

# CRS Report for Congress

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## NATO: Congress Addresses Expansion of the Alliance

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## **Abstract**

This report analyzes NATO enlargement policy from the mid-1990s through May 1999. It discusses legislation offered in Congress during the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress, analyzes how enlargement might affect NATO's mission, examines the various cost studies on enlargement, reviews Russia's position on NATO expansion, then briefly discusses developments in Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland. This report will be updated as needed. See also CRS, *NATO Enlargement: Pro and Con Arguments*, CRS Report 97-718, and *NATO Expansion: Cost Issues*, CRS Report 97-668.

# NATO: Congress Addresses Expansion of the Alliance

## Summary

On April 30, 1998, the Senate gave its consent to the amendment of the North Atlantic Treaty to admit Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary by a vote of 80-19. The President signed the Resolution of Ratification on May 22, 1998. On March 12, 1999, the three countries formally joined the alliance.

On July 8, 1997, NATO named Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary as candidate states for admission to the alliance. On June 3, 1997, Representative Benjamin Gilman and others proposed the European Security Act of 1997 (H.R. 1758). It was engrossed in H.R. 1757, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, on June 11, 1997. The Conference Report (H.Rept. 105-432) was sent to the House floor March 10, 1998. The House passed H.R. 1757 by voice vote on March 26, 1998, and the Senate by a vote of 51-49 on April 28, 1998. The bill became the European Security Act of 1998, and is Title XXVII of the omnibus appropriations measure that the president signed on October 21, 1998 (P.L. 105-277; H.R. 4328).

The European Security Act endorses NATO enlargement; urges that the door to alliance membership be kept open should a first round of enlargement occur; specifically urges consideration of the Baltic states, Bulgaria, and Romania; outlines recommendations for arms control negotiations that affect new and current members; and states that the European allies should pay the bulk of the costs of enlargement.

The act states that no commitments be made to Russia over deployments of conventional and nuclear forces in new member states that would put such states in a category different from that of current members. In addition, NATO should make no commitments to Russia limiting the construction of defense infrastructure or deployment of reinforcements in a new member state's territory.

On May 27, 1997, NATO and Russia signed the "Founding Act," which outlines their future security relationship.

On February 11, 1998, President Clinton sent the protocols of accession to the Senate (Treaty Doc. 105-36). The Senate Foreign Relations Committee drafted a Resolution of Ratification, which it adopted by a vote of 16-2 on March 3, 1998, and sent to the full Senate, accompanied by Exec. Rpt. 105-14.

At the April 23-25 NATO summit in Washington, the allies did not invite new members, but reaffirmed their policy of keeping the door open to qualified candidates.

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# NATO: Congress Addresses Expansion of the Alliance

## Introduction

The 105th Congress considered legislation and amendment of the North Atlantic Treaty that could have important implications for future U.S. security interests in Europe. Legislation has passed Congress calling for NATO expansion and authorizing financial assistance to candidates for membership. The Senate approved a Resolution of Ratification to amend the North Atlantic Treaty to admit Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary to the alliance. All NATO states must approve the three countries' admission for them to join. The debate over expansion, or "enlargement," is taking place at a moment when NATO's mission is unclear. Clarification of the alliance's purpose most likely hinges upon the ability of the United States and its allies to come to an agreement over their mutual security interests, and how best to protect them. The debate over enlargement has addressed key issues surrounding those interests.

A central factor in the debate over enlargement has been how to build stability in central Europe, and to do so without threatening or isolating Russia. Both proponents and opponents of NATO expansion wish to avoid a return to the era of enmity between Russia and the West. Some Members of Congress believe that enlargement would enhance stability by providing NATO's security guarantee for candidate states working to construct viable democracies and free-market systems. Other Members believe that too rapid expansion of the alliance could fuel nationalist sentiment in Russia, where some political groups contend that NATO is intent upon circumscribing Moscow's influence in a region of traditional interest. Some Members support enlargement, but oppose giving Russia any role in NATO decisionmaking within the cooperative framework between the alliance and Moscow, structured in May 1997.

For the United States and its allies, the conflict in Kosovo has thrown into relief some of the differing perceptions of interests among NATO states. Some European allied governments believe that ethnic violence in the Balkans, by spreading nationalistic sentiments and a continuing flow of refugees, could unsettle west European societies. Divergences between the Clinton Administration and allied governments over how to bring peace to Bosnia persist, as do differences over next steps to resolve the crisis in Kosovo. Many Members of Congress remain opposed to the deployment of U.S. ground forces in Bosnia and Kosovo.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>CRS. Issue Brief 91089: *Bosnia-Former Yugoslavia and U.S. Policy*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted). Regularly updated.

Disagreements over Bosnia are relevant to the debate over enlargement because expansion would bring countries into NATO that are in an unstable region of Europe. Some believe that the geographic location of central and east European candidate states for NATO membership gives them a potential strategic vulnerability should instability in Russia grow and an aggressive regime come to power in Moscow. The several years of wrangling among alliance members over how to respond to Bosnia has led some Europeans to ask whether U.S. and European interests may be diverging. A senior French official, for example, has said that “in the management of post-Cold War crises,... a priority for the Europeans may not be a priority” for the United States. Some allies are hesitant to view NATO’s commitment to implement the Dayton accords as a test case for the alliance, in part because there is no alliance consensus over any future commitment to undertake such a mission should ethnic violence erupt elsewhere in Europe, in part due to concern that the Bosnian conflict could reignite should NATO forces leave before peace is secured. Others believe that bringing peace to Bosnia is critical to the alliance’s credibility and relevance. In this view, NATO could not maintain its importance to European security if it stood by while a small European power (Serbia) massacred thousands of unarmed civilians in full view of the world.

