
LEGISLATION AND POLICY

U.S. Hopes for NATO's European Security Role

By

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Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the security situation in the world generally, and Europe in particular, although far from perfect, is vastly better and much safer for the people both of Europe and the United States. But if the end of the Cold War means that European security is on better footing than for generations before, the crisis in Bosnia shows that it is far from assured. And it is certainly more complex.

The challenge we face is to build a security system for Europe that will:

- Maintain U.S. engagement;
- Respond to growing European integration;
- Make the newly free nations part of the European security system; and
- Ensure that Russia will play a constructive role commensurate with its importance and weight in European affairs. In all these aspects, NATO takes a central part.

To achieve the goal of a secure, free world, the U.S. must stay engaged—and it must stay strong. Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of Europe.

The United States commitment to the trans-Atlantic alliance is bedrock U.S. security policy. We maintain about 100,000 troops in Europe. We make continued heavy investment in lift, power projection, forward presence and technology, and in the forces and capabilities that enable us both to meet our present responsibilities and to hedge against the possibility of a revived first-class threat. There is also a political dimension to this engagement. We stay fully involved in European security issues.

We maintain this commitment to Europe not as an act of altruism, but because the security of Europe is vital to the security of the United States. We learned, painfully, in Bosnia that serious threats to peace and security in Europe threaten our own interests, not just Europe's. Our common adversary has vanished, but we know that our common dangers have not—and surely our common interests survive.

The key instrument for our security engagement in Europe is NATO. NATO is the only effective, continuing multilateral military alliance in the world. It has risen to the challenge of providing a critical instrument to promote peace in Bosnia. The best evidence of NATO's continuing relevance is the eagerness of many countries to join it—and the determination of its current members to keep it strong.

But because the world has changed, NATO must change as well. That process has long since begun. NATO has a new post-Cold War strategic concept. NATO nuclear forces are a small fraction of their former size. Troop levels are down. Increasingly, forces are oriented toward new missions. And of course NATO has, in Bosnia, taken on its first-ever real military operation.

Important new opportunities for NATO to carry this process forward exist now because France has opened the door to a fundamental change in its relationship to the alliance. France's new approach is based on a recognition—that we all share—that there can be no stable or workable system of European security separate from the trans-Atlantic NATO Alliance. After the Berlin NAC [North Atlantic Council] meetings, President [Jacques] Chirac said that “France is ready to take its full place in this new alliance, once the Berlin NAC decisions have been implemented.”

But the need for change in NATO arises from broader causes than just France's highly welcome new approach. NATO must grow and develop so as to be able to allow North American and European allies—a group that will increase in number in the coming years—to work together on challenges that will be different from the traditional Cold War defense mission of meeting direct military attack on the territory of member states. Of course, NATO must retain its ability to meet that core task. But meeting the new kinds of challenge—all 16 North American and European members together and indeed, enlisting other European and non-European states, as we have done in Bosnia—is the task on which NATO adaptation must chiefly focus.

We do, however, need NATO command structures, forces, and communication and mobility support for more flexible employment of NATO assets. The time has come to streamline and modernize NATO, recognizing that our challenge is no longer simply to execute a known plan with already designated forces, as it was during the Cold War.

In response to this need, the U.S. came up with the concept—actually originated by Gen. Shalikashvili [Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff] when he was SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander, Europe]—of the Combined Joint Task Force. CJTFs will allow NATO assets to be used more flexibly and especially in operations outside traditional patterns involving different mixes of contributors. CJTFs will likely provide the mechanism for the most probable NATO contingency operations.

CJTF is by no means only a device for distinctively European-led operations. The U.S. would expect to be fully involved in such CJTF operations—and these may well include nonmembers of NATO. The CJTF device would, for example, be particularly useful for future operations similar to the Bosnia IFOR [Implementation Force]—indeed, in a sense the IFOR operation has many of the characteristics of a CJTF.

