

## *Chapter 4*

# **NATO From Liaison to Enlargement: A Perspective from the State Department and the National Security Council 1990–1999**

*Stephen J. Flanagan*

### **Introduction**

This chapter offers perspectives on the development of the internal U.S. government debate on NATO's transformation and enlargement and how these initiatives pursued by the George H.W. Bush and Clinton Administrations supported a common strategy to shape a new post-Cold War security order in Europe. It is written from my vantage point as a member and later Associate Director of the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff 1989-1995, National Intelligence Officer for Europe 1995-97, and the Senior Director for Central and Eastern Europe at the National Security Council Staff 1997-99—during accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to the Alliance.

Throughout that period, I was deeply involved in the U.S. government and public debate and Alliance consultations on NATO's future missions and membership. This chapter draws on my recollections from that period, contemporaneous publications and speeches that I authored, and recently declassified government documents that I wrote, as well as the scholarly literature.

My analysis focuses heavily on the earliest debates on NATO's transformation and enlargement within the U.S. government during the George H.W. Bush Administration, which has received less scrutiny by scholars than the period after 1994, which is addressed in several other chapters in this volume.

The record illustrates that the framework for what became the Partnership for Peace (PfP), as well as considerable groundwork for NATO enlargement, was already well developed by the end of the 1992, as the Bush Administration was winding down. When the Clinton Admin-

istration entered office in 1993, the lines of debate that had unfolded quietly during Bush Administration were relitigated, and became more public after 1994. However, the critical questions of whether, why, when, and how NATO should invite any of the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe to join the Alliance were examined by the Bush Administration during 1991-92. This debate was shaped by entreaties from Central and East European leaders as well as concerns in Washington and key West European governments about wider instability in the wake of the Soviet collapse and Yugoslav Civil War.

To be sure, many difficult questions required further, often contentious, internal deliberations, diplomatic engagement, and political-military assessments before NATO would open its door and the successful March 1999 round of enlargement could be completed. Nevertheless, the strategic rationale, political preconditions, and general military requirements of enlargement had been framed by the time the Clinton administration took office. This reflected the broad, bipartisan political support in the United States during the 1990s that welcoming the Central and Eastern European states into the Euro-Atlantic community after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact was the logical culmination of five decades of political support for their freedom, and that it would enhance both Alliance and overall European security.

## **Europe Whole and Free**

Even as the revolutions in Poland, Hungary, and other Central and Eastern European countries were still unfolding, President Bush articulated, in his May 1989 speech in Mainz, Germany, the U.S. policy goal of working with other governments to realize a Europe “whole and free,” which was far from a sure thing. Bush advanced four proposals to heal Europe’s divisions: strengthen and broaden the Helsinki process to promote free elections and political pluralism; end the division of Berlin; pan-European action to address environmental problems; and accelerated negotiations to achieve dramatic reductions in NATO and Warsaw Pact conventional force levels and military capabilities, including a detailed set of specific proposals.<sup>1</sup>

As most of those revolutions were completed, the Bush Administration articulated its strategy for adapting proven Western institutions to

lead and share responsibility in shaping the “architecture” for continued peaceful change. Secretary of State James A. Baker III first outlined the U.S. approach in a December 1989 speech in Berlin. Baker contended that no single institution would be capable on its own of addressing the complex political, economic, and security challenges required to realize a new European order.<sup>2</sup> He argued that NATO remained valuable and could serve “new collective purposes.” He labeled NATO’s first new mission Allied efforts in the ongoing Vienna talks on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) to realize deep reductions in military forces. He said that the Alliance could be a forum for coordination of other elements of engagement with the East. The European Community (EC) could play a vital role in the economic and political development and integration of the Central and Eastern European states. He noted that the United States was committed to building up the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), particularly in the areas of promoting democratic institutions, peaceful resolution of disputes, greater openness in military affairs, respect for human and political rights, and adherence to the rule of law.

During a period when some, including Václav Havel and West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, were calling for dissolution of both Cold War alliances and development of a new, all-European security structure (around the CSCE), the Bush Administration’s planning was animated by the conviction that the new architecture should build on the strong foundations, core principles, and complementary capabilities of NATO, the EC, and CSCE.<sup>3</sup> Administration officials believed this approach was prudent and that trying to establish entirely new structures in a period of rapid change and political uncertainty—including about the scope of the EC’s further integration—was fraught with risk. Moreover, NATO was seen as the most effective institution to guarantee European peace and security, including among its members, and as a hedge against instability or the reversal of political reforms in Central and Eastern Europe and Soviet revanchism. NATO was also central to retaining U.S. influence in Europe.

