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NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION
ENLARGEMENT

TIME FOR PAUSE?

By

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Preface

As a member of the United States Air Force who served in North Atlantic Treaty Organization positions for more than seven years, I believe the Alliance has played a crucial role in the security of the United States. Few would question the fundamental importance the Alliance has played in preserving US national interests; therefore, any effort to alter the Alliance and the implications of its outcome are a significant event worthy of study.

The time I spent during research was invaluable to my study and understanding of the NATO Alliance and the world events shaping the political decisions of the post-Cold War era. I would like to thank Colonel Mark List, Air War College faculty, for his expertise and guidance while writing this research paper.

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Do Not Choose a Policy that Runs the Risk of Creating Powerful Opposing Coalitions.¹

- Russett and Stam

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION ENLARGEMENT: TIME FOR PAUSE?

Introduction

Few would question that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the most successful military alliance in history. From its beginning in 1949, NATO has been a bulwark of security, winning the Cold War against the formidable Soviet Union. Over the last 15 years, numerous rounds of expansion have placed former client states of Russia under the security umbrella of NATO. Enlargement has been a part of NATO since its origin, yet during the Cold War expansion seemed obvious with a clear and present danger to European sovereignty poised across the eastern frontier. Today, the United States (US) continues to spearhead further NATO expansion, with the Alliance growing from 16 nations in 1998 to 28 today. US strategy for enlargement has followed a two-fold strategic framework; that enlarging NATO will make it stronger and that it will foster greater regional stability. These statements have undergone vigorous debate since 1994, when Allied leaders announced they were considering further NATO enlargement. Ten years have passed since the first post-Cold War NATO enlargement, which included the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, thereby establishing a sufficient period for renewed debate of the US enlargement strategy. In the end, analysis will show that US policies that support further enlargement neither strengthen the NATO

Alliance nor do they foster greater regional stability and therefore, should not be pursued on behalf of US national interests.

Part I - Strengthening the Alliance

US policy states that expanding NATO will make it stronger; therefore, a first step is to define the term ‘stronger’ and explain its use. There are four areas that require analysis to determine whether enlargement makes NATO stronger; these are military, economic, geo-strategic, and political strength. Only after careful study of these interrelated areas will the true strength of the NATO Alliance emerge.

Military Strength

Military strength is about warfighting capability and best analyzed by studying military spending and modernization, and overall force structure. These two areas are of particular importance to the US, where defense spending, research and development, and force modernization dwarfs its Allies and the rest of the world. Perhaps more importantly, the US learned a difficult lesson during Operation ALLIED FORCE, where its Allies could not compete technologically. Therefore, any policy pursuing NATO enlargement must afford benefits in some or all of these areas. One of the best measures of a country’s armed forces strength and technological sophistication is defense spending per troop in uniform.² Moreover, a direct link exists between a country’s technological capabilities and its ability to integrate into the NATO force structure, as well as create synergy with US forces. The table below shows defense spending per troop for the 28 members of NATO, with the 16 pre-1999 members listed first.

Table 1 NATO Defense Spending Per Troop (in Year 2000 Dollars)

PRE - 1999 NATIONS	\$ SPENDING PER TROOP
USA	240,000
UK	149,700
FRANCE	158,900
SPAIN	52,200
NORWAY	136,700
PORTUGAL	60,130
THE NETITSLANDS	151,100
BELGIUM	111,700
LUXEMBOURG	196,800
GERMANY	123,180
ITALY	94,000
DENMARK	147,700
CANADA	126,700
GREECE	41,100
TURKEY	15,700
POST-1999 NATIONS	\$ SPENDING PER TROOP
CZECH REPUBLIC	20,300
POLAND	14,400
HUNGARY	16,300
BULGARIA	3,500
ESTONIA	11,875
LATVIA	9,100
LITHUANIA	9,700
ROMANIA	2,600
SLOVAKIA	9,100
SLOVENIA	38,300
CROATIA	15,100
ALBANIA	680

Source: Thomas S. Szayna, *NATO Enlargement 2000-2015* (Arlington, VA: RAND Press), 57-60.

Table 1 depicts the considerable challenges surrounding NATO defense investment both before and after enlargement. The median spending level was \$90,000 with just four pre-1999 members below this level. No new member reached a level even half this; moreover, if you consider that US defense spending has expanded rapidly since 9/11/2001, the disparity grows more ominous.

What the table cannot show is the role politics plays in European defense spending and investment. In many ways, European nations use the military as a jobs program by allocating a large percentage of spending toward personnel rather than

technology, procurement and research and development.³ In essence, more troops are in uniform than required, exacerbating modernization efforts as finite budgets are overwhelmed with personnel costs. Although not universal, this is more pervasive in Eastern Europe where militaries use conscription widely.