The success or failure of efforts to bring peace to Bosnia is affecting the enlargement debate. Some allies see Bosnia as a test case for the Administration’s and NATO’s commitment and capacity to build stability in central and eastern Europe. Some Members of Congress have said that the allies must shoulder a greater share of the burden in Bosnia to demonstrate their willingness to assume new responsibilities in Europe.

### **Position of the Clinton Administration**

The Clinton Administration proposed expansion of the alliance at the January 1994 NATO summit. Administration officials believe expansion could protect a range of U.S. interests, including the strengthening of nations that share the U.S. belief in democracy; the development of free-market economies open to U.S. investment and trade; the securing of allies willing to share in efforts on a range of global issues; and preservation of a Europe free of the domination of any one power.<sup>2</sup> On October 22, 1996, President Clinton called for the admittance to NATO of new members by 1999. On June 12, 1997, the President named Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic as the United States’ 3 candidates for membership. On July 8, 1997, at the Madrid summit, NATO named these three countries as candidates.

**The NATO Enlargement Study.** The Administration sought a clear decision and direct steps to expand the alliance at the January 1994 NATO summit. On September 20, 1995, NATO announced the findings of the study.<sup>3</sup> The study listed general criteria (democratic structures, a free market economy, respect for human rights) necessary in prospective members. New members must accept the full range of NATO responsibilities, such as building a military able to contribute to collective

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<sup>2</sup>Strobe Talbott, “Why NATO should grow,” *New York Review of Books*. Aug. 10, 1995.

<sup>3</sup>*Study on NATO Enlargement*. NATO. Brussels. September, 1995

defense, providing humanitarian assistance and undertaking peacekeeping missions. The study did not state that new members must enter NATO's integrated military command; the United States has contended that NATO should require all new members to be within the integrated military command, in order to minimize the ability of states to exempt themselves from duties required of others. The study promised new members a guarantee of protection by NATO's strategic nuclear forces. Finally, the study saw no near-term need for basing nuclear weapons or other member states' conventional forces on the territory of new members, but left the option of doing so "when and if appropriate." It did state that placement of NATO headquarters on new members' territory, pre-positioning of materiel there, and frequent training and exercise by NATO forces would likely be necessary "to demonstrate NATO's commitment to collective defense" and to become "familiar with terrain and conditions."

The Final Communiqué of the December 10, 1996 NATO Ministerial noted that NATO has "no intention, no plan, and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members...."

**Next Steps.** On Dec. 16, 1997, in Brussels, NATO foreign ministers signed three Protocols to the Washington Treaty ; the Protocols are the legal instruments on which current member parliaments voted in deciding to admit the candidate states. The Senate approved the Resolution of Ratification approving the Protocols on April 30, 1998, by a vote of 80-19. The President signed the instrument of ratification on May 22, 1998.<sup>4</sup> On March 12, 1999, the foreign ministers of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary deposited the instruments of ratification with the United States Government in a ceremony in Independence, Mo.; this act marked the three countries' formal adherence to the alliance. NATO decided to bring them into the alliance in advance of the April 1999 summit in order to have them approve the final draft of the alliance's new Strategic Concept before its adoption at the summit. On June 30, 1999, Secretary of Defense Cohen discouraged belief that a second round of enlargement might take place in the near future. "The door is open," he said, "but at the top of a steep stairwell."

At the NATO summit in Washington on April 23-25, 1999, the allies did not invite new members, but did keep the door open for future candidate states. The announced a multi-step program which candidates could follow to enhance their militaries and their civil-military relations to bring them in line with NATO standards. Such steps are intended to strengthen the candidacies of a number of states.

Privately, representatives of some countries acknowledged that the manner in which the crisis in Kosovo is resolved will affect a possible second round of enlargement. The failure of the Europeans thus far to produce a force able to bear the brunt of the responsibility in Kosovo, and the failure of the alliance to defeat Yugoslavia in a timely fashion, have raised questions about NATO's future. Some allies believe that issues such as mobility of forces and responsibility for out-of-area missions must first be resolved before enlargement is again considered.

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<sup>4</sup>CRS. *NATO Enlargement: The Process and Allied Views*, by Paul E. Gallis. CRS Report 97-666. July 1, 1997.

**Partnership for Peace.** The Administration's Partnership for Peace program was adopted at the January 10-11, 1994 NATO summit. PFP provides a framework for NATO's evaluation of states that are considered to be candidates for alliance membership. PFP is intended to assist a state establish civilian control over its military; develop "transparent" defense budgets that outline military capabilities to its public and to its neighbors; learn new military doctrine; and work with NATO states to develop specific capabilities, such as peacekeeping. Since 1994, many PFP states, including Russia, have held joint training exercises with NATO states, and some are participating in the SFOR mission in Bosnia. The alliance intends to enhance PFP for those states still seeking membership.

## **Congressional Action**

### **Legislation**

The omnibus appropriations measure (title XXVII of P.L. 105-277; H.R. 4328) contains the European Security Act of 1998. The Act endorses NATO enlargement; urges that the door to alliance membership be kept open should a first round of enlargement occur; specifically urges consideration of the Baltic states, Bulgaria, and Romania, should they meet necessary criteria; and outlines recommendations for arms control negotiations that affect new and current members. The legislation refers to the NATO Participation Act of 1994 (Title II of P.L. 103-447) for a description of criteria for membership. P.L. 103-447 states that candidate states must make significant progress towards establishing democratic institutions and free market structures, as well as well-developed civilian control of the military and a policy of prohibiting transfer of arms to countries supporting terrorism. The President signed H.R. 4328 into law on Oct. 21, 1998.