## **German Unity and NATO Enlargement**

With the opening of travel between East and West Germany and the fall of the Berlin Wall, German unity became the focus and

a critical first step in the Bush Administration's strategy in advancing wider European integration. The administration moved quickly to support the manifest aspirations of the German people for rapid unification despite the strong reservations of other European governments, particularly those involved in the postwar occupation, about the security implications of a unified Germany. Before those three governments would relinquish their postwar rights, they wanted assurances that a reunited Germany with combined military forces would not pose a threat. To address these concerns, the February 1990 Ottawa Open Skies Conference—the first meeting of the 29 members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact since the revolutions of 1989—was repurposed as the United States worked nimbly to fashion the set negotiations that became known as the “2+4 Talks,” involving the two Germans plus the four occupying powers.

A central question in the talks was the status of a unified Germany in NATO. The United States made clear that it supported German integration in NATO, and that while the USSR had no *droit de regard* over this decision in accordance with principles of the Helsinki Final Act, Washington would accomplish this goal through an inclusive dialogue and support measures to assure Moscow this would be achieved in a way that did not threaten the security of the Soviet Union or any other European state.<sup>4</sup> German diplomacy served as an important lubricant in the negotiations with Moscow.<sup>5</sup> Another key factor was close coordination among leaders and senior officials in Washington and key European governments. This negotiation approach would later be cited as a model that could be emulated during the early debates on enlargement during the Clinton Administration.

In the September 1990 Treaty on The Final Settlement on German unity, the two German governments affirmed their commitment not to manufacture or possess nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons and endorsed the declaration of the Federal Republic of Germany in the context of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations to undertake deep reductions in the personnel strength of their combined German armed forces within three to four years. The two governments also agreed that only territorial units not integrated into NATO military structures would be stationed on the territory of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), and that no forces of other states would be stationed or conduct military exercises there un-

til the completion of the withdrawal of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany. The Treaty established that after the Soviet troop withdrawals from the GDR and East Berlin were completed, German forces fully into integrated NATO military structures could be stationed in the territory of the former GDR—without nuclear weapons carriers—but foreign armed forces and nuclear weapons or their delivery systems could not. Finally, the Treaty codified the right of a united Germany to belong to alliances with full rights.<sup>6</sup>

Assertions by Soviet and Russian officials—and some U.S. diplomats—that U.S. and German leaders offered informal assurances during the 2+4 negotiations that NATO would eschew further enlargement remain contentious. These assertions have been roundly refuted by senior U.S. officials involved in the negotiations. Over the last decade scholars have been able to examine the U.S., German, and Soviet archives on this matter. A number of scholars have presented findings that support the statements of U.S. policymakers that NATO enlargement beyond the GDR was not discussed with the Soviets during this period. As Mark Kramer concluded: “Gorbachev did receive numerous assurances during the “2+4” process that helped to sweeten the deal for him, but none of these had anything to do with the enlargement of NATO beyond Germany.”<sup>7</sup> Other analysts contend that U.S. and German officials did have discussions with the Soviets in early February 1990 that could have been interpreted as eschewing expansion beyond the GDR. In particular, Baker told Gorbachev, “there would be no extension of NATO’s jurisdiction or NATO’s forces one inch to the east.”<sup>8</sup> However, this statement was not further elaborated or codified in an agreement, and even Gorbachev admitted it was made in the context of the early phases of negotiations on German unity.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, there was no discussion of NATO enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe in the Bush Administration at that time. The Soviets received financial assistance from Germany and the commitments on military deployments and force levels in the Treaty on the Final Settlement, in exchange for agreeing to a united Germany being a full-fledged member of NATO, but there was no promise to freeze NATO’s borders.<sup>10</sup>

## The Development of Liaison

During 1990, the Bush Administration's European strategy discussions focused on transformation of NATO and relations with the Soviet Union and the post-Communist Central and Eastern European governments with the goal of promoting stability and mutual understanding. While there was a recognition that the Alliance would eventually need to address the interest of many Central and Eastern European states to join NATO, taking a public stance on the issue was assessed to be premature and could risk trouble with Moscow, which still had several hundred thousand troops deployed in the region.

