

## *Chapter 16*

# **Winning Congressional and Public Support for NATO Enlargement, and the Political Psychology of Collective Defense**

*Jeremy D. Rosner*

The debate in the United States over ratification of the first post-Cold War enlargement of NATO demonstrated the potential for the country to act in a bipartisan way to refresh support for the Alliance in a new security period. That decision in the late 1990s, endorsed by a broad range of groups and experts from both parties, seems far from today's polarized partisan environment, but suggests some paths toward political progress on current national security challenges.

### **The Pivot from Policy Development to Ratification**

By late 1996, NATO governments were moving toward consensus after a years-long transatlantic policy debate about NATO's evolution after the Cold War. In the United States, after over three years of policy development, President Bill Clinton declared in October of that year that he and his administration were ready to formally invite Central European states to the Alliance, to ensure "the Iron Curtain [is not] replaced by a veil of indifference."<sup>1</sup> He argued that enlargement would add capable allies to NATO, tamp down dangerous strategic insecurity in Europe's center, and help define a new and workable relationship between NATO and Russia.

But if there was support from policy makers, it was not clear there was equal support from NATO's publics and legislatures. This was a particular question in the United States, given the U.S. Congress's substantial, independent powers over foreign policy.

To be sure, there were many signs U.S. ratification could succeed. NATO remained popular with the public, with 63% favoring a sustained or increased commitment to NATO, according to an October 1997 Pew Research Center poll.<sup>2</sup> Presidents had rarely lost congressio-

nal votes on major treaties and foreign agreements since World War II. NATO enlargement had been part of the “Contract with America” that GOP House candidates touted in 1994, and President Clinton’s Republican opponent during the 1996 election, U.S. Senator Bob Dole, had also pushed for the idea. A “NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act,” endorsing the policy, cleared Congress with strong bipartisan support in mid-1996 and was signed by the Clinton Administration. In earlier times, the Senate had regularly given overwhelming approval to each previous request to add new members to the Alliance—Greece and Turkey in 1952; West Germany in 1955; and Spain in 1982.

Yet major uncertainties loomed:

- Although majorities of the American public after the end of the Cold War continued to say the United States should play an active role in world affairs, there had been a strong surge in the share who wanted more focus on domestic rather than global challenges. Reflecting this, Clinton had been elected promising a laser-like focus on problems at home.<sup>3</sup>
- Similarly, although the public held generally favorable views about NATO, there was little public understanding of what it would mean to extend NATO’s robust security assurances to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic—the first three states proposed for membership.
- The Cold War’s end had emboldened Congress to challenge the executive branch more forcefully across a range of foreign policy issues, reflecting the historical norm that relative peace in the world means relatively less peace between Congress and the White House on national security.<sup>4</sup> President Clinton had only with great effort won a November 1993 House vote on the North America Free Trade Act. By 1999, the Senate would fall 19 votes short on approving the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, with a 51-48 vote against ratification.
- This would be the first (and, even now, the only) time a Democratic president sought approval for NATO’s enlargement from a Republican-controlled Senate. That was the same partisan combination that led to defeat of the Treaty of Versailles after World War I.

- Republicans in Congress harbored particular animus toward this Democratic President. As during the Wilson Administration, animus toward the president was particularly sharp from the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—Henry Cabot Lodge in 1919, Jesse Helms in 1997—the committee of jurisdiction on a NATO enlargement vote.
- Congressional Republicans had supported the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act during the summer of 1996 partly to help Dole claim the issue as his own; but by early 1997 Dole had lost and it was Democrat Clinton pushing the idea as a signal initiative.
- Although support for NATO's enlargement was broad, it was comprised of what political scientist George Grayson later called a "strange bedfellows" coalition, including Republicans and Democrats, defense hawks and human rights idealists, unionists focused on the brave actions of Poland's Solidarity, and business leaders focused on the lure of new markets in Central Europe. Keeping this diverse coalition united was by no means assured.