The European Security Act states that no commitments be made to Russia concerning conventional and nuclear force deployments having "the effect of extending rights or imposing responsibilities" on new members different from commitments to current members. In addition, NATO should make no commitments limiting the construction of defense infrastructure or deployment of reinforcements on new member state's territory. It asks that these considerations on conventional forces be reflected in the re-negotiation of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) now under way. The legislation also states that no international organization and no non-alliance member should gain the authority "to review, delay, veto, or otherwise impede deliberations and decisions" of NATO's decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council. The legislation states that a NATO- Russia agreement should include commitments by Moscow to delineate its borders with its neighbors, station forces on other states' territories only with their permission, and agree to reduce nuclear and conventional forces in Kaliningrad, a part of Russia that borders Poland and Lithuania.

The European Security Act addresses the issue of burdensharing in NATO enlargement. It states that "the United States already pays more than a proportionate share of the costs of the common defense of Europe and should obtain, in advance,



agreement on an equitable distribution of the cost of NATO enlargement to ensure that the United States does not continue to bear a disproportionate burden.”

**Program of Assistance.** The European Security Act authorizes the expenditure of funds for NATO’s Partnership for Peace program to eligible states (under P.L. 103-447). The bill urges funds for the Regional Airspace Initiative (RAI) and the PFP Information Management System (PIMS). RAI is designed to develop civilian and military airspace regimes fully compatible with west European civilian airspace organizations. Most central European states have committed funds to implement such systems, leveraged in part by a U.S. offer to provide Foreign Military Financing for construction of air operations centers. PIMS is a computer network that links PfP capitals with U.S. facilities and the Partnership Coordination Cell at SHAPE headquarters in Mons, Belgium. Close communication between NATO and Partnership countries is considered by NATO officials as an important practical means to coordinate exercise planning via an electronics link, and thereby reduce the need for large (and expensive) conferences among military officials.<sup>5</sup>

## Senate Debate

**Resolution of Ratification and Amendments.** On March 3, 1998, by a vote of 16-2, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved a Resolution of Ratification, and sent it to the full Senate in Exec. Rpt. 105-14. The Resolution describes U.S. membership in NATO as a “vital national security interest”; states that the candidate states have democratic governments willing to meet the requirements of membership; underscores that collective defense is the alliance’s “core purpose”; notes emerging threats such as proliferation and ethnic conflict; encourages European Union expansion to promote stability; and urges an “open door” to future enlargement of the alliance. The document also addresses Russia’s relationship with NATO. It calls the North Atlantic Council (NAC) the “supreme decision-making body of NATO,” not subject to review by the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council or any non-member state or organization, such as the UN. The Resolution requires that, 180 days after its adoption, the President submit a report to the Senate on the Strategic Concept, as well as on the progress and timetable for NATO members meeting their force goals.

Senators Warner and Moynihan proposed an amendment requiring that the candidate states’ admission to NATO be deferred until those states are admitted to the European Union. Sen. Moynihan said that the three countries “face no security threats, so strengthening their economies and democratic institutions should be their first priority....[The 3 countries should] “concentrate their full resources on economic modernization, rather than diverting precious resources to military expenditures,” and EU membership will assist them in accomplishing this objective. (*CR*, March 3, 1998). Among the counter-arguments, Sen. Biden contended that because the United States is not a member of the EU, the United States would effectively be putting a key element of its future security in the hands of European decision-makers. He endorsed

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<sup>5</sup>CRS. *NATO: Alliance Expansion, Partnership for Peace, and U.S. Security Assistance*, by Paul E. Gallis, Richard Grimmett, and Larry Q. Nowels. CRS Report 97-531. May 9, 1997.

EU enlargement, but said that the Senate should not wait for an EU decision that could be many years in coming. (*CR*, March 18, 1998) The amendment was defeated.

Sen. Warner has also proposed a condition to the Resolution of Ratification that would place a moratorium on further expansion of the alliance “for a period of at least three years” from the date of entry of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. He contended that a period of time should pass for NATO to consider the true costs of enlargement, how quickly the three countries could meet NATO interoperability standards, and judge the level of stability in Central Europe and Russia. Opponents of the amendment did not wish to place restrictions on the freedom of action of a future Senate, and contended that the costs of enlargement are sufficiently well known. (*CR*, March 19, 1998) The amendment failed.

Sen. Harkin proposed an amendment that would have redefined the “NATO common-funded budget,” of which all member states pay a share. The amendment would have added FMF, IMET, and the costs of excess defense articles transferred to NATO states as part of the total U.S. share of the common budget. Senator Harkin contended that such transfers amount to “bilateral subsidies” adding to the U.S. costs of enlargement.<sup>6</sup> Opponents of the amendment contended that elements of such assistance packages often have little to do with enlargement, and assist countries already in the alliance. The amendment failed.

Senator Kyl offered an amendment that called on the Administration to negotiate a Strategic Concept that would clarify NATO’s post-Cold War strategy, underscoring NATO’s role as a military rather than a political or economic alliance, emphasizing its role as a collective defense organization, and listing its threats as being, among others, a revived “hegemonic power,” rogue nations seeking weapons of mass destruction, and ethnic and religious conflict. The amendment called upon allied countries to develop lighter, more mobile forces able to move long distances quickly to join U.S. forces in fighting a high-intensity conflict. (*CR*, April 27, 1998) The amendment passed.

## Assessment of the Debate

### NATO’s Mission

What is NATO’s purpose? How would U.S. security interests be affected by enlargement? These questions are at the heart of the alliance debate over enlargement.<sup>7</sup> During the Cold War era, the NATO Treaty’s Article V commitment to collective defense was the core mission of the alliance. By the 1970s and 1980s, over 300,000 U.S. troops were stationed in NATO Europe. A heavy conventional force presence was viewed by political and military leaders of NATO states as an

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<sup>6</sup>CRS. *NATO Common Funds and Burdensharing: Background and Current Issues*, by Carl Ek. CRS Report 98-239. March 11, 1998.