A small interagency planning group began drafting a NATO summit declaration that included several dramatic initiatives including: declaring nuclear weapons as truly "weapons of last resort," eliminating nuclear artillery, proposing a new military strategy, seeking further force reductions in a CFE II, inviting former Warsaw Pact countries to establish missions to NATO, and strengthening CSCE.<sup>11</sup>

At their July 1990 Summit in London, NATO Heads of State and Government endorsed these initiatives as a first step in NATO's post-Cold War transformation. NATO formally extended a "hand of friendship" to the former Warsaw Pact countries, inviting them to form a new relationship with the alliance. The declassified verbatim record of the London Summit reflects that Allied leaders discussed the need to transform NATO for new missions, while retaining its collective defense capabilities. President Bush argued that the most important step in engaging the Soviet Union and the new East European democracies was to invite them to establish permanent liaison missions to NATO. *Liaison* would facilitate an active dialogue and demonstrate that the Alliance had changed and was listening to Eastern security concerns. He noted that this would give the Central and Eastern European countries a channel to NATO and an alternative to a "reformed Warsaw Pact," without alarming the Soviets. He also suggested inviting Gorbachev to a future NATO Summit to help overcome the Soviet image of NATO as an enemy. The leaders also explored how to develop cooperative political and military activities.<sup>12</sup>

## **Initial Stirrings: Moving Beyond Liaison**

The first detailed discussions of NATO enlargement in the U.S. government unfolded during spring and summer of 1991. It was stimulated by several factors. There was growing concern in Washington and Bonn that leaders and the wider public in Central and Eastern European countries were losing hope in the promise of integration in Euro-Atlantic political, economic, and security institutions and that this disappointment might lead to backsliding on implementation of difficult reforms or even the emergence of extreme nationalist political leaders, or the spread of the sectarian violence that was unfolding in Yugoslavia. In addition, the failed August 1991 Soviet coup raised fears of further instability and even revanchism in Moscow. While this abated somewhat in the wake of the collapse of the USSR, Central and Eastern European governments remained anxious to build closer ties with NATO and the EC. EC governments, however, were focused on development of the Union (Maastricht) treaty; Central and Eastern European leaders assessed the prospects of their integration were off in the distant future. The CSCE remained mainly a forum for dialogue on security, and other architectural constructs, such as President Mitterrand's Atlantic to the Urals European Confederation, failed to gain much traction.<sup>13</sup>

In February 1991, the Warsaw Pact's military structure was dissolved by defense and foreign ministers and the last meeting of its Political Consultative Committee was held in Prague the following July, ending any notion that a reformed, or more political pact could provide for Central and Eastern European security.<sup>14</sup>

In March 1991 Václav Havel, then President of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic (CSFR), became the first East Central European leader to address the North Atlantic Council. However, some Allies were reluctant to issue a joint NATO/CSFR statement on basic principles of relations, which appears to have led other Central and Eastern European governments to decide not to push too hard on NATO's door at that time. Allied reluctance also raised concerns in Central and Eastern European capitals that NATO governments were more interested in allaying Soviet concerns than in helping them emerge from the legacy of Communist rule.

The following month Polish President Lech Wałęsa, after a disappointing meeting with the EC seeking economic assistance, lamented that “the Iron Curtain could be replaced by a silver curtain, separating a rich West from a poor East.”<sup>15</sup> Still, some of the Central and Eastern European countries continued to ask the difficult question: if NATO is an alliance of democracies committed to promoting and protecting common values, how long would they have to be democracies before membership became an option?

Allies were pursuing liaison in ways that would avoid any delay of Soviet force withdrawals from the Central and Eastern European countries or undercut Eastern reformers who were arguing for more cooperative security relations with the West. A number of NATO governments were initially reluctant to develop the liaison program beyond information exchanges and increased contacts to practical cooperation and to have any differentiation among countries in the conduct of liaison activities. I argued that this hesitation existed in large measure because Allies had yet to fully consider, or convey to liaison governments, what the long-term objectives and parameters this function should be. In a May 1991 policy planning paper, I presented a range of possibilities from information exchange to limited partnership and even “candidate membership.”<sup>16</sup>

By that time, leaders in Poland, Hungary, and the CSFR had already signaled NATO membership was a long-term goal.<sup>17</sup> At the June 1991 meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Copenhagen, Secretary Baker advanced several principles to clarify the objectives and guide the development of the NATO liaison relationships. Baker noted that NATO liaison complemented the activities of other forums and formed a web of relations that would further integrate the Central and Eastern European countries into with the West. Although liaison functions were not designed to extend a security guarantee, they did seek to foster greater security throughout Europe by building trust and reducing misunderstanding. Baker called for:

new mechanisms for the Eastern countries to interact with members of the alliance so they would develop a better understanding of NATO's nature and operations and to foster the security concerns to all participating states; cooperation in areas where NATO had specialized technical expertise, such as civil emergency plan-



ning, for coping with common problems; and flexible relationships responsive to evolving needs of these countries in transition on a differentiated basis that reflected their progress toward of democratization and demilitarization.<sup>18</sup>

Ministers issued a separate statement pledging to build “constructive partnerships with the Soviet Union and the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe in order further to promote security and stability in a free and undivided Europe.” The statement identified several concrete initiatives including: meetings of officials and experts on security policy, military strategy and doctrine, arms control and defense conversion; intensified contacts between senior NATO military authorities and their counterparts in the Central and Eastern European states, including visits to military training facilities; participation of Central and Eastern European experts in certain Alliance activities, such as scientific and environmental programs; exchange of views on subjects such as airspace management; expansion of NATO information programs in the region; and parliamentary exchanges.<sup>19</sup> These principles were endorsed and expanded by the Rome Summit later that year that year and were further developed through the Partnership for Peace.