For all these reasons, some foreign policy experts at the time doubted whether it would be possible to gain ratification. One said it would take a "feat of magic" given "skin deep" support for NATO, and a public that had been reluctant to send troops to Bosnia or money to Mexico to relieve the peso crisis.<sup>5</sup>

Facing such danger signs, President Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright decided to take special steps to ensure they would have the necessary public and congressional backing. They created a special office with the sole purpose of obtaining that support. It would be housed at the State Department, but "double hatted," reporting directly to both the Secretary and National Security Adviser Samuel "Sandy" Berger. Berger and Albright's Deputy Secretary, Strobe Talbott, asked me to lead the NATO Enlargement Ratification Office (S/NERO)—and, along with a gifted Foreign Service Officer (later U.S. Ambassador to Serbia and Pakistan) Cameron Munter, we began our work in early March 1997. A few weeks later, Albright and Talbott recruited Ronald Asmus, a RAND analyst who was one of the intellectual fathers of NATO enlargement, to be Deputy Assistant Secretary of

State for European Affairs, to lead the policy work on this effort, and Asmus became our close partner in achieving ratification.

### **Defining Success: “A Good Win”**

On one level, S/NERO’s goal was simple: getting the constitutionally-required “two-thirds of the Senators present” to approve an amendment to the North Atlantic Treaty. We knew that falling short of that goal would be a disaster. Woodrow Wilson’s failure to achieve ratification of the Treaty of Versailles was not only a huge political setback for his administration and party; it also helped signal an American retreat from global affairs that would contribute to the worst moments of the rest of that century. We were determined not to permit a Senate defeat that would send a similar signal after the close of the Cold War.

But from the outset, the Clinton Administration approached the ratification effort not simply as a quest for 67 votes and a legal hurdle for adding three countries to the Alliance. Rather, the ratification campaign represented a broader opportunity to sharpen the American public’s understanding of, and support for, the Alliance, and to ensure the public was ready to support the treaty’s security commitments, particularly toward new members, in a new era.

Public support had always been the critical variable at the core of the Treaty’s security guarantees. When Dean Acheson first explained the new Atlantic Alliance to the American public in 1949, he observed that the operation of Article 5—the Treaty’s central promise of collective defense—was “not a legalistic question.” He said it was rather “a question of faith and principle,” linked to the “exercise of will.”<sup>6</sup> It would ultimately be futile and dangerous to extend NATO membership to Central European states without ensuring the American public and Congress were truly prepared to treat an attack against one of them as an attack against all. A narrow victory in the Senate, or Senate consent without real public backing, would not suffice.

These factors framed S/NERO’s work from the start. On February 26, 1997, just days before joining the administration, I sent a personal note to Albright, Talbott, Berger, and Deputy National Security Adviser James Steinberg, laying out what I felt should be the goals of the

ratification effort. I argued our goal should not only be a win, but “a good win.”

A “good win” meant obtaining not just the constitutional requirement of two-thirds of the Senate, but a lopsided, larger-than-expected, and fully bipartisan margin. I argued we needed to show “broad, enthusiastic U.S. support, both to make the ... security guarantees [to new allies] more meaningful, and to strengthen the U.S. as it pursues other foreign policy goals.”

A good win also meant that the victory could not come at the expense of other U.S. interests, including constructive relations with Russia. Clinton had staked a good deal on building closer ties to Russia and President Boris Yeltsin. A win on NATO enlargement would be undermined if pursued in a way that needlessly poisoned that relationship.

A good win also had to provide affirmation and political momentum for the Open Door concept—NATO’s pledge that membership would remain open to qualified candidate states that were not in this first round of enlargement. I was confident that if we made the Open Door policy an explicit part of the debate and won strong Senate endorsement, then votes on future rounds would be less controversial. This proved to be true.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, a good win had to involve the broad public, to the greatest extent possible. As a student of public opinion on national security, I knew that the public pays relatively little attention to most foreign policy issues, and that we would never make NATO’s enlargement a topic of conversation at most American dinner tables. But I argued we needed to do all we could to take this issue to the public, and draw as many sectors of society as possible into the discussion. I felt the strength and legitimacy of NATO’s security guarantees partly depended on this.