<sup>7</sup>CRS. *NATO Enlargement: Pro and Con Arguments*, by Paul E. Gallis. CRS Report 97-718. Updated April 14, 1998.

important instrument to put off the moment, should a conflict begin, when the West would have to make a decision to resort to nuclear forces; in addition, the very engagement of large-scale U.S. conventional forces sent a signal to the Soviets that the United States would use its nuclear forces to prevent a defeat of allied states. The United States stationed nuclear systems in Europe, and backed its commitment to the allies' security by strategic nuclear systems as well. The presence of U.S. conventional forces in Europe and the U.S. nuclear guarantee sent a strong political message that the fate of the European allies was tightly linked to that of the United States.

The U.S. conventional and nuclear presence gave a stronger message of guaranteed assistance in the event of conflict than a literal reading of Article V implies. Article V notes that "an armed attack against one or more [allies] shall be considered an attack against them all." But additional language makes clear that the commitment to come to the assistance of a Treaty party under attack is not unconditional. Rather, it states that each signatory will assist the ally under attack with "such action it deems necessary, including the use of armed force...." Such language could mean that an ally would provide no assistance, or political support only, or, of course, full military engagement.<sup>8</sup>

U.S. conventional forces in NATO Europe are declining, and now stand at approximately 109,000. Few U.S. nuclear systems are now in Europe; Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) were eliminated under the 1988 INF Treaty, tactical nuclear weapons have been withdrawn, and only a reduced number of gravity bombs remains. In 1991, NATO declared that the (then) Soviet Union was no longer an "enemy" of NATO. In NATO's 1991 "Strategic Concept", the alliance signaled its intention to move towards lighter, more mobile forces for power projection in central Europe to develop an improved capability for crisis management and such missions as peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Some countries, such as the United States, France, the Netherlands, and Britain are in the process of reshaping their forces to accomplish such missions, a reflection of dramatically improved East-West relations since the end of the Cold War. Moreover, given that Russian military forces are suffering from severe budgetary constraints, conscription shortfalls, sharp deterioration in morale and readiness, and uncertain leadership, the threat posed by Russia has markedly declined.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee Report on enlargement endorsed efforts to combat new threats to European security, but added that "no consensus exists in the Committee in support of a broader mission for NATO." It endorsed territorial defense (Article V) as NATO's core purpose, and insisted that other missions, such as crisis management and peace operations, not be elevated above territorial defense.

Senator Lugar has called for consideration of the idea of "double enlargement" — enlargement in geographic terms, but enlargement also in the sense of NATO taking on new missions that will give the alliance new and clear purpose. He has specifically mentioned crisis management and peacekeeping as such missions to which

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<sup>8</sup>CRS. *NATO: Article V and Collective Defense*, by Paul E. Gallis. CRS Report 97-717. July 17, 1997.

new members might contribute and which might also serve to enhance European security. (May 1996.)

Other members have raised concerns about enlargement. Senator Stevens, in hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Oct. 21, 1997, expressed doubts about the accuracy of the Administration's cost study of enlargement, and said that existing evidence indicates that the costs — and the U.S. share of those costs — may be higher. He believes that U.S. forces could serve U.S. interests better in other parts of the world than Europe, and that U.S. budgetary expenditures for enlargement should be allocated for modernization and readiness of U.S. forces. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Shelton responded that adding the 3 candidate states to NATO would, in his view, improve readiness of the alliance, and serve to protect U.S. interests by enhancing stability on the continent, deterring transnational threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and guarding against a potential revived Russian threat.

NATO's mission of collective defense remains important to member states because of a concern that Russia, still armed with nuclear weapons, might one day become more unstable and aggressive, and a direct threat to its neighbors. Representatives of several central European states interviewed recently expressed concern over an eventual Russian threat, and stated that the Article V commitment is the principal reason for their desire to join the alliance. While many Administration officials emphasize the importance of Article V, they also note that U.S. and allied defense spending is declining, in response to public demand as well as to a perceived declining Russian threat. According to U.S. General Wesley Clark (SACEUR), in the period 1990-96, NATO defense budgets collectively declined 15%, land forces 50%, naval forces 40%, and air forces 30%, prompting some observers to question whether NATO forces could defend Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in the event of a conflict?

The state of Russian conventional forces would make it difficult to mount a credible attack in central Europe, much less a surprise attack. Many U.S. and allied officials believe that Russian conventional forces continue to decline; in May 1997, President Yeltsin called for a further 30% reduction in his country's defense budget. Today, Russia spends 5% of its shrunken GDP on defense; Yeltsin said on May 23, 1997, that he intends for the figure to drop to 3 to 3.5% by the year 2000. Some observers believe that the Russian government is cannibalizing its defense budget to free funds for internal security forces, reflecting an overriding concern about internal unrest. On Oct. 7, 1998, Yuri Maslyukov, then the communist deputy prime minister, said that Russia could no longer afford its large strategic nuclear force, and should reduce the force to a few hundred warheads by 2010. According to press reports, the Russian general staff reported to Yeltsin in February 1999 that financial constraints will require that military forces be reduced to 550,000-600,000 during the next two years, a figure half that of current levels.