## **The Rome Summit and the NACC**

The Copenhagen Declaration was an important step in providing all Central and Eastern European states an initial roadmap for their integration into the Western security system. By the fall of 1991, however, the liaison program was at a critical juncture. There was a growing consensus in the Bush Administration that the Alliance had reached the limits of dealing with the Central and Eastern European states through diplomatic liaison and dialogue. There was agreement that these governments would need concrete Western advice and assistance if they were to succeed in their reforms and become members of the Euro-Atlantic community.

The senior interagency European Strategy Steering Group (ESSG) identified the upcoming Rome Summit as an opportunity to actualize the Copenhagen pledge of partnership and to advance practical programs of cooperation. The group decided not to pursue discussion of NATO membership that time. In September, I was asked to draft a

memo for the ESSG that outlined a number of initiatives for Allied consultations, and was also authorized to “test market” these at a meeting of the NATO Atlantic Policy Advisory Group in early October.<sup>20</sup>

Washington’s assessment was shared by the German government, which led to the joint statement by Secretary of State Baker and German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher on October 2, 1991. The two ministers proposed the establishment of a North Atlantic Cooperation Council to institutionalize dialogue with liaison countries and several specific proposals for developing practical cooperation for consideration at the Rome Summit.<sup>21</sup>

The Baker-Genscher initiative was generally welcomed by Allies and most provisions were adopted at the Rome Summit in November 1991, except for one to start planning with liaison countries for joint action on disaster relief and refugee problems. In their Rome Declaration, NATO heads of state and government announced the adoption of a new Allied Strategic Concept for a time of diminished threat but continuing instability, based on three mutually reinforcing elements: dialogue; cooperation; and the maintenance of a collective defense capability. The leaders avowed that Allied security was “inseparably linked to that of all other states in Europe,” and that “our common security can best be safeguarded through the further development of a network of interlocking institutions and relationships.”<sup>22</sup> They agreed to expand the scope of the Alliance’s liaison program with the Soviet Union and the five Central and Eastern European members of the former Warsaw Pact, and welcomed participation by Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which had recently regained independence. The new program included both deepened dialogue and practical cooperation. To help oversee and guide this effort, NATO foreign ministers invited their nine liaison counterparts to form a North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC).

The first meeting of the NACC was held in Brussels at ministerial level on December 20, 1991. The foreign ministers of 24 countries (16 NATO, 8 Central/Eastern Europe)—and Soviet Ambassador Afanassievsky, who announced the formal end of the USSR and Yeltsin’s statement of Russia’s interest in NATO membership—agreed to develop “a more institutional relationship of consultation and cooperation on political and security issues,” including:

Annual ministerial-level and bimonthly meetings at the ambassadorial level, as well as ad hoc gatherings, as circumstances warranted; Regular meetings of the NATO Political, Economic, and Military Committees, the APAG, and the NATO military authorities with liaison states; Consultations on defense planning, arms control, democratic concepts of civil-military relations, civil-military coordination of air traffic management, science and the environment, and the conversion of defense production to civilian purposes; New efforts to distribute information about NATO in Central and Eastern Europe through liaison channels and the embassies of member states.<sup>23</sup>

In his intervention, Secretary Baker proposed that the NACC develop as the primary consultative body between NATO and liaison states on security issues; assume oversight of the liaison program; and play a role in helping to manage future crises in Europe.<sup>24</sup>

The second NACC ministerial in March 1992, which included all the states of the former Soviet Union except Georgia (which joined the following month), approved a NACC work plan, including intensified consultations and cooperative activities in the areas that had been agreed to at the initial meeting. A December 1992 ministerial also adopted a work plan for 1993 with a provision for joint planning and training for peace-keeping, and the NACC later established an Ad Hoc Group on Cooperation in Peace-keeping, which included several non-aligned countries with substantial experience in the field that were not members of NACC—Finland, Sweden, and Austria (which joined PFP after its formation in 1994 and the EU in 1995).<sup>25</sup>

The development of the NACC during this period did not abate the manifest interest of a number of Central and Eastern European states and former Soviet republics in even closer ties with NATO and eventual membership. Indeed, leaders in Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest continued to press for a path to eventual membership.