The February 26 memo suggested several things were necessary to achieve a good win. As noted, the effort needed to be bipartisan; but I argued that the harder half of achieving bipartisan support lay with winning Republican votes: “While most of the votes we need to pick up...are from Democrats on the left, the most serious prospect for defeat entails a broad defection by Republicans on the right.” My reading of Stull Holt’s 1933 study *Treaties Defeated in the Senate* and other historical analyses underscored that treaties in the 20<sup>th</sup> century had nearly

always been threatened by Republicans, not Democrats.<sup>8</sup> Despite scattered internal resistance to the idea of focusing the ratification campaign more on wooing Republicans than Democrats, the President's team ultimately sided with my recommendation.

Achieving a good win would also require deeply involving the Senate in the ratification process. Holt concluded that a key factor in the Senate's rejection of the Treaty of Versailles was Wilson's refusal to involve Senator Lodge and his colleagues more in the negotiations. My memo therefore urged the administration to invite the Senate to create a group that would have a real seat in the diplomacy, and it urged involving the House as well, since the House could play a major role in shaping this kind of national debate, even if it lacked a vote on the Treaty.

My memo argued that another key to success was creating a tangible sense of momentum and inevitability. If the outcome of the vote never seemed in doubt, it would depress the energy of opponents, make enlargement's critics seem more fringe, reduce the leverage of Senators seeking amendments, and contribute to a broader public and international sense that, at least in the United States, the wisdom of enlarging NATO was more a matter of consensus than dispute.

## **The Ratification Campaign**

There is neither space nor need to describe here in detail the specific steps the Clinton Administration took to achieve ratification of the first round of NATO's enlargement. Several excellent books chronicle those actions, especially those by Asmus, Grayson, and James Goldgeier.<sup>9</sup> Yet it is worth noting a few points about the effort, especially those aimed at "a good win."

### *The importance of early diplomacy and signaling to Congress*

Much of the work needed to ensure ratification preceded S/NERO's creation. President Clinton had already signaled unequivocally to Congress that NATO's enlargement was a personal priority; he had stressed it during his re-election campaign and in his 1997 State of the Union address.<sup>10</sup> In speeches and meetings with Congress, he and Secretary

Albright had clearly laid out enlargement's strategic rationale. Albright and Talbott had succeeded in driving the Alliance to create the "NATO-Russia Founding Act," and they, along with others, managed to walk a fine line important for ratification politics. The Founding Act was positive enough toward Moscow that it reduced anxieties (mostly among Democrats) that NATO enlargement would antagonize Moscow. But it also had enough red lines between Russia and NATO's own decision-making that it minimized concerns (mostly among Republicans) that NATO was giving Russia any kind of vote or veto. The State Department's former Europe chief, Richard Holbrooke, had helped solidify the inter-agency consensus behind enlargement. All this laid a strong foundation for later success in Congress.

#### *The Senate NATO Observer Group*

The President's top advisers quickly agreed with the idea of inviting the Senate to create an "observer group" to take part in the diplomacy that would precede ratification. Yet before they could act on this idea, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott on March 21, 1997 proposed the idea himself, in a *Washington Post* op-ed.<sup>11</sup> This was a stroke of good fortune, since it put the Senate's own stamp on the idea, and linked it to one of the Republicans most needed for success. Lott's initiative meant that he would decide which Senators to involve, freeing us from that knotty question, given that multiple committees and individual Senators arguably had a stake in the issue. The Observer Group ultimately included 28 Senators, with an even partisan split, including key enlargement supporters and opponents.

There were some bitter early fights between the Observer Group and the administration over the Senate's role in diplomacy, especially the degree to which it could access classified diplomatic cables. But over some months, the two branches built a satisfactory process of cooperation, and the Group contributed significantly to the Senate's work. There were ultimately 17 meetings between the Observer Group and the President, members of his administration, or relevant foreign leaders. The administration also brought members of the Senate Observer Group, along with House members, to NATO's Madrid Summit in July 1997.

