

PREPARED STATEMENT
FOR
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
HEARING ON
NATO ENLARGEMENT
APRIL 3, 2003
by
Jeffrey Simon*
Senior Research Fellow
Institute for National Strategic Studies
National Defense University

NATO, the core institution defining the transatlantic relationship, stands at a crossroad. Now that the Alliance's 21-22 November 2002 Prague Summit has passed into history, NATO will need to focus on implementing its decisions that include the adoption of transformed command arrangements, a NATO Response Force (NRF), a Capabilities Commitment to deal with post-September 11th security challenges, and substantial enlargement of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) to 26 members in 2004. The "new" NATO will be a very different organization from what it has been. On balance, integration of the seven new members on NATO will make a modest but generally quite positive contribution to this transformation of transatlantic security affairs.

The European Union (EU)'s decision at Copenhagen on 12-13 December 2002 to enlarge from 15 members today to 25 by mid-2004 will similarly challenge and transform that organization. In 2004 eight of NATO's new members (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia, and Slovenia) also will be in a "new" EU.

The dual (NATO and EU) enlargement will further reduce the "variable geometry" that has existed between the two institutions in Europe and result in "mingling EU and NATO cultures" with unknown, but potentially significant consequences. However, the EU's eight new NATO members, who have recent historical memory of Soviet domination, joined the Alliance because they see it as the best vehicle to guarantee their security and defense concerns and strongly support the active U.S. political and military engagement on the continent that NATO helps assure. For these reasons, one hopes and expects that they will exert their influence to support greater EU-NATO cooperation on security and defense issues, and therefore have beneficial effects on both institutions by helping to bridge the transatlantic gap.

* The opinions expressed or implied in this paper are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the INSS, the National Defense University, the Department of Defense, or any other governmental agency.

The United States' military "footprint" is also likely to change in Europe not just by thinning of its presence in Germany, but also by acquiring a "new presence" and shifting in the direction of Europe's east and southeast. If the U.S. and Europe are to be successful in working together, a new EU-NATO institutional relationship will be needed, in part, due to the overlapping responsibilities that have become evident with NATO's involvement in western Balkan international border security. Additionally, both sides of the Atlantic need to work to ensure that the EU ESDP and emerging European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) are complementary and does not become competitive.

This is particularly important now since the EU on 31 March 2003 has assumed responsibility for NATO's "Operation Allied Harmony" in Macedonia and would be more so if the EU were to assume leadership of a follow-on force to NATO's SFOR in Bosnia. After the 2004 dual enlargement, the resulting "variable geometry" of the EU and NATO in the Balkans could likely have security repercussions there. Hence, there will be a greater need to maintain NATO for defense and reassurance and in deepening cooperation between the two institutions.

Why NATO Enlargement?

NATO during the Cold War (1949-1991) maintained a consensus on the USSR/Warsaw Pact threat as defined in Military Committee 161 threat assessments. While we knew our opponent's capabilities, we did not know his intent. Defense of Europe remained a central U.S. priority as embedded in NATO's MC14/3 "flexible response." Hence, when NATO enlarged during this period it was for the purpose of defense. In the midst of the Korean War, Greece and Turkey were added in 1952 to contain the USSR, the Federal Republic of Germany with its newly created *Bundeswehr* in 1955, and Spain in 1982 for strategic depth.

The post-Cold War (1991- September 11, 2001) period was marked by the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact and with their eclipse, the perception of common threat. When NATO enlarged it was for enhancing stability and security. The July 1990 London Summit stressed openness to cooperation and willingness to break down former dividing lines in Europe. The November 1991 Rome Summit deepened this cooperation and created the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), and the January 1994 Brussels Summit clarified the Alliance's openness to enlargement (Article 10) and launched Partnership For Peace (PFP). When invitations were extended at the Madrid Summit in July 1997, and Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined on 12 March 1999, enlargement was justified as incorporating "producers" of (political, economic, social, and military) security as defined in the September 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement*.

What lessons should we have learned from the 1999 enlargement?

- First, the three new allies found integration to be a more difficult and long-term process than they anticipated. Promised Target Force Goals and defense commitments had to be renegotiated, extended, or changed.
- Second, the Alliance had to alter its expectations in terms of performance and found it more difficult to gain compliance once the new allies were members.

- Third, we assumed that upon “graduation” to becoming a full member, they could stand on their own feet. They were excluded from many programs that had been put into place to help prepare them become the allies they wanted to become, and that we wanted them to become. In the end, we might conclude that the overall enlargement was “successful,” though to date Hungary’s performance has not been as satisfactory as that of Poland and the Czech Republic.