While the Bush Administration elected not to pursue a policy of formal Allied consideration of enlargement during the election year of 1992, there was an internal debate over the rationale, modalities, and timing of eventual NATO enlargement. During the summer and fall of 1992, I prepared several memos for senior State Department officials on various aspects of NATO enlargement, including one reviewing key

considerations in preparing the groundwork with Allies for a debate, another setting out criteria for enlargement, and one on how to treat Russia, including keeping the door open to its eventual membership. The European Bureau of the State Department and officials in the European Directorate of the National Security Council (NSC) were also exploring the enlargement issue, which in my recollection was the subject of several ESSG meetings.

In early 1992, I was also granted permission by the State Department to publish a paper in *The Washington Quarterly* that outlined some of our deliberations within the Bush Administration on the further development of the NACC and enlargement, which I posed as a series of questions.<sup>26</sup> On future enlargement, I argued that the first step Allies needed to take was a careful consideration of how the core functions, particularly collective defense, could be applied to a broader group of states. I asked since NATO now emphasized that it was an alliance of democracies with historical ties and common values, what was the basis for excluding other such countries in Europe that might apply for membership? Could NATO develop a set of criteria for membership that would give transforming Central and Eastern European states the roadmap to fuller integration they were seeking? Beyond democratic and economic reforms, what other political, military, and geostrategic considerations should be articulated? I cited an op-ed that Hans Binnendijk, then Director of Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, had written following a discussion we had about the issue in November 1991, in which he set out an illustrative set of criteria that any new members of the Alliance might be expected to meet.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, I floated a proposal to address concerns within the U.S. and other Allied governments about how to manage the addition of the still transitioning Central and Eastern European states to NATO membership in a way that would preserve the Alliance's political cohesion and military capabilities. Perhaps bilateral "association agreements" could be developed as codicils to the North Atlantic Treaty through which Central and Eastern European states that met certain criteria would be invited to adhere to articles 1 through 4, but not the collective defense obligations of articles 5 and 6 of the Treaty. Under this phased approach to enlargement, "associates" would thereby have the right to seek consultations with members states when threats to their security and territorial integrity arose, but decision-making authority on

any action to be taken would remain vested in the full members of the North Atlantic Council.

A quiet debate and growing consensus on enlargement continued through the end of the Bush Administration, however, senior leaders were contending with a number of more pressing issues, including the aftermath of the first Gulf War, the Madrid Peace Process, and the escalating war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Moreover, Secretary Baker and key members of his team had moved in late summer to the White House to work on the Bush reelection campaign.

I was authorized to present a paper outlining some of the aforementioned considerations concerning enlargement to counterpart policy planners and other officials at an October 1992 meeting of the NATO Atlantic Policy Advisory Group meeting in the Netherlands. It is noteworthy that in his final intervention at the North Atlantic Council Ministerial meeting in December 1992, Acting Secretary of State Larry Eagleburger stated that the Allies could not keep kicking the enlargement issue down the road, saying that the deepening partnership could “could contribute to transforming the composition of the Alliance itself.”<sup>28</sup>

### **The Initial Clinton Debate**

The debate on NATO enlargement resumed in early 1993 as the Clinton Administration undertook various policy reviews, including on overall European strategy and the crisis in the Balkans—which had greater urgency. This phase of the debate has been ably chronicled by former officials and scholars on both sides of the Atlantic and is subject to nuanced reassessments in several other chapters in this volume, particularly the two by Daniel S. Hamilton.<sup>29</sup> I therefore focus here on a few pivotal developments and highlight several threads of continuity in the debates from the Bush to Clinton administrations.

Under Clinton the initial focus on NATO’s relations with the East was to build upon and improve the NACC and other elements of engagement with Russia. President Clinton called for a NATO summit in early 1994 to address these challenges. This set in motion intense and sometimes contentious interagency preparations of the agenda and deliverables.

There were three main elements of the Summit approach. First, give NATO, through the NACC or other outreach arrangements, new capabilities for joint action with NACC partners on common security concerns, with a focus on peacekeeping. Second, make adjustments in the military and political structures that recognized the EU's desire for more autonomy and U.S. interests in more equitable burden sharing. Third, adapt the Alliance's military structures to address new challenges within as well as outside of Europe.

Some in the Clinton Administration wanted to continue to avoid taking a position on NATO enlargement, mainly out of concerns of damaging still fragile relations with Russia. Others, including Under Secretary of State Lynn Davis and I, contended that this would be a mistake. We argued that NATO needed to play a role in both providing all European countries a means to cooperate on common security concerns and serving as a hedge against failure of the democratic transformation in the East.