A meaningful Russian conventional threat to central European states is plausible only at a future moment, when Russia's economy stabilizes, greater defense expenditures are taking place, and a leadership in power intending to seek territorial gains or exert greater influence over neighboring states. In such circumstances, in purely military terms, some states seeking NATO membership could prove difficult

to defend. Poland's terrain is largely flat, making defense of its territory questionable using conventional forces. A contrasting view holds that Poland could offer tactical advantages to the alliance in the event of a conflict involving heavy armor.<sup>9</sup> NATO force-projection capabilities and many years of training for "deep battle" — moving highly maneuverable armored forces long distances and limiting an adversary's ability to do the same — would put allied forces at an advantage, in this view. Russian armored forces would have to traverse considerable territory to reach Poland, an undertaking that would require a long and potentially vulnerable logistics train. A possible weakness in this argument is the relative lack of forest in Poland to provide cover for NATO's armored forces. Another weakness is that Russia might heighten its considerable influence over Belarus and station armored forces on Belarusian soil, a measure that would enhance Russian logistics. The Baltic states, hinged against Russian territory and difficult to supply, are, in the view of many NATO military officials, in a starkly more disadvantageous strategic position (interviews).

Secretary of Defense Cohen believes that important U.S. interests could be served by enlargement. Enlargement, he said, could dampen nationalism and ethnic tensions by bringing new member states into NATO's security framework. The re-nationalization of defense, with a country obtaining weapons of mass destruction, "arming itself against an enemy, real or perceived," could be more easily averted by enlargement, and a war into which NATO might be drawn could be avoided.

The Clinton Administration has begun to cast NATO's mission in a changing light. Citing Russia's military decline, U.S. officials note that new risks such as nuclear proliferation could trigger an Article V (collective defense) situation. In this view, any new alliance members must understand that they would be expected to help prevent proliferation, and to assume responsibility in dealing with new nuclear powers that might become a threat. This view also supplies part of the rationale for NATO moving from a heavy, armored positional defense in central Europe (one geared against a Russian attack) and towards lighter forces for power projection, able to move quickly to address a distant crisis. Not all NATO members accept that the proliferation threat might be dealt with through possible military action, nor that it should be classed as an Article V contingency. The French government, for example, believes that NATO should emphasize political steps to curb proliferation and other potential new threats. The vagueness on this point of the revised Strategic Concept, agreed at the April 1999 NATO summit, reflects the differences over this issue.

The inability of several key European allies to move forces rapidly into the Yugoslav theater during the early days of the Kosovo conflict underscored important alliance weaknesses in the area of lift and general mobility of forces. In addition, the bulk of the air strikes have been undertaken by U.S. airplanes, raising an issue of burdensharing. Resolution of the conflict is virtually certain to provide a moment for allied states to reassess their contribution to the alliance, and the future needs of their forces, issues that were raised in the United States during the enlargement debate, particularly the discussion of the Kyl amendment.

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<sup>9</sup>C.T. Kelley, D.B. Fox, and B.A. Wilson, "A First Look at Options for Poland," in *New Challenges for Defense Planning*. Rand, 1994, pp. 451-476.

## Estimated Costs of Enlargement and Burdensharing

In March 1996, CBO issued a report assessing costs of enlargement under five possible options, ranging from assisting a new member engaged in a border skirmish or a conflict with a regional power, to the permanent stationing of the forces and equipment of current member states on the territory of new members to prepare for a broader conflict. The study assumes that Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia would be the initial new members and that costs would be spread over 15 years. Costs at the low end (for option 1) would be \$60.6 billion, with the U.S. share being \$4.8 billion, and at the high end (for option 5) \$125 billion, with the U.S. share being \$18.9 billion.<sup>10</sup>

A fall 1996 *RAND* study estimated that expansion (to include Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, over 10-15 years) would cost \$10-20 billion if new member states alone modernized their militaries; \$30-52 billion if current members undertook preparations to deploy 10-15 divisions and 10 fighter wings on the territory of new members; and \$55-110 billion for forward deployment of current members' forces on the territory of new members in contemplation of a resurgent threat from the east.

The Administration's February 1997 *Report to Congress* estimated that the cost of enlargement would be \$27-35 billion between 1997-2009. The emphasis for prospective new members would be on enhancing "interoperability" (such as developing air defense and command-and-control compatible with those of current NATO members, and training to learn the alliance's operational concepts), modernizing and downsizing their militaries, and upgrading facilities such as airfields and roads for receiving reinforcements from current member states. Current members would be expected to utilize defense expenditures to enhance their capacity to reach the new member states and potential regions of crisis with lighter, more mobile forces than those of the Cold War years. (In July 1997, USACOM commander Gen. John Sheehan criticized the allies for leaving it to the United States to develop the lift and command-and-control assets necessary for NATO's new missions.) Over 12 years, the estimated annual costs to the United States would be \$150-200 million; \$800-100 million to new member states; and \$600-800 million to current members. The report notes that enhanced needs for collective defense could drive the costs up.

In August 1997 GAO, at the request of the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House International Relations Committee, issued a study of the Administration's *Report to Congress*. GAO found that the Administration's assumptions were "generally reasonable," citing in particular the Administration's assessment of a low-threat environment. However, GAO noted that the Administration supplied few documents supporting determination of costs, and relied on "expert guesses" due to unavailability of hard data. For these reasons, costs might be "substantially higher or lower" than the Administration's estimate.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>CBO Papers. *The Costs of Expanding the NATO Alliance*, by Ivan Eland. March 1996.

<sup>11</sup>CRS. *NATO Expansion: Cost Issues*, by (name redacted). CRS Report 97-668. Updated Feb. 26, 1998.