Force structure also plays a key role in military strength. During each post-1999 enlargement, NATO has used the Membership Action Plan (MAP) process to reduce disparities and help potential members prepare for accession to NATO. Underlying this process is the tenet of interoperability. NATO has embraced this concept for sixty years and it was to play a key role in the selection of new members. Today NATO has more than 1,000 Standardization Agreements in force with a goal of full military interoperability. The goal of enlargements was, and always has been, for aspirant states to have forces fully capable of integration into NATO. A 2005 study though, found that no post-1999 new member has fully met the membership criteria; moreover, each new member fell short on promised defense investment and restructuring.⁴

There are numerous force enablers that the US and NATO seek to create synergy within the existing forces. Far from all inclusive, these include strategic airlift, air refueling, air defense and overall expeditionary force capabilities. The new NATO members fail to measure up in these areas as well. In fact, RAND found that these nations have limited potential to make any military contribution to NATO due to low investment, technology, training and overall military sophistication.⁵

The enlargement of any organization involves costs and military organizations may be the most costly; therefore, for NATO to bolster itself defensively while balancing available means and ends demanded the robust use of cost-benefit analysis. Previous

examples demonstrate that the overall benefit to NATO of post-1999 members from a military capabilities standpoint was quite low. Cost, on the other hand, was quite high. Conservative estimates of enlargement for Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary were \$35 Billion with some estimates exceeding \$100 Billion.⁶ More importantly, numerous US Allies, including Germany and France said they would not help with the cost, leaving the overburdened US to fund new entrants.

Overall, when looking at military spending, force structure and modernization, enlargement has not assisted the pre-1999 NATO nations create a stronger, more capable defense establishment.

Economic Strength

Economic growth and the power of national economies can prove invaluable to an alliance. Wealthy nations, as defined by gross domestic product (GDP) and per capita income have larger budgets to fund fielded forces while also fostering innovation and technological advancement across the economy. Alliances demand investment with members obligated to fulfill their portion of treaty mandates. Although not strictly enforced, NATO requires an obligation of two percent of GDP for military forces, and for the most part, both old and new members uphold this obligation. Wide disparity occurs though, because national incomes across Europe are so divergent. The following table shows GDP per capita and GDP growth rates for NATO members.

Table 2 Gross Domestic Product and Growth Rates

NATION	AVG GDP PER CAPITA	% GROWTH RATE
USA	\$46,900	1.1%
UK	\$36,400	0.7%
FRANCE	\$33,200	0.3%
SPAIN	\$34,700	1.9%

NORWAY	\$59,300	2.6%
PORTUGAL	\$22,200	-0.1%
THE NETITSLANDS	\$40,400	2.0%
BELGIUM	\$37,400	1.0%
LUXEMBOURG	\$81,000	-0.9%
GERMANY	\$35,400	1.0%
ITALY	\$31,300	-1.0%
DENMARK	\$37,100	-1.2%
CANADA	\$39,100	0.4%
GREECE	\$32,000	2.9%
TURKEY	\$11,900	1.1%
CZECH REPUBLIC	\$25,900	3.0%
POLAND	\$17,300	4.8%
HUNGARY	\$19,800	0.6%
BULGARIA	\$12,900	6.0%
ESTONIA	\$21,000	-3.6%
LATVIA	\$17,300	-4.6%
LITHUANIA	\$17,800	3.1%
ROMANIA	\$12,200	7.1%
SLOVAKIA	\$21,900	6.4%
SLOVENIA	\$29,600	3.5%
CROATIA	\$18,300	2.4%
ALBANIA	\$6,000	6.1%

Source: CIA World Factbook 2008.

Table 2 depicts GDP per capita in the pre-1999 NATO enlargement states as \$37,000 annually with only Turkey and Portugal below this level, while the 12 new members have a GDP per capita of \$18,000 annually. These figures represent a standard of living more than fifty percent below the pre-1999 enlargement states, with only the Czech Republic and Slovenia nearing parity. Even by predicting much larger annual growth rates, it will be over two decades before most new members approach parity, representing twenty years of membership burden inequality.

The implications of these disparities are profound for NATO and the US. First, it divides the nations into two groups, known as security consumers and security producers, where wealthy nations become obligated to consuming nations that are incapable of making necessary defense investment.⁷ RAND found that most new members lacked the

resources and capabilities to ensure their sovereignty, much less provide benefit to NATO.⁸ Secondly, economic inequality can lead to free riding, where nations fail to make necessary investment knowing others will do so, either on their behalf or out of their own national interests. The US is highly vulnerable to free riding due to its massive defense budget and Allies that will not shoulder the expansion burden.