The events of 11 September 2001 changed our perception of threat *and* the criteria for extending NATO invitations. Although the 1994 Brussels Summit issued a declaration "to intensify our efforts against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery" and the 1999 Strategic Concept referred to terrorism in an Article 4 context, terrorism remained in the background during the post-Cold War period. But when NATO invoked Article 5 on 12 September 2001, the issue was raised to the forefront of NATO's post-Cold War agenda and the divergence in transatlantic risk assessments became more apparent.

Clearly the United States perception of risk *has* changed, and the huge increase in defense expenditures reflects this. Although European NATO allies invoked Article 5 and *some* have provided defense assistance in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan and to Operation Iraqi Freedom, risk assessments remain diverse, especially when searching for any increases in defense expenditures. In a total reversal from the Cold War, where we knew our opponent’s capabilities but not his intent, in the war on terrorism we know our opponent’s *intent*, but not his capabilities. While NATO remains a “defensive” Alliance, the U.S. war on terrorism requires “offensive” operations (e.g., pre-emption) often far beyond the territories of NATO members. This mentality shift strains the transatlantic relationship, particularly for those European allies who do not share the same perception of risk and had come to see NATO’s main role as providing reassurance and stability, rather than in defending Europe.

If 11 September had *not* occurred, it is likely that the Prague invitation list would have been smaller. The Prague Summit invited seven Membership Action Plan (MAP) partners from the Baltic to Black Sea to join the Alliance because we believe they share common values and perception of risk. Will enlarging the NAC to include 26 members sharing common values and interests be sufficient to help NATO to deal with these risks or will enlargement only make them worse?

The seven new members’ physical and institutional capacities are substantially *weaker* than Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, whose performance as allies has been “mixed,” though can be judged as successful. However, some of their demonstrated deficiencies suggest “lessons” for us as we pursue the integration of NATO’s seven new 2004 allies. Certainly, the MAP introduced at the April 1999 Washington Summit has witnessed the evolution of a defense reform process that should ease some post-accession challenges for the new invitees, but their weaker capacities suggest the need for greater patience and further assistance as they prepare to assume the obligations of full membership.

The 2002 Prague Summit's invitees have substantially weaker capabilities than NATO's three new 1999 members (Poland with a population of 38 million, and Hungary and the Czech Republic with 10 million) because they are smaller and have less developed institutional capacities. Each of the seven invitees has significant strengths *and* deficiencies, and in light of their support after September 11, 2001, it was more difficult to make "credible" distinctions among the seven. They were clearly "more viable" than Albania and Macedonia whose fundamentals of statehood have been in question and who have been "consuming" NATO's security and defense resources, and Croatia, who had just joined the MAP in 2002 and is only beginning its reform. Omitting any of the seven invitees would have raised credibility issues because the "strengths" of any excluded partner would have been weighed against the "weaknesses" of the invited. An invitation list of seven made credible NATO's Article 10 commitment to openness and prevented "drawing lines" in Europe.

Dual Enlargement and the Changing U.S. Military "Footprint"

With the challenge of the war on terrorism, the Prague Summit Declaration has addressed the question of what capabilities it needs by creating a "NATO Response Force (NRF) consisting of a technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land, sea, and air elements...[with] full operational capability by October 2006. The NRF and EU Headline Goal should be mutually reinforcing while respecting the autonomy of both organizations." It approved the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) as part of an effort to create minimal necessary capabilities to deal with a high threat environment. Individual allies have made firm commitments to improve capabilities in the areas of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBNR); intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition; air-to-ground surveillance; C3; combat effectiveness; strategic air and sea lift; air-to-air refueling; and deployable combat support and combat service support elements.

The PCC and NRF will allow NATO's new European allies to operate with U.S. forces through the entire conflict spectrum. For some allies, their contribution would consist of small *niche* units (e.g., police, engineering, de-mining, chemical decontamination, alpine, and special forces) with secure communications, ample readines s, and capable of deployment. The NRF is to comprise up to about 21,000 personnel including land, sea, and air components capable of being deployed within 3-30 days of a NAC decision and conduct operations for up to 30 days. On the positive side, it provides NATO's new small allies with the theoretical capacity to focus on *niche* specialization as a way to "extend" national and multi-national capabilities and "fill" (not close) the gap.

The 2004 dual enlargement coupled with the likelihood of a changing U.S. military "footprint" in Europe will likely influence the course and evolution of the "new" NATO, "new" EU, and (Northeast, Southeast, and Central) European security.