On December 2, 1997, NATO approved a report with estimated costs of enlargement that are sharply lower than previous estimates. The report's findings were released, but the actual report remains classified. The report stated that the costs of enlargement to current allies over 10 years should be \$1.3 - 1.5 billion. NATO and U.S. officials said that the lower estimate could be explained by the discovery that candidate states' infrastructure was in much better condition than previously thought. At the same time, a classified NATO report that provides a preliminary evaluation of the candidate states' DPQ's was leaked to the press. It reportedly states that in fact the infrastructure of the candidate states is in very poor condition, that the equipment, for example, of the Czech army is approaching obsolescence, and that the costs for enlargement could be considerable.

## **The European Allies**

The European allies evince a spectrum of views on the issue of enlargement.<sup>12</sup> At the Madrid summit, a consensus settled on naming Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary as candidate states. In the summit communiqué, the allies agreed that enlargement would enhance stability. A number of countries, led by France, championed Romania's candidacy; some members, led by Italy, supported Slovenia's candidacy. The United States opposed naming either of the two states. Member states must unanimously agree, through their constitutional processes, to amend the North Atlantic Treaty to admit the 3 candidate states.

On February 2, 1998, Canada agreed to admit the three states; on the following day, Denmark followed suit. On March 3, the Norwegian parliament approved the candidate states' entry, as did Iceland on March 19 and the German *Bundestag* on March 26. On May 14, Greece approved enlargement, as did Luxembourg on May 24; on June 23 the Italian parliament followed suit. France and Britain approved the three states in July. On August 25, Spain gave its approval. In August, Belgium also approved the three states, as did Portugal on September 16. On October 21, Turkey gave its consent. On December 2, the Netherlands' parliament approved enlargement. All member states have now approved expansion of the alliance, as required by the treaty for the candidate states' admission.

Elements of doubt about enlargement and its effect on strategic issues remain evident. These sentiments will affect possible future rounds of enlargement. Some officials in NATO countries believe that different security interests [in NATO] are being regionalized, with the implication that the addition of more states would lead to further dilution of consensus in the alliance. This view is widely heard in allied Defense ministries, where a belief remains that the impulse for divergent responses of member states to the conflict in Bosnia would only be exacerbated when new states join and new ethnic conflicts or regional crises to emerge. Popular support in Hungary and the Czech Republic is lacking for NATO's air campaign in Yugoslavia (as well as some states that are not new members).<sup>13</sup> Some Italian officials privately express doubt that the interests of southern European members of NATO would be

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<sup>12</sup>*Process and Allied Views*. Op. Cit.

<sup>13</sup>CRS. *Kosovo: International Reaction to NATO Air Strikes*, coordinated by Karen Donfried. CRS report RL30114. Regularly updated.

served by the potential entry of northern European countries such as the Baltic states; in contrast, the Nordic countries opposed the inclusion of Romania and Slovenia, backed by Italy and other members, as not serving the interest of northern European members.

Allied governments were reluctant to share in the costs of enlargement as initially estimated by the Clinton Administration, in part because their publics desire declining defense budgets, in part because of competing budgetary priorities. President Chirac has been the most vocal among leaders of allied governments. On July 11, 1997, he said, "We have adopted a very simple position: Enlargement must not cost anything in net terms" because there is no threat. "In reality, NATO is a peacekeeping body, a crisis management system, and accordingly can afford much lighter resources in terms of both equipment and infrastructure... France...has no intention of increasing its contribution to NATO to cover enlargement." (Document provided by the French Embassy.) The British government initially contended that the Administration's cost estimates were too high and that the Administration was "using arguments about enlargement to leverage a better performance [from allies] on force goals." On Oct. 21, 1997, however, British Defense Secretary George Robertson said that "if additional spending is required, Britain will pay its share." The December 1997 NATO cost study of enlargement was endorsed by all member governments, and presumably obligates them politically to share the costs provided in that estimate.

### **Candidates for NATO Membership**

The 1994 NATO Participation Act, as noted, mentions criteria necessary for NATO membership. The North Atlantic Treaty does not establish explicit criteria for entry. The preamble to the Treaty does state that member governments are "founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law." Article I obligates member states to refrain from the use of force, unless attacked, to resolve international disputes. Article II commits them to "strengthening their free institutions." Article III commits them to "maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack." Article X states that, by unanimous agreement, current members may admit other states "in a position to further the principles of this Treaty." These principles have not always been rigorously applied, either to applicants or to member states. Portugal became a member in 1949, even though it had a dictatorial government. Today, some members criticize Turkey for its repression of the Kurds, or Greece for discrimination against Moslems. Other members, such as Luxembourg and Iceland, have virtually no military capacity, or have sharply declining defense budgets and marginally effective forces.

Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary have all had elections judged free and fair by international bodies since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.<sup>14</sup> Each has made strong progress towards developing free market economies, and is attracting western investment, and each is a candidate for European Union membership. At the same time, their militaries suffer from significant deficiencies. Their equipment is aging, and their armed forces remain top-heavy with officers. Their fighter pilots average 40-60

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<sup>14</sup>CRS. *Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary*, by (name redacted). Issue Brief 92051. Regularly updated.



hours in the air a year; the NATO standard is 180 hours. All three are in the process of learning NATO training and practices, in part through participation in Partnership for Peace. Of particular importance are lack of English language skills among officers and a lack of a strong sense of initiative among both officers and non-commissioned officers. Secretary Cohen has stressed the need for the development of a strong corps of NCOs in each candidate state. The three countries have established firm civilian control of their militaries, and a total of 1500 of their troops are participating in the Stabilization Force (SFOR).<sup>15</sup> In addition, all three states endorsed U.N. Res. 1199, which approves the possible use of force against Yugoslavia for its continued repression of Kosovo.

In February 1999 the three candidate states unveiled new military-civilian air navigation networks, a key part of NATO military infrastructure that assists in the control and tracking of air traffic. The state-of-the-art technologies replaced dated Warsaw Pact systems.