In the end, economic strength appears to hold promise in the very long run, where NATO enlargement may create a stronger, more capable defense establishment; however, the timeline for robust and meaningful contribution appears to be well in the future.

Geo-Strategic Strength

In addition to military or economic benefit, adding territory can create a stronger alliance. Historically, landmass has been a key determinant of strength due to areas of geographic importance with basing access, defensive characteristics or natural resources. Whether NATO has used such a decision process as part of enlargement is open for debate, with numerous examples supporting each side of the argument. Any consideration of enlargement must be cognizant that expansion creates new responsibilities and increases burdens to the alliance. As noted NATO expert, R.W. Rauchhaus wrote, “Not only do new members require NATO’s protection; they also heighten concern over destabilizing events near their borders.”⁹ This point is critical because NATO is obligated to defend all member states. Enlargement since 1999 shows a true mix of results. Many considered the accession of Poland a crucial decision to stymie the power of Russia and Germany. Although unforeseeable at the time, the historical context of this decision is rooted in several hundred years of European history.¹⁰ During the same enlargement round though, the inclusion of Hungary is highly

questionable. A landlocked nation that, at the time, had no contiguous border with NATO defines it as a strategic burden. In fact, a study by Kidd found that it would be nearly impossible to defend Hungary without violating the territory of other states such as Austria.¹¹

Future enlargements showed a similar dichotomy, where some membership decisions relied on geo-strategic importance, while others ignored it altogether. Following the 2001 terror attacks in the US, locations for basing and deployment activities were central to US thinking which brought Romania into NATO. Had 9/11 not occurred, Romania's membership was doubtful, but its valuable strategic location changed the decision calculus.¹² In contrast, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are extremely difficult to defend and require substantial NATO air and naval presence in the Baltic Sea. Perhaps more importantly, these three nations are geographically close to Russia and have a significant diaspora of Russian minorities within their borders. Although these concerns are valid and worthy of consideration, a 2009 study by Keller found, "There was no NATO planning on how to defend the Baltic Republics against a Russian incursion."¹³

Political Strength

Political strength is extremely difficult to measure. Clearly, NATO enlargement has created new and open dialog between many nations. As an organization with 60 years of heritage, NATO has well developed institutions to foster dialog at the highest levels of government. Even looking outside of NATO, new members found their ability to approach other nations enhanced by NATO membership. Poland, for example, found strength through NATO and improved its relationship with Russia and Germany. At the

same time though, as NATO expands eastward nations often do not share a common set of European values. Widely divergent national interests can become a roadblock and ultimately result in less coherent policy and understanding between members. Some experts have repeatedly warned, “A larger NATO will have more to argue about and, lacking discipline, the arguments are likely to become more frequent and bitter than they used to be.”¹⁴ One only needs to look at the nations who supported US action in Iraq to find a dividing line between new and old NATO; moreover, divisions and disagreement on policy are now commonplace. Enlargement further east, at some point, results in the European West enlarging with non-European, non-western nations. Ultimately, political strength is derived from a foundation of common beliefs, shared national interests and political goals. As Rynning wrote, “Centuries of historical development and culture will limit the extent to which they can agree on the purpose of policy and the incorporation of this purpose into a framework of flexible cooperation.”¹⁵

Did enlargement make NATO stronger? In the end, it appears that despite the analytical value of these four tools to determine and validate enlargement decisions, NATO failed to implement them with necessary rigor. Whether including a nation proved advantageous to Alliance strength became irrelevant; instead, political expediency drove decision-making. If candidates had benefits, they received vocal promotion; on the other hand, if they provoked new unanswered questions they were quietly ignored. The US promised enlargement would strengthen the Alliance and enhance regional stability. Analysis to this point shows NATO strength to have been dissipated at worst or unchanged at best; therefore, the implications of enlargement on regional stability demands careful review.