It bears emphasis that the goal of NATO adaptation is to allow all allies to work together more effectively, not to find a way for Europe to manage without the U.S. The U.S. will remain fully engaged in European security issues, so neither politically nor militarily is there any question of Europe needing to prepare for a U.S. withdrawal from Europe. Indeed, it is overwhelming[ly] likely that in any situation where involvement of military forces is justified and where NATO is prepared to authorize a military operation, the U.S. will be part of the operation. That is one of the lessons of Bosnia.

That said, the U.S. recognizes—and indeed welcomes—that with greater European integration generally, there will increasingly be a common European foreign and defense policy and a desire for a European defense identity within NATO.

The message of the Berlin foreign ministers' meetings and the Brussels NAC-D [North Atlantic Council defense ministers'] meetings just completed is that NATO will adjust its

military structure to accommodate the possibility of WEU [Western European Union]-led operations using NATO assets. These adjustments should be in accordance with the following principles:

- WEU-led operations are possible, so they and the forces, support, command arrangements and operational concepts they would require must be planned for by NATO.
- Such operations would be under distinctively European command and would normally look to the WEU for general political guidance.
- NATO assets (including equipment, planning, training, experience and staffs) should be able to be made available for such operations, with NAC approval and appropriate continuing oversight of the use of those assets.
- It follows that in the future, part of NATO's peacetime responsibilities must include preparing for such assistance, in planning, exercises, training and staffing, for WEU-led operations.

All of this should be done within the alliance and within its military command structure, not as a separate (including de facto separate), parallel structure or by elements that are "European only, American clean."

It is essential from the U.S. point of view not to foster a bifurcated NATO, in which, de facto if not explicitly, there are two systems, one for the U.S. and Article 5, and one for Europe and non-Article 5 operations. This implies the double-hatting of personnel and structures, i.e., that certain NATO personnel and structures will have additional responsibilities and functions related to WEU-led operations, as well as related to NATO-led operations.

On all these points there is broad consensus within the alliance, emphatically including France. The work on operationalizing these principles will be completed for further action at the next set of ministerial meetings at the end of 1996.

We are embarked on a major effort—the output of which will be nothing less than a new NATO, geared to meet tomorrow's challenges, on a unified basis, respecting both European and U.S. concerns, and strengthening, not weakening, the transatlantic link.

A further key parameter of NATO adaptation is the need for the modified structure to be prepared for the job of accommodating new members.

NATO enlargement will happen because it is a necessary part of projecting stability to the new democracies of Europe. It is important to note that NATO enlargement should not be seen merely in relation to Russia. For there are other fundamental reasons for enlargement:

- Furthering European integration;
- Promoting a multilateral (not a nationalistic) defense concept;
- Providing a context to resolve intra-CEE [Central East European] problems; and
- Solidifying democratic and economic reforms in a trans-Atlantic institution.

The impulse for the desire of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe to join NATO comes from their desire for thorough, permanent inclusion in the broad Atlantic community and for the sense of living in a secure neighborhood that NATO has brought to its current members. They want to be irreversibly part of the West, and we want to help them in this endeavor. The conflict in the Balkans vividly reminded us all of the dangers of not having a stable structure for security in Europe outside NATO's boundaries.

As we continue to move carefully and gradually toward enlargement, we need to continue to adhere to the four principles that have made NATO the strongest, most successful alliance in history.

- First, NATO is an effective military alliance, not a system of paper guarantees. New members will be full members, with full rights and responsibilities. They must be prepared to defend other members of the alliance, and NATO must be prepared to come to the defense of any new member.
- Second, NATO is an alliance of free nations. New members must uphold democracy and market principles, protect freedom and human rights inside their borders and respect the sovereignty of their neighbors. And their military forces must be under effective civilian and constitutional control.
- Third, NATO works by consensus. New NATO members will not be expected, any more than current members are, to agree on everything. But they must respect the history, culture, and traditions of all members. It would serve no one's interest to import instability or border disputes into the alliance. And they must be willing to hammer out a consensus on security matters in a spirit of cooperation.
- And fourth, NATO is a military organization. New members' military forces must be capable of operating effectively with the military forces of current members. This does not mean unsustainable investment in forces and technology, but it does mean being open about defense budgets and plans, accepting NATO military doctrine, and working toward commonality in critical elements, such as communication equipment.