*U.S. Committee on the Enlargement of NATO*

In a saga filled with surprising turns, few were as unexpected or helpful as the appearance of Bruce Jackson. A central casting country-club Republican and Dole fundraiser, in October 1996 he reached out to NSC official (later U.S. Ambassador to Poland) Daniel Fried to offer the creation of an outside bipartisan committee to support the enlargement effort. Fried connected Jackson to me, and by the time S/NERO opened shop, the U.S. Committee on the Enlargement of NATO had become a vital part of the ratification effort. Jackson and his Republican co-leader, Julie Finley, hosted dozens of gatherings where members of Congress, staff, and journalists could meet visiting Central European leaders, and hear their case for enlargement first-hand. Jackson's and Finley's strong ties with Hill Republicans proved a key bridge across the aisle. The Committee ultimately ran ads in Capitol Hill newspapers (including one with an iconic photo of Albright and Helms, on the same stage, beaming at each other and holding hands) in support of NATO's enlargement.

*Endorsements*

An early and constant priority for S/NERO was getting endorsements from a wide range of organizations and luminaries. That not only showed broad public support—and dispelled the canard that this was only an issue of concern to ethnic Central European voters—but it also made it easy for senators who were just learning about the issue to be comfortable with it. We wanted to “close the off-ramps” for skeptical Senators by showing there was almost no segment of society that opposed the issue. Air Force Brigadier General Robert “Tip” Osterthaler spent weeks with S/NERO staff visiting leaders of veterans' organizations to make the case for NATO's enlargement. Munter flew uninvited to a meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and came away with their endorsement. We ultimately obtained endorsements from over three dozen organizations—including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the AFL-CIO, the National Governors Association, the American Jewish Committee, a range of state legislatures, three former presidents (including President Carter, after a direct pitch to him by Secretary Albright), and a wide range of national security experts and former officials from both parties.



### *Editorial boards*

The ratification strategy aimed to generate as much nationwide media discussion as possible. To that end, we mounted a broad outreach to editorial boards at both the major national newspapers and local papers. Administration officials fanned out across the country to make the case. It was an uphill effort: according to Grayson, of the 68 North American newspapers that ultimately took positions on the first round of enlargement, 34 opposed the initiative, another 13 called for delaying the vote, and only 21 favored it.<sup>12</sup> The negative balance underscores that ratification was hardly a forgone conclusion. Yet there were some notable successes: the *Chicago Tribune* reversed its position to favoring enlargement after administration officials reached out to members of the editorial board and helped them meet with key Central European leaders.

### *The opposition*

A final variable in the ratification effort was the nature of our opposition—not something of our making, but important to the successful outcome. The opposition benefited from some highly influential Senators, including some leading Republican voices on military matters, such as John Warner (Virginia), as well as respected voices on the Democratic left, including the liberal lion Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (New York). Opponents also had strength among prominent foreign policy writers, including the legendary diplomat George Kennan, Johns Hopkins academic Michael Mandelbaum, and Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*, whose paper was among the many opposing enlargement. The Cato Institute added a libertarian voice against enlargement, while Ben & Jerry's co-founder Ben Cohen injected passion and funding.

This was a powerful mix, and the opponents attacked NATO's enlargement with some challenging arguments. Moynihan and others on the left argued that enlargement would alienate Russia and could trigger World War III. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger initially argued the administration had given too much away to Moscow in the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Senator Warner and former Senate Armed Services Chair Sam Nunn warned enlargement could degrade the Alliance by admitting weak militaries and indefensible geographies.

Peace groups and others on the left argued enlargement was a scheme to enrich U.S. arms makers. And a mix of left, right, and libertarian voices expressed concern over enlargement's cost to the United States, which remained a muddled issue until the end (figures ranged from Cato's estimate of \$70 billion over a decade, to the administration's estimate of \$1.5–2 billion over the same period). Ben Cohen helped finance full-page ads in the *New York Times* and other papers across the country.

Yet the opponents never seemed to have any centrally organized lobbying effort, and ultimately never did much to grow their ranks. They did not create the kind of education effort for elites provided by the U.S. Committee to Expand NATO. They did not work to get resolutions of disapproval from a broad range of civic organizations. All this meant that the ratification faced an opposition that was often articulate and quoted, but rarely organized or expanding.