Part II – Enhancing Regional Stability

One of the most contentious issues surrounding NATO enlargement is its effect on regional stability, as numerous studies predicted NATO enlargement could greatly alter regional stability. The nations of Eastern Europe that lived under communism for five decades believed they had earned entry into NATO; moreover, history will always remember a dividing line in Europe created by Stalin after World War II. At the same time though, the Cold War was over so did a true need exist to bring Eastern European nations into NATO? And if so, for what purpose? Considered by some a magnanimous gesture, more plausible is that the US and NATO used a hedging strategy in the event that Russian democracy failed. There is also considerable evidence that NATO membership has allowed some nations, such as Poland, to grow stronger ties with Russia through a position of strength created by NATO membership.¹⁶

Stability: Russia

As Thucydides said, policy can create an enemy where none exists. The cost of NATO expansion has been reduced trust and a decline in cooperation with Russia.¹⁷ In fact, Russia has shown steadfast opposition to NATO enlargement by repeatedly stating, “Any expansion of the zone of NATO is unacceptable.”¹⁸ More importantly, NATO actions have undermined the very people it supported in Russia—those interested in a liberal, market driven economy with strong ties to the West. There are many things NATO and the US want from Russia; internal reform, reductions in nuclear arms, energy supplies and support for the war on terrorism. Russia though, believes the West broke a promise about expansion and more dangerously, feels isolated from European politics. Since 1997, US and NATO policies have generated animosity and the effect has been

widespread. The non-democratic opposition has grown markedly, cooperation with the West is no longer desirable and most Russians question the entire post-Cold War outcome.¹⁹ Numerous experts believe NATO enlargement has exploited Russian weakness and given its democracy a ‘no confidence vote’.²⁰ Although Russia is a weakened militarily, it has repeatedly demonstrated an ability and willingness to use other instruments of power to great advantage. Since 2007, Russia has cut off natural gas supplies to Ukraine and Western Europe three times. Additionally, it nationalized oil exploration firms and voided multinational drilling partnerships with western firms after investment of billions of dollars. Western banks also renegotiated Russian debt with large losses due to the 2008 collapse in oil prices. The use of economic leverage is no surprise and many European experts predicted it, in fact, a 2002 study wrote, “NATO enlargement will only result in antagonizing Russia, which may respond by failing to honor its financial debts.”²¹ Russia has also adamantly opposed US missile defense in Europe, ultimately threatening to retarget the US and NATO with nuclear missiles if deployment of the system is granted.²² Diplomatically, the West has seen Prime Minister Putin and President Medvedev clash with Western leaders on numerous topics. Table 3 depicts events since the 2008 election of President Obama.

Table 3 Anti US/NATO Actions by Russia since November 2008

Threatened NATO members with offensive missile deployments
Cut off energy supplies to Ukraine and Germany
Had spies caught operating at NATO headquarters
Pulled out of NATO-Russia Council meeting
Expelled two NATO diplomats from Moscow
Took military control of South Ossetia and Abkhazia's borders

Source: The Heritage Foundation. Webmemo #2431. May 8, 2009.

Although the Russian military is not the immediate threat that existed during the Cold War, it also cannot be ignored with spending up 27% from 2008-2009 and key programs, such as long-range bombers and blue water naval capability, reinvigorated.²³ More importantly, Russia demonstrated the willingness to use military power to reinforce its political position. The 2008 war in Georgia still brings wide debate, and although Georgia initiated the conflict, it is clear Russia used disproportionate force against the population. In 2005, NATO enrolled Georgia in a Membership Action Plan that, arguably, provided a false sense of security. Recalling the argument surrounding NATO's geo-strategic strength, Georgia is an ideal example where true integration into NATO would be difficult because it cannot be credibly defended.²⁴ Russia makes no apologies for action in Georgia; moreover, a great deal of evidence exists showing Russia encouraged the separatist movement after the 2005 MAP approval.²⁵ Just as Russian natural gas embargoes and refusal to repay financial debts were predicted, so was the conflict in Georgia. The CATO institute wrote, "Extending security commitments to nations in what Russia regards as its geopolitical backyard virtually invites challenge at some point."²⁶

What happened in Georgia must be seen as a Russian redline, clearly stating regardless of US or NATO intentions, that she will involve herself politically and militarily in nations where her interests are at stake. In fact, in 2008 Russia proclaimed the right to intervene in the sovereign states of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova.²⁷ By establishing a 'Monroe Doctrine' of her own, Russia has made it clear that provocation by NATO encroachment is not acceptable. In both word and deed, Russia has challenged the underpinnings of European security and interstate political

accord. In fact, in August 2008 Russia repudiated the Helsinki Pact of 1975, which recognized the inviolability and sanctity of borders in Europe.²⁸ The Heritage Foundation issued a formal statement saying, “Russia's new foreign policy principles were intended to send clear signals to multiple audiences. The message to the world was that Russia has a ‘zone of privileged influence’ and that it holds veto over the aspirations of the people living in it; that initiating democratic reforms or pursuing a pro-Western policy in Russia's backyard is dangerous.”²⁹ Events in Georgia also created political discord within NATO with several nations voicing concern that NATO policies forced Russia into a corner. Germany has been the most outspoken, with their foreign minister saying, “Russia was reacting to Western provocation...following the 2008 Bucharest Summit where discussion of Ukrainian and Georgian NATO membership was a key part of the agenda.”³⁰

The provocative statements made by Russia apply uniquely and dangerously to Ukraine--a large Russian diaspora and a deep role in Czarist history place Ukraine in a special situation. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, a great deal of tension has fomented between the two nations with the numerous natural gas embargoes providing but one example. Prime Minister Putin’s stance is clear, “Ukraine is not even a real state and it would cease to exist if it dared to join NATO.”³¹ In August 2008, President Medvedev also enunciated five clear principles for Russian foreign policy.