Baltics. After the three Baltic States enter NATO and the EU (with Poland) in 2004, there will be greater institutional geometric congruence in Europe's northeast quadrant. If the U.S. military footprint shifts from Germany to include Poland, it should likely have a substantial impact on Baltic political and military cooperation (e.g., on the future of the

North-East Corps and Baltic Brigade—BALTBRIGADE). The three Baltic MAP partners—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (with respective populations of 1.5, 2.55, and 3.6 million) are very small, have real defense interests arising from lingering concerns about Russia, have been willing to support the U.S. and NATO farther afield, and are likely to seriously focus on developing NATO *niche* defense capabilities with the U.S. and Poland.

Romania and Bulgaria. Europe's southeast quadrant will witness greater institutional "variable geometry" with the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into NATO in 2004, because of their delayed 2007 EU accession schedule. If the U.S. military footprint moves toward Romania (and Bulgaria), it likely will have a substantial impact on Balkan political and military cooperation particularly since the EU has just assumed responsibility for the Macedonia operation and has expressed its willingness to take over the Bosnia operation after the SFOR mandate ends. It could also influence the evolution of the Southeast European Brigade--SEEBRIG. Romania and Bulgaria, the two Balkan invitees, are relatively large (with respective populations of 21 and 7.9 million), and have provided substantial military support during Kosovo, Afghanistan, the war on terrorism, and now Iraq. Their NATO membership strengthens their governments by undermining the agendas of domestic nationalists and populists and contributes to southeast European stability and security.

Why Slovakia and Slovenia?

The Committee has asked me to focus my remarks on Slovakia and Slovenia, the two Prague and Copenhagen invitees, in Europe's center. Both provide a land bridge of diminishing importance to NATO's "island" of Hungary and, for different reasons, have traditionally registered stronger support for the EU and lower public support for NATO. Indeed, had the 20-21 September 2002 elections in Slovakia or 23 March 2003 referendum in Slovenia gone differently, I would not be defending their ratification today.

Slovakia, a country of 5.5 million population, started later than the other MAP invitees in that it only acquired independent statehood after the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic's "Velvet divorce" on 1 January 1993 and had to build its defense establishment from scratch while having to cut its inherited Warsaw Pact armed forces. It also had the disadvantage of Vladimir Meciar's tumultuous rule that had a disruptive impact on the Slovak public's understanding of NATO membership obligations and benefits. The two failed NATO referenda during Meciar's rule on 23-24 May 1997 and 19 April 1998 contributed to Slovak confusion by asking if they wanted nuclear weapons and foreign troops deployed on their soil, rather than informing and educating the populace. Indeed, Slovakia would not likely have received an invitation *if* Meciar had returned to power in the recent September 2002 elections.

Slovakia has made substantial progress in overcoming these early problems. First, the Mikulas Dzurinda (1998-2002) government launched a significant NATO educational campaign that did raise public awareness of, and support for NATO. Although public support for NATO has recently eroded (as in many NATO countries) in the build-up to

the Iraq war, the Slovak government has fully supported the war on terrorism, has provided overflight and transit rights to Afghanistan and sent an engineering unit to ISAF in Kabul, and publicly supported the U.S. in Iraq. In fact, at the moment 69 Slovak soldiers are in Kuwait as part of the Czech Chemical unit participating in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Second, the U.S. has provided Slovakia with a defense assessment in 2000 that provides much of the conceptual basis for their defense reform, and ever since Slovakia has been implementing its Army Model 2010 program. Though Slovakia is experiencing many of the “normal” problems associated with such a complex endeavor, their strategy is realistic. With a total force structure of 30,000 (14,200 professionals and 15,800 12-month conscripts) in 2003, Slovakia is doing well in implementing a Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) on a government-wide basis, maintaining defense expenditures at 1.9 percent of GDP since 2002, meeting recruitment objectives to build an all-volunteer army of 20,000 by 2007, and planning a NATO *niche* capability.

One over the horizon concern has to do with the possibility of a NATO referendum. The political opposition is attempting to gather the necessary 350,000 signatures to hold a referendum that could become problematic in light of depressed public support for NATO. Though possible, the probability remains low.

Slovenia is a small country with a population of roughly two million. Though starting from a very weak position regarding its low public support and limited physical capacity to integrate with NATO, it has made substantial progress of late. First, Slovenia’s popular support for NATO has been perennially weak. Their 23 March 2003 referendum that resulted in a vote of 66 percent support for NATO (89.6 percent voted for the EU) pleased and relieved many who had concerns that Slovenia’s low public support might result in a negative vote. Why did this occur? Some have speculated that the recent split within NATO over Iraq may have confirmed for Slovenes that other NATO members have a voice on security and defense matters. Also the 12 March 2003 assassination of Zoran Djindjic in Serbia and Montenegro may have reminded many Slovenes that they live in an unstable region and being a member of NATO provides some benefits. But whatever the reasons, the referendum has put to rest earlier concerns that the government had not been doing enough to convince its public to support NATO.