NATO enlargement must avoid the risk that taking in some countries will imply the permanent exclusion of others, thereby either inviting a new division of the Continent or undercutting those who are working for reform in places like Russia, Ukraine and elsewhere. The first new members will not be the last, and security for all, not just NATO members, must be preserved. Therefore, NATO enlargement must not only be inclusive rather than exclusive, it must be accomplished in tandem with developing the broad range of European security institutions, including the EU [European Union], WEU [Western European Union] and OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe]. It will necessarily be a steady, deliberate, and gradual process.

The process is under way. Last fall, a major alliance study and analysis of NATO enlargement was released in Brussels. It is a study not of who would join and when, but of more basic issues of how and why—the necessary preconditions for other decisions.

Let me summarize some key conclusions. NATO will expect of new members:

- That they commit themselves to and follow the basic values and principles of the alliance: democracy, the rule of law and peaceful resolution of disputes.
- They must not close the door behind them. The first new member will not be the last. Enlargement will be a long process, whose scope cannot be determined in advance.
- Militarily: New members must contribute to the common defense. They must be producers and not merely consumers of security for the alliance as a whole. They must accept NATO military doctrine. For the United States, it is a principle that new members must agree to participate fully in the NATO integrated military structure.
- The study also sets forth two very important points about the adjustments in NATO military posture.

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- First, while it is important for NATO's force structure that the allies' forces could be deployed, when and if appropriate, on the territory of new members, the peacetime stationing of other allies' forces on a new member's territory should neither be a precondition of membership nor foreclosed as an option. As with current members, decisions on this would be taken by the alliance and the nation concerned in light of all relevant facts.

The alliance would, of course, reserve the right to dispose forces as necessary in the event of crisis or war. We would certainly expect that troops from other members would frequently be on the territory of any new member for exercises, training and the like.

- Second, the security provided by the NATO agreement, including its nuclear component, will apply fully to new members. There is no a priori requirement for the stationing of nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, and for the foreseeable future, NATO's current nuclear posture will meet the requirements of an enlarged alliance and there would be no need to modify NATO's nuclear posture or policy. However, NATO would, of course, retain the right to modify this posture in the future as circumstances warrant.

Proceeding from these principles, NATO will now go forward with the enlargement process. This year, NATO has entered the second phase of the process by intensive consultations with interested partners to determine what they must do and what NATO must do to prepare for enlargement. Based on the results, NATO will decide on its next steps in December.

NATO has made a commitment to take in new members and it must not and will not keep new democracies in the waiting room forever. We will move forward steadily. NATO enlargement will happen; indeed, it is already happening.

As part of this process, we are taking steps to strengthen the Partnership for Peace as a permanent part of a broad, inclusive security framework for Europe as a whole.

The 27 Partnership for Peace nations are working and training together in military joint exercises. Secretary [of Defense William J.] Perry was recently in Ukraine to open the multilateral exercise Peace Shield '96 in which troops from 11 countries—Ukraine, the U.S., Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria—participated. But the Partnership for Peace is more than just joint exercises. The strongest proof of the practical reality of PfP is the participation by many of its members in the Bosnia operation. PfP is echoing beyond the security realm and into the political and economic realms as well, using security cooperation as a catalyst for political and economic reform.

At Berlin and at the NAC Defense Ministerial, we have outlined steps to make PfP more concrete and effective, such as expanding its areas of emphasis beyond peacekeeping.

For those partner countries that are embracing PfP as a passage to NATO membership, these actions are a key to opening that door. For these countries, the Partnership for Peace is becoming a passage to democracy and market reform and a secure and stable place in the European security system, as well as a passage to membership in the alliance.