Table 4 New Russian Foreign Policy Directives – August 2008

Respect for international law
Unacceptability of a unipolar world led by US
Rejection of policies leading to confrontation and isolation
Determination to protect Russian citizens and interest overseas
Priority on friendly ties in regions where Russia has privileged interests

Source: Wishnick, E. *Russia, China and the US in Central Asia: Prospects for Great Power Competition*. Carlisle, PA: US Army Strategic Studies Institute, 2009.

Both US and NATO actions have heightened tensions; the combination of a US Congressional Resolution supporting Ukrainian democracy and free markets coupled to the MAP greatly alarmed Russia. The US State Department also published a statement saying the US, “Very firmly and strongly supported Ukraine’s territorial integrity.”³² Today the possibility exists that the US and NATO could have to support these words with action. As it did in Georgia, Russia has followed a policy of issuing all people of Russian heritage within Ukraine a passport. Analysis by the US State Department and Stratfor indicate this step build a premise for future action by Russia against Ukraine.³³ Should this happen, it is questionable whether the West has the capability or political will to defend Ukraine. Perhaps more worrisome, the Strategic Studies Institute found, “Russian military planners envision all kinds of potential military scenarios in Eurasia due to NATO’s enlargement that would force Russia to rearm or retaliate, if necessary with nuclear weapons.”³⁴ In Ukraine and Georgia, the US and NATO enacted policy that increased regional tensions—precisely the opposite of that promised.

In a globally interconnected world, it is also naïve to view NATO enlargement as only influencing Europe. One can also look at the US-NATO-Russian relationship with respect to basing rights in Central Asia to see a broad shift since 9/11/2001. Initially Russia supported US efforts in the war on terrorism, not just in Afghanistan but also with intelligence sharing, airbase access and even funding for Northern Alliance forces. The US-Russian relationship was so positive in 2001 Cohen wrote, “Russia’s contribution to the US counter-terror operation in the weeks after September 11 exceeded that of all its NATO Allies combined.”³⁵ Following the last round of NATO enlargement much has

changed, with the Russian Duma calling NATO enlargement the “most serious threat to our country since 1945.”³⁶ Russia has increasingly opposed US and NATO policies since the March 2004 enlargement, including basing in Central Asia, support to the war on terrorism and failure of the NATO-Russia Council following the invasion of Georgia. Clear signals are being broadcast, such as new Russian doctrine published in 2006 and supported by a speech to the Federal Assembly stating the US and NATO are the main enemies and security threats to Russia.³⁷ Here is a nation that had been more beneficial to the US war on terror than any NATO Ally had, yet five years later considers the US its greatest threat and makes every effort to stymie efforts in Central Asia.

Stability: China and Asia

Using a global view the worst outcome for the US and NATO is renewed great power competition with China and Russia aligned together. Unfortunately, NATO enlargement has provoked this dangerous path because, “The further NATO expands into the Soviet Union’s old areas, the more Russia is forced to look to the south and east rather than west.”³⁸ Today, even US allies outside Europe have shown concern and questioned enlargement rationale. The Indian Minister of External Affairs said, “A policy seemingly designed to bring Russia and China together is of great concern to India.”³⁹ Clearly, a Russia-China linkage is a disastrous outcome and yet that is precisely where many believe NATO enlargement is moving. Authors Russett and Stam argue, “Preventing any such alignment should be central to all thinking about the future of NATO and the policy that creates a worst-case scenario coalition to oppose you must not be set to chance.”⁴⁰ Numerous indicators show Russia and China have the best relationship in their history, such as Putin visiting China seven times between 2004 and

2008.⁴¹ Additionally, China and Russia now hold routine military exercises, with the first held in China in 2005 with 10,000 troops participating.⁴² The year 2007 signaled even greater cooperation, marking the first time Chinese troops operated in Russia since 1969, with Putin enacting a special law to allow for their presence.⁴³ Today we also see Russian and Chinese media broadcasting anti-NATO messages. For example, a 2008 joint Russian-Chinese media statement targeted NATO saying, “Some countries security cannot be guaranteed at the cost of some others,’ including expanding military and political allies.”⁴⁴ Instability created by NATO encircling Russia does not stop with improved Russia-China relations but involves all of Central Asia.