**Poland.** Poland's defense budget stands at approximately 2.8% of GDP, above the average (2.1%; the U.S. percentage is approximately 3.8%) for NATO members. Poland intends to increase its defense budget to 3% of GDP in order to bring its military closer to NATO standards. The country continues a Warsaw Pact practice of having a top-heavy officer corps, but intends to cut personnel in order to streamline its forces. Some U.S. officers believe that Poland spends too much money preserving outmoded facilities and insufficient amounts on training and modern equipment. Deputy Defense Minister Korkoszka has said that Poland must "obtain combat aircraft, ground-to-air, sea-to-sea, and air-to-air missiles, submarines, and certain types of artillery." Poland's governing elite and population strongly support entry into NATO. Poland's economy continues to expand, and is expected to grow in 1999 at 5.1%, after a 1998 GDP growth rate of 5.2%. Its western economic orientation continues: in 1998, 64% of its exports have gone to the EU, and only 8% to Russia.

The Polish government endorsed NATO's decision to launch a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia on March 24, 1999. It has sent a force of 140 men to Albania to guard NATO commanders, and has agreed to take Kosovar refugees.

**Hungary.** On Nov. 16, 1997, with a relatively low turnout of 49%, the Hungarians endorsed NATO membership through a referendum; 85% of those voting cast ballots supporting membership. Hungary's political elite strongly supports membership. Hungary's defense spending had been declining, reaching 1.5% of GDP in 1996. It now stands at 1.8% of GDP. U.S. officers give Hungary high marks for assistance provided at the military base in Tazsar, which the United States leases for some of its operations in Bosnia. Hungary's armed forces are restructuring, with an all-volunteer force of 50,000 (down from 140,000 in the Warsaw Pact era) as the government's goal. Hungary's top-heavy general staff has already been sharply trimmed, and a more decentralized command system with a cadre of career NCOs on the NATO model is being developed. Its air force is small and in need of modernization, but the government is following NATO recommendations and

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<sup>15</sup>CRS. *NATO Prospective Members: Military Modernization*, by (name redacted). CRS Report 98-154. Updated Feb. 24, 1998.

concentrating first upon acquisition of modern radar and communications equipment. In July 1998, the center-right coalition of Victor Orban came to power and said that during its tenure it is unlikely to purchase high-performance aircraft.

The conflict over Kosovo has presented difficult problems for the Hungarian government. Hungary is the only NATO member that borders Yugoslavia; its relatively flat border intersection with Yugoslavia makes it an obvious route for a possible invasion of Yugoslavia, should NATO decide upon that course. At the same time, approximately 300,000 ethnic Hungarians live in Vojvodina, the northern part of Yugoslavia. It is possible that an imminent ground invasion would see Serb violence against the Hungarian minority in an effort to drive out an element of the population that Yugoslav President Slobdan Milosevic may believe has divided loyalties. For that reason, the Hungarian government's interest has been to ensure calm in Vojvodina. A majority of the Hungarian population, as of late May 1999, opposes NATO's air campaign. Hungary has urged its NATO allies not to bomb targets in northern Yugoslavia, but NATO warplanes have repeatedly struck the region, especially a strategically important railhead and military site near the town of Sombor. The Hungarian government has agreed to allow NATO aircraft to undertake missions from its airfields, but the Hungarian foreign minister said on April 29, 1999 that "for now and forever" his government would not allow a ground offensive to begin on Hungarian soil.

**Czech Republic.** On July 17, 1998, Milos Zeman, a Social Democrat, was appointed prime minister of a minority government, dependent for its survival upon support in parliament from the defeated Civic Democrats (ODS). The Social Democrats support Czech membership in NATO. The previous government, which also supported NATO membership, did little to promote it publicly, in part due to the expected expense of membership and controversy over increased defense expenditures. The Czech military, in the early stages of modernization, remains unpopular among the citizenry due to its legacy of repression during the Cold War; additional defense expenditures are therefore unpopular. The Czech defense budget is 1.8% of GDP. The government has pledged to reach a figure of 2% in 2000. The Czech Republic has 60,000 men in its armed forces; much of the top-heavy, Warsaw-Pact trained officer corps has been pared. Some U.S. officials have criticized the Czech Republic's efforts to modernize and re-train its forces.

The Czech political elite strongly supports entry into NATO. Opinion polls indicate that popular support is unsteady, but rising. A USIA poll of October 1997 found that 59% of the population support NATO membership; however, Czech polls of the same month variously indicated that support stood at figures from 35% to 47%. A Czech poll of February 1998, like the October 1997 poll, found that 59% of those responding support NATO membership. Polls are conducted by telephone; the legacy of the Cold War era may make respondents reluctant to express an opinion, thereby causing different results in each poll. The Czech population has had negative experiences with alliances during this century: Czechoslovakia's allies in the 1930s failed to come to its defense in the face of German aggression; the Russian-led Warsaw Pact imposed a harsh authoritarian regime. For these reasons, many Czechs continue to distrust their military and military organizations in general. At the same time, the Czech Republic has a highly educated population clearly dedicated to

democratic ideals. Some observers expect public opinion to embrace NATO membership more firmly as the debate in the country progresses.

The Czech governing elite has given mixed messages over the conflict in Kosovo. President Havel has strongly supported the NATO air campaign. In contrast, Prime Minister Zeman initially distanced himself from NATO's decision to go to war, saying that the decision was made before the Czech Republic joined NATO on March 12, 1999. In fact, NATO made a final decision on March 23. The government has since begun publicly to support the NATO air campaign. It allows U.S. KC-135 (refuelling aircraft) to use its airfields, and NATO men and equipment to transit Czech territory. The Czech Army has sent a field hospital to Macedonia.