But even those countries that do not aspire to NATO membership are realizing many of the same political and security gains from active participation in the PfP. Moreover, PfP is providing them the tools and the opportunities to develop closer ties to NATO, and learn from NATO—even as they choose to remain outside the alliance. In short, by creating the Partnership for Peace, NATO has done more than just building the basis for enlargement. It is, in fact, creating a new zone of security and stability throughout Europe.

For even as some countries join NATO, it will be important to keep the door open for others down the road. We will ensure that PfP continues to provide a place in the security architecture of Europe for those nations that do not aspire to become NATO members and that it remains a viable preparation station for those about to. Far from fading, it will assume even greater importance as the enlargement process goes forward.

Central to the subject of NATO's evolution is Russia. Russia's development, both internal and external, is a critical factor to the future of European security. We all—and I include the Central and Eastern European countries—have an enormous stake in the success of Russia's transition, and we must continue to support Russian reform. We have an unchanged vision of an undivided Europe that includes a free, stable, prosperous, and democratic Russia playing a constructive role in European security.

It follows that one of the most important elements of NATO's evolution and one of the tests of its success will be the successful definition of NATO's future relations with Russia.

NATO and Russia disagree on NATO enlargement. But Russia must understand that NATO will enlarge on its own terms, on a schedule now broadly agreed within the alliance. But to say that is not to imply that NATO enlargement threatens—or sees a threat in—Russia, or is insensitive to Russia's interests or concerns. NATO's basic principles—collective defense, democracy, consensus and cooperative security—are no threat to the Russia of today nor, we trust, of tomorrow. As in the past, NATO will be a threat to no country—Russia or any other—unless that country by its actions chooses to make itself a threat to NATO or its members.

The United States, under President Clinton's leadership, has made building a strong and stable relationship with Russia our highest security priority. As part of that effort, we seek to develop with Russia what Secretary Perry calls a pragmatic partnership. What we mean by that is that we work cooperatively with the Russian government.

Recently, we saw a signal success of that effort as the last of some 4,000 Soviet nuclear warheads left a now-denuclearized Ukraine, to be dismantled in Russia pursuant to a tripartite agreement among Ukraine, Russia, and the United States. Russia itself has made major cuts in its nuclear forces, helped by the Nunn-Lugar CTR [Cooperative Threat Reduction] program.

We also cooperate with the Russian military on a wide range of defense and military contacts, such as joint exercises and frequent exchanges in which our militaries learn from each other—and even more important, learn to know each other. We held four bilateral exercises last year, each a great success, and each conducted in a spirit of trust and goodwill. U.S. and Russian personnel plan to exercise together in at least half a dozen important exercises this year, both in NATO's Partnership for Peace and in bilateral channels.

As part of this effort, we have, with our allies, begun a dialogue with Russia about its role in European security and its relationship with NATO. So far as NATO enlargement is concerned, that means there will be no surprises and Russia will not be isolated. If Russia is willing to join in, NATO will build a relationship with Russia based on mutual respect and on enhanced, regularized consultations.

Ultimately, this would mean a formal relationship of some kind between NATO and Russia, perhaps through a standing consultative group, which Secretary Perry has mentioned. Naturally this relationship will be reciprocal. It will recognize that both NATO and Russia should—and can—consult and consider each other's views and interests without giving the other a veto or a vote in their independent decisions and actions.

Russian participation in IFOR is a positive example of the NATO-Russia relationship. Today, a Russian brigade is operating as part of an American-led NATO multilateral division in northern Bosnia. Its commander, Russian Gen. [Leonty] Shevtsov, is operating under an agreed command relationship with U.S. Gen. [George A.] Joulwan, Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

Secretary Perry devoted great effort to bringing Russia into IFOR not just because of the additional troops Russia brings to Bosnia, but because Russia's participation in Bosnia casts a very long shadow that will have an impact on the security of Europe for years to come.

When we deal with the most important security problem which Europe has faced since the Cold War was over, we want to have Russia inside the circle working with us, not outside the circle. NATO and Russia have a special relationship today in Bosnia, and Russia is demonstrating its capacity to participate in the future security architecture of Europe—as NATO is demonstrating its will to secure that cooperation.