In a paper prepared for Secretary of State Warren Christopher in September 1993, we argued for an incremental approach that would transform the NACC into an operational organization that could develop a partnership on peacekeeping and other security activities with the Central and Eastern European countries and former Soviet republics. The second element of this approach would be a clear commitment to open NATO to new members, along with the announcement of criteria or standards that aspirant countries would need to meet. These standards would be couched in a way that would not *a priori* be seen as excluding Russia, Ukraine, or other newly independent states in Eurasia. In addition, new arrangements with Russia and Ukraine could also be developed to counter perceptions that NATO's enlargement was directed at them. Rather than offering all the NACC governments the right to consultations with NATO akin to article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, as was the interagency proposal at the time, we suggested making that the first step in a phased approach to NATO membership that would proceed from an Article 4 to an Article 5 commitment based on the progress aspiring members had made on achieving the criteria and their readiness to contribute to collective defense. We postulated that this would result in the extension of full membership to several Central and Eastern European states by 1998 and others in later phases, including a peaceful, democratic Russia.<sup>30</sup> Our memo was also

designed to allay concerns that the Clinton Administration might rush into a process of enlargement.

Our phased approach was set aside by principals, who felt extending Article 4 commitments could create ambiguity about collective security guarantees. However, principals did agree to support NATO's Open Door policy at the Summit. What many in the government didn't appreciate at the time was that President Clinton, National Security Advisor Lake, and others were already convinced, including through discussions with Havel, Wałęsa, and other Central and Eastern European leaders in April 1993 at the dedication of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, that enlargement was the right thing to do, and could be achieved in a way that did not isolate Russia.

The other key achievement of the Brussels Summit in January 1994 was the formal establishment of the Partnership for Peace (PfP). PfP was designed to strengthen practical cooperation between NATO and non-member countries of Europe and Eurasia through individual programs tailored to partners' capabilities and needs, with implementation linked to progress on reforms. The Summit also sought to cast PfP as playing a key role in the "evolutionary process of the expansion of NATO."

A number of Central and Eastern European governments and their supporters in the United States expressed great disappointment that NATO did not make a more explicit commitment to NATO enlargement in Brussels. Some derided PfP as a "second class waiting room" that did not address their long-term security concerns.

To counter this narrative, the Administration quickly dispatched U.S. Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General George Shalikashvili, and State Department Policy Planning Staff member Charles Gati to the Visegrád countries. Albright and other officials presented PfP as the "the best path" to NATO membership, and that message, reinforcing the linkage to membership, engendered active Central and Eastern European engagement in PfP.

While the phased approach to enlargement was set aside, Paragraph 8 of the Partnership for Peace Framework Document issued at the Brussels Summit granted PfP members who perceived a threat to their territorial integrity, political independence, or security a right, anal-

ogous to Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, to consultation with NATO.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Debate After 1994**

The internal Clinton Administration debate on NATO enlargement in 1994-1995 featured vigorous exchanges between those who wanted to continue the development of Pfp, to avoid loss of Russian cooperation on nuclear and conventional arms control, and those who contended that a failure to offer a more explicit roadmap to NATO membership risked the creation of an unstable security vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe and possible backsliding on democratic and military reforms. Some in Washington and Allied governments were also greatly concerned that as NATO developed this new relationship with the East, it was essential to maintain the political cohesion and military effectiveness of the Alliance, and that adding more members too quickly could erode these important aspects. This debate ultimately led to agreement to launch the 1995 NATO Study on Enlargement, which clarified the purpose and established a clear set of principles. These principles guided the process that led to the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to the Alliance in 1999, and seven more Central and Eastern European countries in 2004.<sup>32</sup>

### **Key Lessons and Implications for the Future**

NATO enlargement played a central role in healing the Cold War division of Europe and providing the security environment that facilitated a peaceful and successful democratic transition of much of Central and Eastern Europe. It was vital to realizing President Bush's vision of a Europe "whole and free." It was by no means a foregone conclusion that this transformation of the Alliance or the region could be achieved so effectively in less than a decade. It required careful planning, skillful diplomacy, and a firm commitment to principles.

The historical record reveals that the strategic rationale, political preconditions, and general military requirements of enlargement had been framed during the G.H.W. Bush Administration and brought to fruition during the Clinton Administration. This continuity reflected



the broad, bipartisan political support in the United States and in most other NATO countries during the 1990s for welcoming the Central and Eastern European states into the Euro-Atlantic community and that it would enhance both Alliance and overall European security.