## **Russia**

Russia describes potential NATO expansion as a threat to its well-being.<sup>16</sup> Russian officials frequently note that invasions by European powers of Russian territory since the 18th century have come across the Polish plain. On Oct. 25, 1996, the Duma passed a resolution opposing enlargement by a vote of 307-0. Russian officials contend that the "Two plus Four Treaty" of 1991 uniting Germany prohibits the expansion of NATO beyond eastern Germany. The Treaty does not in fact contain such language, nor imply such an agreement. However, Jack Matlock, ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1991, stated that the United States made a verbal, but legally non-binding, commitment not to enlarge the alliance at the Two plus Four talks.

The collapse of the Russian economy has reduced Russia's weight in international affairs. Some observers express concern that political instability in Russia could lead to less central control over nuclear weapons, or efforts by some republics to gain independence, preparing the ground for a more authoritarian, nationalist leader. Sharp disagreements with NATO over the conflict in Kosovo have also adversely affected relations. Russian officials contend that NATO is acting outside the auspices of international law by attacking Yugoslavia over what Moscow views as issues having to do with Yugoslav sovereignty. NATO has sought to use Russia as an intermediary with Belgrade, but NATO's objectives and Russia's objectives for resolution of the Kosovo conflict remain different on key points.

**The Founding Act.** On September 6, 1996, former Secretary Christopher endorsed a French plan for negotiating a "charter" between NATO and Russia. NATO and Russia signed the document, to be called "the Founding Act," on May 27, 1997, in Paris. The Founding Act touches upon several issues addressed in the European Security Act. H.R. 1757 requires that no commitments be made to Russia concerning nuclear and conventional forces that would place new member states in a category different from that of current members. The Founding Act restates a current NATO position that the alliance has "no intention, no plan, and no reason" in the foreseeable future to station nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons storage sites on new members' soil, but it does not preclude NATO from doing so should the need

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<sup>16</sup>CRS. *NATO Enlargement and Russia*, by (name redacted). CRS Report 97-477. Updated April 14, 1998.

arise. In addition, the Founding Act states that NATO may maintain military infrastructure on the soil of new members “adequate” to assure their protection under Article V of the NATO Treaty. NATO pledges “in the current and foreseeable security environment” not to station “substantial combat forces” on new members’ territory, but at the same time underscores the intention to increase interoperability, integration, and reinforcement capabilities with the new member states.<sup>17</sup>

The European Security Act states that the Administration must not give any state or international organization a veto or right of review in NATO decisionmaking. The Founding Act establishes a Permanent Joint Council between NATO and Russia to undertake consultations on matters of mutual interest, such as peacekeeping, nuclear and biological weapons proliferation, terrorism, and drugs, but states that “the consultations will not extend to internal matters of either NATO, NATO members states, or Russia... .” At the April 1997 Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, Secretary of State Albright told Senator McCain that the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council would not be a decision-making forum, and that Russia would have no influence over issues such as NATO’s defense posture. He asked whether Moscow would be obligated to discuss in the Council such issues as Russia’s evolving union with Belarus, its policies towards the Baltic states, or the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces in the Caucasus. Secretary Albright responded that such issues are discussed bilaterally with Moscow, and would not be addressed in the Council.

With some exceptions, the Permanent Joint Council has met monthly since September 1997. NATO has sought a narrow agenda, Russia a broader one. For example, Russian officials have complained that they had not been adequately consulted over SFOR’s decision in Bosnia to pursue war criminals, and that such pursuit went beyond SFOR’s mandate.

## **Defense Capabilities**

Earlier legislation, such as the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act, encouraged the Administration to transfer “advanced fighter aircraft” and other weapons systems to frontline candidate states for membership. Poland and the Czech Republic have had discussions with the Department of State about acquiring small numbers (reportedly, less than a dozen) of F-16s and/or F-18s, which are high-performance combat aircraft. The presence of representatives of U.S. companies that build such aircraft in the 3 candidate states has become an issue in central Europe, where some officials and some citizens have complained of pressure to purchase such systems. Secretary Cohen said on October 9, 1997, that the three countries should concentrate on making their militaries interoperable with NATO militaries and training their forces to NATO standards, and that purchase of high-performance aircraft should be postponed for the “foreseeable future.”

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<sup>17</sup>*Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation*. Brussels. NATO Press Office. May 27, 1997.

## Conclusion

A continued course by these states of democratic practices could allay some Russian concerns that NATO seeks to build an aggressive defense alliance near its borders. In contrast, ethnic violence and economic dislocation in central Europe would raise tensions with Russia and further the cause of those in Russia who believe that Moscow must play a major, perhaps decisive role in determining the future of the region. The outcome of the Kosovo conflict may affect the future course of expansion. The United States is bearing the brunt of the military effort there. It is possible that issues such as burdensharing and the need for the European allies to develop more mobile forces to fight in out-of-area engagements will push enlargement off the near-term agenda. At the same time, an opposing sentiment may emerge that ethnic conflicts, such as the one in Kosovo, underscore the need for alliance expansion to accelerate the development of stability.

NATO expansion would most likely enhance security in Europe if it occurred in a period when the conditions that led to the Article V commitment to mutual defense had receded, and minimal criteria for improvements in central and eastern Europe's defense posture were required. Politically, the mission of collective defense co-exists uneasily with NATO's intention to expand to the east, which Russia does not perceive as a defensive initiative. The Russian political elite continues to view enlargement as an encroachment on Russia's traditional sphere of influence. In contrast, supporters of enlargement stress NATO's posture as a defensive alliance, and underscore the right of candidate states to seek membership in political and security institutions that enhance prospects for international stability.

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