NATO policy decisions cannot ignore the political events shaping the landscape in Central Asia because following the 9/11/2001 attacks NATO espoused a new global role with its NATO Response Force (NRF). First use of the NRF was in Afghanistan where more than 20,000 non-US NATO troops deployed. Additionally, European nations realize vast natural resource corridors crisscross Central Asia and are of paramount importance to their economic livelihood. Russia, China and their allies will not cede regional dominance to NATO and mounting evidence supports this assertion. Today Russia and China place great emphasis on Central Asian regional associations and alliances, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Although never intended as an anti-US or NATO block, enhanced diplomatic, economic and military cooperation between members has created countless obstacles. Regional experts call the SCO, “A consolidation of anti-US interests in Central Asia and a Sino-Russian Partnership.”⁴⁵ When originally formed in 2001 the US and NATO downplayed the SCO’s significance; however, this changed profoundly in 2005 when Russian political

influence altered US and NATO basing rights in Central Asia. First, Uzbekistan denied basing access for 27 of 28 NATO members (exception Germany). Following this diplomatic success, the SCO persuaded Turkmenistan to limit force presence, and then in 2008 attempted to have US and NATO forces ejected from Kyrgyzstan. Although NATO and US forces still use Manas airbase, SCO intervention forced costly renegotiations with annual fees skyrocketing from \$2M to nearly \$200M.⁴⁶

Table 5 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States

<u>FULL MEMBERS</u>	<u>OBSERVER MEMBERS</u>
Russia	India
China	Iran
Kazakhstan	Mongolia
Tajikistan	Pakistan
Kyrgyzstan	Sri Lanka – Dialog Partner
Uzbekistan	Belarus – Dialog Partner

Source: SCO website. See <http://www.sectsco.org/EN/>

Recently the political underpinnings of the SCO have fundamentally changed with global consequences. Following the 9/11/2001 attacks, the SCO made statements that the US, Europe and Central Asia all shared a similar terrorist problem and the cross-border chaos it creates. This was welcome news to the US who knew Russia was battling major insurgencies in Chechnya and elsewhere, yet by 2008 a huge political shift had occurred. Regional experts Blank and Cohen both concluded, “China and Russia intend to use the SCO as a vehicle for coordinated opposition to the US in Central Asia.”⁴⁷ As evidence of this policy, Russia and the SCO opened dialog with Iran and invited it to become an SCO observer member. This policy shift instantly transformed an organization formerly against terrorism to one allowing membership to known state sponsors of terrorism. Over the same period, Russia and China repeatedly blocked UN

efforts to halt Iranian nuclear ambitions. Moreover, by choosing to invite Hamas to Moscow, as a known terrorist organization, Russia gave it legitimacy and usurped US Middle East peace efforts.⁴⁸ Overall, SCO policies developed by Russia and China harm US and NATO efforts across Europe, Central and Southern Asia and beyond.

Russia has not limited its efforts to balance the US and NATO by using the SCO. It has also reinvigorated an alliance called the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Through the CSTO, Russia has created a very NATO-like rapid reaction force capable of deployment across Asia. The CSTO is not a reincarnated Warsaw Pact, but it is another tool to balance US and NATO aspirations. Although the CSTO conducts dialog with the UN, SCO and other regional security groups, Russia's dominance within the organization causes many to question its legitimacy. What is not in dispute is Russia's goal with its CSTO and SCO security framework, "Increase coordination between the two organizations in an effort to become the hub of all Eurasian security networks."⁴⁹

Table 6 Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Member States

Russia	Tajikistan
Armenia	Kyrgyzstan
Belarus	Uzbekistan
Kazakhstan	

Source: www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/int/csto.htm

NATO's enlargement program was to bring greater regional stability, yet as Alliance nations grow closer to Russia and bring Western influence to a region formerly a client of Russia the instability grows. Both Kissinger and Schultz wrote, "Isolating Russia is not a long-term sustainable policy."⁵⁰ Russia has not sat idly and watched NATO grow unchecked; rather, it has solidified its own alliances to the south and east.

From Europe to Asia to China, organizations are now disrupting US and European influence as well as thwarting political efforts to halt nuclear proliferation and terrorism. Did NATO enlargement bring greater regional stability to Europe? This is debatable, but a more fundamental question to ask is, 'At what cost was European stability gained?' In a globally interconnected world, evidence clearly indicates greater instability and opposition to US and NATO policies spanning Southern and Eastern Europe, Russia, Central Asia and China.