Enlargement of NATO to Central and Eastern Europe was not an objective or in the political calculus of senior U.S. policymakers when the negotiations for German unification began. However, the 2+4 process provided a diplomatic model that could be emulated and adapted in the realization of the first post-Cold War round of NATO enlargement during the Clinton Administration. The United States and other Allies made clear that they supported the integration of a united Germany in the early 1990s and later the independent countries of Central and Eastern Europe into NATO. They cautioned Moscow that it had no veto over the sovereign decisions of these countries in accordance with principles of the Helsinki Final Act and later the Charter of Paris, but that the process would be undertaken through an inclusive dialogue and achieved in a way that did not threaten the security of the Soviet Union, Russia, or any other European state. This principled and transparent strategy, together with skillful diplomatic engagement, achieved the key goals of stabilization and reintegration of Central and Eastern Europe into the community of European democracies.

Another key factor was strong but inclusive U.S. leadership, which featured close coordination among heads of state and government and senior officials in Washington and key European governments, including Russia. While the Alliance has been unable to establish a durable and effective cooperation with Russia, this was not for lack of effort. As Alexander Vershbow outlines in his chapter in this volume, the United States and other Allies expended enormous effort to engage Russia as a partner, and to even hold out the prospect of NATO membership, and achieved real gains until the events of 2014.

Twenty years ago, leaders in Central and Eastern Europe asked the question: if NATO is an alliance of democracies committed to promoting and protecting common values, how long would they have to be democracies before membership became an option? Today with backsliding on reforms in Poland and Hungary and increasingly authoritarian, nationalist rule in Turkey, it is increasingly clear that NATO can

no longer ignore this retreat from the principles without damage to the Alliance's cohesion and standing in the world.

With respect to hard security, the thirteen countries that have joined the Alliance since 1999 have for the most part demonstrated an enduring and lately an increasing commitment to providing for their own defense and to contributing within their means to collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security. Through their continuing and varied contribution to the full range of NATO missions, these countries have more than met the relevant principles of the 1995 Study on Enlargement that their membership should contribute to Alliance and wider European and global security.

## Notes

1. George H.W. Bush, "A Europe While and Free," Remarks to the Citizens in Mainz, Rheingoldhalle, Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany, May 31, 1989. As of March 3, 2019: <https://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/ga6-890531.htm>.

2. James A. Baker III, "A New Europe, a New Atlanticism: Architecture for a New Era," Address to the Berlin Press Club, December 12, 1989, U.S. Department of State, *Current Policy*, no. 1233 (December 1989). As of March 2, 2019: <http://digitalcollections.library.cmu.edu/awweb/awarchive?type=file&item=690688>.

3. By 1991 Havel and his advisors became convinced that "NATO was thus the only effective organization left that could offer a genuine guarantee of a country's security in a rapidly changing world." See Michael Žantovský, "In Search of Allies: Vaclav Havel and the Expansion of NATO," *World Affairs*, 177, No. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 2014), pp. 47-58.

4. See James A. Baker, III, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-92* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), pp. 209-16, 232-57,

5. See Kristinia Spohr, "Germany, America and the shaping of post-Cold War Europe: a story of German international emancipation through political unification," *Cold War History*, 2015, Vol. 15, No.2, pp. 221-43.

6. German Tribune, *Treaty on the final settlement with respect to Germany*, September 12, 1990, Articles 3,5,6.

7. See Mark W. Kramer, "The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia," *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2009. As of February 22, 2019: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/twq-myth-no-nato-enlargement-pledge-russia-spring-2009>.

8. Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrinson, "Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion," *International Security* 40, no. 4 (2016), pp 7-44.

9. "Promises Made, Promises Broken? What Yeltsin Was Told About Nato In 1993 And Why It Matters," *War on the Rocks*, 2016. As of March 3, 2019: <https://warontherocks.com/2016/07/promises-made-promises-broken-what-yeltsin-was-told-about-nato-in-1993-and-why-it-matters/>.

10. Mary Elise Sarotte, "A Broken Promise? What the West Really Told Moscow about NATO Expansion," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 5 (September/October 2014), pp. 96-7. As March 2, 2019: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-08-11/broken-promise>.

11. Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, op. cit., p. 257.

12. NATO Office of Public Affairs, "1990 Summit: a turning point in 'East-West' relations," As of March 3, 2019: [https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/news\\_116133.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/news_116133.htm?selectedLocale=en).