In the end, the Senate voted April 30, 1998, to endorse NATO's enlargement, by a vote of 80-19 (Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona would have voted in favor, but had left to catch a flight). The lopsided margin obscures the clashes that endangered Senate approval until late in the game. The final days were spent combatting a series of hostile amendments (it was hostile Senate amendments and "reservations" that sank the Treaty of Versailles in the United States). One by Senator John Ashcroft (Republican from Missouri) proposed to limit NATO's missions to only defense of members' territories, ruling out NATO's involvement in conflicts like Bosnia; Ashcroft's provision was tabled by the Senate on an 82-18 vote. Another amendment, from Senator Warner, would have barred the admission of any other new members for at least three years; it failed, 59-41. Defeat of the Warner amendment was key example of the difference between a win and a good win. We could have accepted his proposed pause and still won admission for the first three states. But a good win, including robust endorsement of the Open Door policy, required defeating it.

## Implications for the Future

Twenty years later, the first post-Cold War enlargement of NATO still seems an enduring success. It added new forces and capabilities to

NATO, strengthening the Alliance and the security of its members, including the United States. It created a process that continues to generate a magnetic appeal to those states still aspiring to membership, such as Georgia and Ukraine. It helped transform Central Europe from its historic role as a spawning ground for great power conflicts into a thriving area firmly anchored in the West, enabling roughly 100 million people to enjoy more freedom, security and progress. Few if any of the dire predictions of enlargement's proponents came true. There has been no evidence of NATO losing its military edge as the new states joined. There has been no explosion of America's NATO-related costs. Contrary to the dire warnings of NATO enlargement's fiercest critics, the 1998 vote did not trigger World War III.

As part of that overall effort, the U.S. ratification process in 1997-1998 ultimately met our standard of "a good win." The final margin was overwhelming. Support was solidly bipartisan. There was a real national debate, with a wide range of experts, interest groups, and media outlets taking an active part. The debate included an explicit rejection of efforts to shut NATO's "Open Door" policy. That in turn helped make all three of the subsequent rounds of enlargement virtually uncontroversial within the Senate and the public. Public support for NATO has remained undimmed, even as America's current president has tried to cast doubts on the Alliance's utility.

Yet some key questions about NATO's enlargement linger. This is particularly true regarding the debate over whether enlargement pushed Russia away from the West. While Vladimir Putin and other Russian leaders often criticize NATO's enlargement as threatening, there has been a surprising lack of high-quality, dispassionate research about whether this is just a talking point for them, or a genuine driving force behind Russia's drift toward increased confrontation and authoritarianism. Other authors in this volume contribute important new insights on this question, and hopefully their work will spur additional scholarship as well.

It also is worth examining how it came to be that the first three post-communist countries admitted to NATO are now among the Central European states veering furthest from liberal democratic norms. Hungary is ruled by a strongman-leader who has villainized immigrants (despite their paucity in Hungary), fanned anti-Semitism,

suppressed media freedom, politicized the courts, and boasted about his illiberal model of governance. Poland is ruled by a party that has stacked the courts, politicized the public broadcaster, and imposed a government-sanctioned view of history. The Czech Republic has elected a prime minister who is a populist oligarch.

It was not supposed to be this way. During the ratification process, we argued enlargement would bolster democratic norms by requiring applicant states to address a range of issues regarding their democratic bona fides. We also argued NATO membership would more firmly embed these countries within the liberal democratic culture of the trans-Atlantic community.

The strong turn toward populism in the Central Europe's first three NATO members may be a coincidence, and it is implausible that their political conditions would have been better had they remained outside the Alliance. But one experience a few years ago led me to wonder if the security that NATO has brought to Central Europe may have played a small role.