Conclusion

Over its 60-year history, NATO has proven indispensable in maintaining peace across Europe and the transatlantic region. In the post-Cold War era, NATO has chosen a course of rapid enlargement, growing from 16 to 28 member states. As justification, the US has espoused two arguments as the foundation of its NATO enlargement policy. First, enlargement would strengthen NATO and second, enlargement would enhance regional security. By defining alliance strength as the sum of military, economic, geo-strategic and political strength, part one of this essay found NATO enlargement has been far from an unequivocal success. Militarily, new members are ill equipped, poorly trained and fail to meet NATO standards in nearly all areas; moreover, they cannot achieve required integration without prohibitively costly modernization programs. Enlargement appears more neutral viewed economically. Although wide disparities in national incomes and GDP exist across Europe, many new members are growing rapidly. In the near term though, the lack of capital will prevent military modernization and investment, limiting interoperability within the NATO structure. Viewed through the geo-strategic lens, enlargement fostered numerous successes, such as securing NATO's

perimeter and bringing nations in key strategic locations into the Alliance. Expansion has also enlarged NATO's area of responsibility and increased burdens. New members require NATO's protection and security umbrella, but also bring the concern of destabilizing events within or near their borders. Politically, expanding the Alliance has promoted greater dialog with member states and their neighbors. At the same time, enlargement decisions failed to identify that expansion could isolate and anger Russia as well as concern other nations around the globe.

Whether enlargement has enhanced regional security is a difficult question to ascertain. Evidence clearly indicates that by using enlargement as a hedging strategy against Russian democratic backsliding, NATO has created a self-fulfilling prophesy. US and NATO policy choices failed to see how decisions within one region would influence another, as well as foster dangerous second and third order effects. Enlargement has transformed the benign security environment in Europe into a new era of balancing involving Russia, Central Asia and China. Efforts to limit nuclear proliferation and the spread of terrorism now encounter political obstacles heretofore unexpected. Today Russia and China have open dialog and political harmony on countless issues. Although far from certain, even the possibility of a Russia-China strategic partnership is the worst possible outcome for NATO, as any such alliance will fundamentally alter the global strategic landscape.

It is time to halt NATO enlargement and to focus on building credible political, economic and military institutions of the recent entrants. More importantly, a dedicated effort to reengage Russia and dialog with China is now a political imperative. Thucydides warned of policy that creates an enemy where none existed, yet unyielding

NATO enlargement has encircled Russia and pushed it into dangerous new alliances that degrade Western security and spawn myriad security problems for the US and its security partners. Without question, further enlargement will weaken NATO and negatively affect overall inter-regional stability. Overall, pursuit of further NATO enlargement is not in the US national interest; rather, it is time to build a new 21st century security strategy that fosters dialog and diplomacy, forever erasing Stalin's great East-West divide.

Notes

¹ Russett and Stam, *The Use of Force*, (Oxford, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers), 317.

² Thomas S. Szayma, *NATO Enlargement 2000-2015*, (Arlington: RAND Press), 56.

³ David S. Yost, *The NATO Capability Gap*, Survival, Volume 42, Number 4, 2-4.

⁴ Sean Kay, *What Went Wrong With NATO?* Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Volume 18, Number 1, 73.

⁵ Thomas S. Szayna, *NATO Enlargement 2000-2015*, 68.

⁶ Carpenter and Conry, *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, (Washington, D.C.: CATO Press), 3.

⁷ See Joel R. Hillison, *New NATO Members: Security Consumers or Producers?* (Carlisle, PA: US Army Strategic Studies Institute), April 2009 for a detailed study of security consumers versus producers.

⁸ Thomas S. Szayna, *NATO Enlargement 2000-2015*, 68-70.

⁹ R.W. Rauchhaus, R.W., *Explaining NATO Enlargement* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass and Company), 33.

¹⁰ Stephen J. Blank, *European Security and NATO Enlargement*, (Carlisle, PA: SSI Press), 33.

¹¹ Andrew Kydd, *Trust Building, Trust Breaking: The Dilemma of NATO Enlargement*, International Organization 55, 4, Autumn 2001, 805.

¹² Richard E. Rupp, *NATO Enlargement: All Aboard? Destination Unknown*, East European Quarterly, XXXVI, Number 3, September 2002, 350.

¹³ Patrick Keller, *Revitalizing NATO*, American Foreign Policy Interests, Vol 31, Issue 2, March 2009, 375.