Second, Slovenia has a stable political and economic environment that some of the other NATO invitees do *not* enjoy. It has been active in the Partnership for Peace (PFP) and MAP and has put most of the necessary NATO membership legislation in place. The U.S. has also provided Slovenia with a defense assessment in 2000 and ever since Slovenia has been implementing its army reform program. With a total force structure of 7,800 (4,640 professionals and 3,160 7-month conscripts) in 2003, Slovenia is striving to build an all-volunteer force by the end of 2004 with plans for 7,800 professionals by 2008. Former DSACEUR General Mackenzie has helped engender greater realism in Slovene defense planning (e.g., total wartime strength plans have been reduced from 73,000 to 43,000 to 26,000, and should be 14,000—8,000 professionals and 6,000 wartime reservists in 2010), but they still have a way to go. The Slovene objective to provide a

battalion to “the full range of alliance missions” by the end of 2004 is probably unrealistic. While the 2003 defense budget of 1.61 percent of GDP is to increase to 2.0 percent by 2008, with low social support, potential economic constraints, and less NATO leverage after they join, this goal (as we have seen in Hungary) may not come to fruition.

Third, Slovenia has provided assistance in Afghanistan by providing weapons to the Afghan National Army and managing the de-mining fund, but has evinced hesitation on Iraq. Prime Minister Anton Rok wanted a UN resolution before commencement of operations in Iraq and criticized Foreign Minister Rupel for signing the V-10 declaration in February. Germany has substantial influence due to the fact that it was first to recognize Slovenia’s independence in January 1992 and remains Slovenia’s largest trading partner. Despite Slovenia’s position on Iraq, on 15 January 2003 Slovenia added a company of roughly 100 troops to Bosnia’s Sector North to the two platoons of Military Police and the medical unit that it maintains in Sarajevo.

Fourth, and perhaps the most important reason for Slovenia’s ratification is that its accession to NATO (and EU) provides a symbolic segue for the former Yugoslavia to euro-Atlantic institutions. In this way, Slovenia’s accession contributes to stability and security in Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Macedonia (and non-Former Republic of Yugoslavia, Albania), who remain quite distant from both institutions.

After NATO Ratification and Accession

In closing, I believe that seven new members will make modest contributions to Alliance defense, provide valuable political and strategic support to the United States in the advancement of our interests in Europe and more globally, and help bridge the transatlantic gap. I support ratification of the seven Prague invitees, but based upon lowered, more sober and realistic expectations.

First, we need to recognize that NATO’s seven new allies are smaller and have weaker military and institutional capacities. The 1999 NATO members, who are generally much larger, have found it very difficult to fill civilian and military staff positions at NATO, even four years after accession. NATO’s seven new members will find this task particularly challenging and continued support will be necessary. For this reason, we should *not* repeat the mistakes that we made in 1999 when we terminated eligibility for many U.S. programs under the assumption that the new allies could stand on their own feet. Hence, we should think about extending the eligibility of new NATO members for some programs (e.g., such as Warsaw Initiative Funds).

Second, since lessons of the 1999 enlargement suggest that once in NATO most leverage is lost, we need to ensure necessary adherence to the completion of reforms *after* actual accession. We need to prevent repeating the past experience of promises made by aspirants before accession on defense budgets and force goals then remained unfulfilled after becoming members. Most of the new NATO allies (except Romania) will become ineligible for FMF because they have not signed Article 98 of the ICC. Since the U.S. has extended waivers to many old NATO allies, we might review and consider the possible

granting of waivers to the new allies on a case-by-case basis linking assistance to performance.

Third, NATO's new members have found it very difficult to finance their military participation in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. All new members have had to finance their operations abroad by either increasing defense budgets, postponing modernization, increasing debt, and/or borrowing funds by floating government bonds. Among the "lessons learned" by the three new 1999 NATO members were that: (1) the process of developing capabilities involved "severe bumps," (2) NATO did *not* increase common support funds; (3) and the anticipated "savings" from cutting armed forces did *not* materialize for modernization. (This third factor is only relevant to Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia, and not the three Baltic states and Slovenia who had to build armed forces from scratch). These "lessons" have relevance to NATO's seven new members, who have different capacities to develop *niche* capabilities. Since the U.S. has already performed defense assessments for all MAP partners, after accession we should focus on the means to assist the new NATO members, based upon performance, in developing *niche* capabilities and encourage the eight new NATO members in the EU to forge cooperative links between the NRF and ERRF.

In summary, this round of enlargement can be successful and contribute to a revitalized NATO if we recognize that the new allies are smaller and have weaker capacities, that we continue certain U.S. programs on a case-by-case basis in tandem with progress on meeting NATO commitments, and are successful in improving EU and NATO cooperation.