In early 2014, 16 years after S/NERO concluded its work, and long after the Baltics and additional Central European states had also joined both NATO and the EU, I was advising an Estonian party on their campaign for the European Parliament. The party was settling on a campaign message that focused on domestic issues, although some in the Western-oriented party argued for more of a focus on national security. Then, in late February and early March, Russia forcibly seized Ukraine's Crimean peninsula. Many in the party said, in effect, "Well, now we *must* focus on national security; all our voters will demand it." I replied that this was an empirical question, and set up focus groups to assess reactions among the party's rank-and-file.

We started our focus groups the way we begin virtually every group anywhere, with a broad question: how are things going in this country? Participants talked at length about bread-and-butter issues: employment, salaries, pensions, corruption, and the like. Not one person mentioned Russia or Crimea. Our moderator probed this striking omission: "What about Russia's actions in Crimea? Does this concern you?" "Oh no," responded a Tallinn man. The moderator asked why not. He responded, "Well, now we are in NATO."

I was fairly stunned, and wondered whether Estonia was really as safe from aggression by its huge eastern neighbor as this Tallinn voter assumed. On one hand, I was glad that Central European citizens in these new NATO states felt safe, with a confidence that the Alliance's Article 5 guarantees were meaningful. On the other hand, I worried that their perception of NATO's protections might lead them to pay too little attention to security issues in their own countries' politics, and wondered if this would leave more room for populist appeals on other issues.

Obviously, there are bigger forces creating openings for populism, which has upended politics in the United States as well as in Central Europe, which faced these populist headwinds with less well-established democracies than many other countries. But it is worth exploring the potential linkages between NATO's security guarantees and political dynamics within these states. And we should focus on how NATO (as well as other institutions, particularly the European Union) can continue to push to preserve liberal democratic norms among its members.

Closer to home, it is worth asking whether the successful 1998 ratification effort provides a broader model for bipartisan cooperation in the United States on national security issues. The short answer is: partly. It would be a mistake to suggest there is any magic wand that can wave away the toxic air of division and recrimination that hangs over Washington. As many studies reveal, partisan polarization in the United States reflects myriad long-term trends, from a more politicized mainstream and social media environment; to geographic sorting that has left more pockets of America either deep blue or deep red; to gerrymandering of congressional districts; to shifts in cultural beliefs. It is inevitable that these forces have made it harder to forge bipartisan support on national security issues, just as they have on most domestic issues. It also may be that the tactics that brought success in 1998 would not fare as well in this age of social media.

Yet there were a few elements of the success on NATO's enlargement that may hold some hope for progress, including:

- **Build on successful institutions.** Americans trust NATO. They did during the Cold War. They do now. This is a huge asset. During the ratification effort, we capitalized on that trust and the transatlantic values that helped build it. Even as Don-

ald Trump reportedly has considered withdrawing the United States from NATO, public support for the Alliance has shown no signs of weakening, and bipartisan majorities in Congress have voted for resolutions reaffirming American support for NATO, and opposition to withdrawing from it. It may be that the enlargement debates helped to reinforce public and congressional support for NATO. At a minimum, the strength of that support means that internationalists may do well to use NATO as a substantive and rhetorical starting point, where applicable, in building their case for other initiatives.

- **Take opponents seriously.** During the enlargement effort I spent more time with Republican activists and members of Congress than at any other time in my life. We were determined to win them over. We knew that required hard listening, bringing them into the diplomatic process, having real respect for their concerns, and taking serious steps to address their worries. The bipartisan success of recent congressional efforts on issues such as Russian sanctions and disapproval of Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen suggest there may inherently be more room for non-ideological discussion and compromise on national security issues than on many domestic challenges like health care financing and reproductive rights.
- **Do not be overly cowed by public opinion—or Congress.** Decades of studying and working the seams between public opinion and national security policy have left me impressed with the malleable nature of that ground. As some scholars have noted, public opinion only rarely imposes binding constraints on the ability of a president to take action abroad. In the wake of events like the violent conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and Somalia, there were some good reasons that President Clinton and his administration could have spooked themselves into believing the public was unwilling to take on new security commitments abroad. It is good they did not. The public and Congress tend to judge national security pragmatically, more by results than ideology. Strong-willed presidents, with a clear plan, can usually get their way on national security if they act with confidence, clarity, and candor.