Of course, Russians are skeptical about NATO enlargement. Secretary Perry, who has worked as hard as anyone on improving NATO-Russia relations, has said that the opinions of Russians he has talked to about NATO enlargement range from bitter opposition to profound apprehension. But objectively, as they might once have said, there are reasons Russian interests are served by cooperation on a process that will:

- Keep the United States firmly and fully engaged in European security;
- Ensure that the nations of Europe, including Germany, continue to cooperate as part of an integrated security structure, not pursue independent national security policies;
- Build stability and confidence in Central and Eastern Europe, not the reverse;
- And most important, rather than isolating Russia, allow her to participate fully, on a scale and in a manner commensurate with Russia's inherent might and power in Europe.

To be sure, even Russians who agree with the premise that these are Russia's interests do not often yet agree with the conclusion that NATO's enlargement will advance them. Our task is to work with Russia to gain confidence and recognition of these propositions, but the fact remains that Russia has no veto, and NATO will enlarge on its own terms.

This course that we are seeking for Russia foresees an optimistic outcome and maintains an optimistic outlook. But we are not naive about Russia, and we are acutely conscious of the dangers, of the hard lessons of history. Should Russia turn away from its new path, we can re-evaluate our approach and indeed we would have to do so. An integral part of our pragmatic partnership policy for Russia is that we continue to remain strong so that we have a military hedge against whatever might come.

In any case, we must be realistic about what Russian foreign policy will be under any government. Russia is a great power. It will always have its own unique interests. A partnership between nations—a pragmatic partnership of the kind that Secretary Perry has spoken about—does not mean an identity of views, but a recognition that mutual interests in secure relationships provides a basis for working out concrete problems.

Nor does our support for Russian reform mean we are uncritical of Russian actions inconsistent with our interests. We have made clear our view that when Russian forces operate beyond Russia's borders—or indeed within them—they must do so in accord with international norms. We have also made clear that when Russian actions affect our interests, we will be clear

about our objections to them. This is why we have objected in the strongest possible ways to Russia's plans to provide Iran with nuclear technology.

Obviously, there are great uncertainties about Russia, including the result of the imminent elections. But however the elections turn out, it would be deeply premature to let our real concerns about Russia's future make us abandon our hopes for a fundamentally new Russia, a fundamentally new Europe, and a fundamentally new relationship between the trans-Atlantic alliance and Russia.

This is why, for example, in the United States we are pursuing funding for the Cooperative Threat Reduction program, the Nunn-Lugar program, and why we all need to continue economic aid for reform in Russia. That is why we are willing to adjust the CFE [Conventional Armed Forces in Europe] treaty flanks provisions to meet legitimate Russian concerns, while preserving the treaty's basic principles. It is also why we need to develop our policy on NATO enlargement conscious of, though not subservient to, Russia's concerns.

In all this effort at building a new NATO, the crucible of real action is not the wordsmiths at Brussels or even the planners at Mons [Belgium]. It is in the implementation force in Bosnia. Just as the NATO-Russia relationship is being forged in Bosnia, so too is the future of NATO itself.

It is in Bosnia where all 16 members of NATO, each one making a contribution, are sending the message that NATO is the bedrock on which the future security and stability of Europe will be built. It is in Bosnia that we are demonstrating that NATO can meet new challenges.

It is in Bosnia where NATO is first reaping the benefits of joint peacekeeping training with our new peace partners. It is in Bosnia where future NATO members are showing themselves ready and able to shoulder the burdens of membership. And it is in Bosnia where we are showing that we can work together as partners with Russian forces.

It is in Bosnia that NATO is working also with neutral and other non-European states in an enterprise that affects global security. Bosnia is not an exercise. It is the real thing.

There are many pitfalls to come in Bosnia and many more in NATO's internal adaptation, its reach to the East, and its construction of a stable and positive relationship to Russia. But both in Bosnia and more generally, the task is well begun, and we mean to carry it through.