.


138. The motivation for the “Peace Pannon” deal, from the US perspective, was simply to ensure that NATO’s E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft, which were using Hungarian airspace to monitor the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, would be able to distinguish Hungary’s MiG fighters from those flown by Serb and Croat forces.


142. Dana Priest and Daniel Williams, “U. S. Allows Arms Sales to 10 in Ex-East Block: Barrier to Offensive Weaponry is Removed,” The Washington Post, 18 February 1995, pp. A-1, A-12. Most restrictions had been eliminated a few years earlier, but this decision cleared the way for the sale of tanks, artillery, combat aircraft, missiles, and other weapons useful for offensive operations. The decision did not apply to the CIS member-states.
143. As of late 1994, one of the Czech Army’s mechanized divisions had been converted into a mechanized brigade, and its infantry division had been disbanded. Further moves to a brigade basis were underway. The Polish Army had disbanded one mechanized division and converted another. See the interview with General Stanisław Koziej, director of the defense system department in the Polish National Defense Ministry, in “Gry wojenne,” Gazeta wyborcza (Warsaw), 15 December 1994, p. 10.

144. Interview on Duna Television, Budapest, 20 November 1994.

145. Interview with General Stanisław Koziej, in “Gry wojenne,” p. 11.


147. See the interview with the deputy secretary-general of NATO, Sergio Balanzino, in Népszava (Budapest), 11 November 1994, pp. 1, 9.


150. Interview with General Stanisław Koziej in “Gry wojenne,” p. 11. See also “Możemy liczyć na pomoc: Olechowski i Pawlak po powrocie z Pragi,” Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 14 January 1994, pp. 1, 23.


155. Interview with Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski in “Nic o Polsce bez Polski,” p. 10.


157. Comments by the late NATO Secretary-General Manfred Wörner; cited in “Die Tschechoslowakei will eng mit der NATO zusammenarbeiten,” Die Welt (Hamburg), 10 July 1993, p. 2.

158. “Partnership with the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe,” statement issued by the North Atlantic Council’s Ministerial Session in Copenhagen, 6-7 June 1991, Point 9.


161. “Gorbatschow und die deutsche Einheit,” Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazin (Frankfurt), 17 June 1994, p. 23. Some recriminations about the “loss” of Eastern Europe arose well before Gorbachev’s volte-face on the German issue, and the bickering continued until the aborted coup of August 1991; but the specific question of German membership in NATO had almost no effect on the exchanges one way or the other.

162. “Russia Seeks Greater CFE Vehicle Allowance,” Jane’s Defence Weekly


164. Ibid., p. 136.

165. For a more pessimistic appraisal, see Konovalov, "K novomu razdelu Evropy?" op. cit., p. 5.