¹⁴ R. W. Rauchhaus, *Explaining NATO Enlargement*. (Portland, OR: Frank Cass and Company), 33.

¹⁵ Sten Rynning, *NATO Renewed: The Power and Purpose of Transatlantic Partnership*. (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan), 182-183.

¹⁶ Alexandra Gheciu, *NATO in the New Europe*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), 72-74.

¹⁷ Andrew Kydd, *Trust Building, Trust Breaking: The Dilemma of NATO Enlargement*, International Organization 55, 4, Autumn 2001, 808.

¹⁸ Carpenter and Conry, *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, (Washington, D.C.: CATO Press), 105.

¹⁹ Andrew Kydd, *Trust Building, Trust Breaking: The Dilemma of NATO Enlargement*, International Organization 55, 4, Autumn 2001, 808.

²⁰ Carpenter and Conry, *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, (Washington, D.C.: CATO Press), 103.

²¹ Richard E. Rupp, *NATO Enlargement: All Aboard? Destination Unknown*, East European Quarterly, XXXVI, Number 3, September 2002, 352.

²² Jonathan Eyal, *Who Lost Russia? An Inquiry into the Failure of the Russia-Western Partnership*. (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor and Francis Inc.), 71.

²³ Jonathan Eyal, *Who Lost Russia? An Inquiry into the Failure of the Russia-Western Partnership*. (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor and Francis Inc.), 71.

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²⁴ Carpenter and Conry, *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, (Washington, D.C.: CATO Press), 36.

²⁵ Jonathan Eyal, *Who Lost Russia? An Inquiry into the Failure of the Russia-Western Partnership*. (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor and Francis Inc.), 72.

²⁶ Carpenter and Conry, *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, (Washington, D.C.: CATO Press), 3.

²⁷ Jonathan Eyal, *Who Lost Russia? An Inquiry into the Failure of the Russia-Western Partnership*. (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor and Francis Inc.), 72.

²⁸ Ariel Cohen. *Russia and Eurasia: A Realistic Policy Agenda for the Obama Administration*. The Heritage Foundation. March 27, 2009.

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³¹ Jonathan Eyal, *Who Lost Russia? An Inquiry into the Failure of the Russia-Western Partnership*. (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor and Francis Inc.), 15.

³² Richard Boucher, *US State Department Daily Press Briefing*, Washington, D.C., November 29, 2004, www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2004/38805.htm.

³³ Stratfor Analysis, *Ukraine: Russian Passports and Future Intervention*, November 14, 2008, www.stratfor.com/analysis/20081114_ukraine_russian_passports_and_possible_future_intervention?ip_auth_redirect=1.

³⁴ Stephen J. Blank, *Toward a New Russia Policy*. (Carlisle, PA: US Army Strategic Studies Institute), 54.

³⁵ Richard E. Rupp, *NATO Enlargement: All Aboard? Destination Unknown*, East European Quarterly, XXXVI, Number 3, September 2002, 356.

³⁶ Richard E. Rupp, *NATO Enlargement: All Aboard? Destination Unknown*, East European Quarterly, XXXVI, Number 3, September 2002, 351.

³⁷ Stephen J. Blank, *Toward a New Russia Policy*. (Carlisle, PA: US Army Strategic Studies Institute), 46.

³⁸ R. W. Rauchhaus, *Explaining NATO Enlargement*. (Portland, OR: Frank Cass and Company), 30.

³⁹ R. W. Rauchhaus, *Explaining NATO Enlargement*. (Portland, OR: Frank Cass and Company), 31.

⁴⁰ Russett and Stam, *The Use of Force*, (Oxford, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers), 305-317.

⁴¹ Jonathan Eyal, *Who Lost Russia? An Inquiry into the Failure of the Russia-Western Partnership*. (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor and Francis Inc.), 70.

⁴² Elizabeth Wishnick, *Russia, China and the United States in Central Asia: Prospects for Great Power Competition*. (Carlisle, PA: US Army Strategic Studies Institute), 20.

⁴³ Elizabeth Wishnick, *Russia, China and the United States in Central Asia: Prospects for Great Power Competition*. (Carlisle, PA: US Army Strategic Studies Institute), 21.

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⁴⁷ Stephen J. Blank, *US Interests in Central Asia and the Challenges to Them*. (Carlisle, PA: US Army Strategic Studies Institute), March 2007, 13. Ariel Cohen, *The Dragon Looks West: China and the SCO*. Heritage Lectures, Number 961, August 3, 2006, 2.

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⁵⁰ Henry A. Kissinger and George P. Schultz, *Finding Common Ground*, International Herald Tribune, October 1, 2008, 6.

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