- **Reach out to the public—and at least civil society.** Although it may seem to contradict the previous point, there was great value in the effort the Clinton Administration made to take its case for NATO enlargement out beyond Washington. It is doubtful our efforts radically energized or changed mass public opinion. But the endorsements from a wide range of civic groups and meetings with editorial boards were quite important. In addition to “closing the off-ramps” for wavering senators, those efforts helped educate a key stratum of opinion leaders about NATO, its history, and its continuing relevance. It is a type of effort that can help bridge partisan divides across a range of national security initiatives today.

There was much that was unique about the politics surrounding the 1997-1999 ratification of NATO’s enlargement. The historical moment; the bipartisan genesis; the strange-bedfellows coalition of supporters—these were all unusual and yet crucial to the outcome. The gusts of nationalism and protectionism blowing through American and global politics today make internationalist initiatives more challenging now in many ways. Yet the success of the ratification effort two decades ago helped establish an enduring point of relative consensus in the politics of American foreign policy and provides some guidance for how to sustain other internationalist initiatives in the years ahead.

## Notes

1. Remarks of President W. J. Clinton to the People of Detroit; October 22, 1996; <https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1996/s961022a.htm>.

2. The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, “Public and Opinion Leaders Favor NATO Enlargement,” News Release, October 7, 1997.

3. Polling by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs found the share of the public wanting the United States to “play an active part in world affairs” stayed nearly steady during this period, moving from 64% in 1986 to 62% in 1990 and 65% in 1994. Dina Smeltz, Ivo Daalder, Karl Friedhoff, Craig Kafura, and Lily Wojtowicz, “America Engaged: American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy (Chicago Council on Global Affairs: Chicago, 2018), p. 2. At the same time, however, there was an 18-point spike after the Cold War in the share of the public that agreed with idea that, “we should not think so much in international terms but concentrate more on our national problems and building up our strength and prosperity here at home.” The share agreeing rose from 60% in 1985 to 78% in 1991. “America’s Place in the World: An Investigation of the Attitudes of American Opinion Leaders and the American Public About International Affairs” (Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press: Los Angeles, November 1993), p. 31.

4. Jeremy D. Rosner, *The New Tug-of-War: Congress, the Executive Branch, and National Security* (Brookings Institution: Washington, 1995).

5. Quoting Charles Kupchan, in Jeremy D. Rosner, “NATO Enlargement’s American Hurdle: The Danger of Misjudging Our Political Will,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1996.

6. Dean Acheson, Speech on the proposed North Atlantic Treaty, March 18, 1949, p. 14. Truman Library website: <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/nato/doc5.htm>.

7. During mid-1997, as the administration was preparing for NATO’s Madrid Summit and the decision about which states would first be added to NATO, the Romanian ambassador told me worriedly that if Romania were not made part of the first group of new Central European members then it would never gain membership. I responded that, to the contrary, if we did the first round right, Romania’s addition in the next round would be largely uncontroversial. On May 8, 2003, four years after we gained strong Senate approval for the first round of enlargement, the Senate voted to support the admission of Romania and six other states by a vote of 96-0. It is true that the intervening events of September 11, 2001 had strengthened the hand of the U.S. executive branch on national security issues; but the content of the



debate on the second round of enlargement makes clear that the Senate felt many core questions on this issue had been settled in the 1998 debate.

8. Stull Holt, *Treaties Defeated by the Senate* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933).

9. Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, (Columbia University Press: New York, 2002); George W. Grayson, *Strange Bedfellow: NATO Marches East* (University Press of America: Lanham MD, 1999); James M. Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Brookings Institution Press: Washington, 1999).

10. Transcript of Clinton's State of the Union, <http://www.cnn.com/2005/ALLPOLITICS/01/31/sotu.clinton1997/index.html>. James Lindsay and others have stressed the importance of clear signaling to Congress by presidents and their administrations about their national security priorities. See, for example, *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy* (The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1994).

11. Trent Lott, "The Senate's Role in NATO Enlargement," *Washington Post*, March 21, 1997, p. A-27.

12. Grayson, *op. cit.*, 137.