13. Mitterrand's European Confederation envisioned three concentric circles of integration: 1) a deeper, federal integration among the then 12 EC member states, (2) a wider Common Market including Central and Eastern Europe with the prospect of eventual membership in the EC, and (3) cooperation with the Soviet Union on security issues. See Frédéric Bozo, "The Failure of a Grand Design: Mitterrand's European Confederation, 1989-1991," *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (Aug. 2008), pp. 391-412.

14. Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne, *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact* (Budapest and New York, Central European University Press, 2005), pp. 65-72.

15. Joel Haverman, "Walesa Asks Economic Support but Western Europeans Resist," *Los Angeles Times*, April 4, 1991. As of March 2, 2019: [http://articles.latimes.com/1991-04-04/news/mn-2680\\_1\\_economic-support](http://articles.latimes.com/1991-04-04/news/mn-2680_1_economic-support).

16. "NATO Liaison: General Principles for Development," SPEUR 2178, May 14, 1991. George H.W. Bush Presidential Records, National Security Council, Barry Lowenkron Files, NATO Files. FOIA Number 2000-0233-F. Thanks to Prof. Joshua Shiffrinson of Boston University for sharing this document.

17. See M.E. Sarotte, "The Convincing Call From Central Europe: Let Us Into NATO, NATO Enlargement Turns 20," Snapshot, *Foreign Affairs*, March 19, 2019. As of March 26, 2019: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-03-12/convincing-call-central-europe-let-us-nato>.

18. U.S. Department of State, Office of the Assistant Secretary/Spokesman, "Intervention by Secretary of State James A. Baker, III at the North Atlantic Council, June 6, 1991," Press Release, Copenhagen, June 7, 1991.

19. NATO, "Partnership with the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe," Statement issued by the North Atlantic Council Meeting in Ministerial Session in Copenhagen 6-7 June 1991. As of March 2, 2019: <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c910607d.htm>.

20. "New Directions for NATO Liaison: Building an Effective Partnership with the East," SPEUR 2583, September 27, 1991, George Bush Presidential Library, NATO Files; "NATO and the East Beyond Liaison," Paper for the NATO APAG Meeting in Elounda, Crete, October 9-11, 1991, SPEUR 2471, Unclassified.

21. U.S. Department of State, Office of the Assistant Secretary/Spokesman, "Joint Statement by Secretary of State James A. Baker, III and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany," Washington, D.C., October 2, 1991.

22. NATO Press Service, "Declaration on Peace and Cooperation," Press Release S-1(91) 86, Rome, November 8, 1991, paras 9 and 3. As of March 3, 2019: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_23846.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23846.htm).

23. NATO "North Atlantic Cooperation Council Statement on Dialogue, Partnership and Cooperation," Press Release M-NACC-1(91) 111, Issued on 20 Dec. 1991. As of March 3, 2019: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_23841.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23841.htm?selectedLocale=en).

24. U.S. Department of State, "Intervention by Secretary of State James A. Baker, III Before the North Atlantic Council, Brussels," December 20, 1991.

25. U.S. Department of State Archive, "Fact Sheet: The North Atlantic Cooperation Council," Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, Department of State, May 9, 1997. As of March 3, 2019: [https://1997-2001.state.gov/regions/eur/nato\\_fsnaacc.html](https://1997-2001.state.gov/regions/eur/nato_fsnaacc.html).

26. Stephen J. Flanagan, "NATO and the East: from Liaison to Security Partnership." *Washington Quarterly*, Spring 1992, pp. 141-151. As of March 3, 2019: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01636609209550097?journalCode=rwaq20>. This was a revised version of a paper I presented at an October 1991 "Congressional-Executive Dialogue on the Future of NATO," organized by Stanley Sloan of the Congressional Research Service.

27. These criteria included: acceptance of the rule of law; renunciation of all territorial claims; support for self-determination of subnational groups; willingness and capability to offer mutual assistance to other member states; and acceptance of some limited decision-making authority (not a full veto) in NATO for a certain transition period. Hans Binnendijk, "NATO Can't Be Vague About Commitment to Eastern Europe," *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), November 8, 1991, p. 6.

28. James Goldgeier, *Not Whether but When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1999), p.18.

29. See especially *Ibid.*; and Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

30. "Memorandum to Secretary Christopher, "Strategy for NATO's Expansion and Transformation," September 7, 1993, Declassified, National Security Archive. As of March 9, 2019: <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/4390816/Document-02-Strategy-for-NATO-s-Expansion-and.pdf>.

31. NATO, On-Line Library, "Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council/North Atlantic Cooperation Council," NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10-11 January 1994. Partnership for Peace: Framework Document. As of March 26, 2019: <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940110b.htm>.

32. NATOe Library, Official Texts, "Study on Enlargement," 03 September 1995. As of March 5, 2019: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_24733.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24733.htm).