Introduction

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Since the early 1990s, the efficacy of enlarging the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been vigorously and exhaustively debated in a number of academic and policy publications. This volume is not intended to revisit the argument over NATO enlargement into central Europe or the 1997 Madrid invitation to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to join the alliance. Today, NATO enlargement is a political reality. This fact sets the baseline for our analysis.

The contributors to this volume, though they differ on specific issues, share the view that the focus of discussion has now shifted to the long-term integration process itself. The success or failure of the 1999 NATO enlargement will have lasting consequences for the future of the alliance and for European security. As the dust of political and academic jousting over the enlargement decision settles, it is critical to review the assets and liabilities that Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are likely to bring to NATO as its full members in the years to come. The inclusion of the central Europeans should be viewed in the broader context of the ongoing restructuring of the alliance. The key issue for the 1999 enlargement and the focus of this book is how the entry of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic will ultimately fit into the continuum of NATO's evolutionary process, or, to put it simply, what the new entrants get from it and what they bring to the table.

Though a detailed discussion of NATO reforms falls outside our scope, this book treats enlargement not as a self-contained development but as an aspect of the transformation of NATO, under which a number of reforms in its structure and mission have been implemented since the early 1990s. The heated arguments over whether to bring the central

Europeans into NATO often overshadowed changes that had already taken place within the alliance.[1] Prior to the 1997 Madrid enlargement decision, the key landmarks of NATO's evolution were the June 1992 ministerial decision to engage in peace support operations, the growing recognition of the need for member nations to deploy forces outside their own immediate subregion, the proposal to reorganize NATO's integrated command structure, and the 1994 approval of the Combined Joint Task Force concept.

The process of internal reform of NATO in the 1990s has progressively transformed it away from the collective defense organization it was during the Cold War era and toward a future trans-Atlantic security community. This transformation is incomplete, and there are few parallels in history to guide it. It is marred by the inevitable tension between the traditional role of the alliance and its new tasks. The successful integration of the three new members is even more important if one considers the strain accompanying reform that by 1998 had begun to show within NATO. For example, disagreement over the issue of AFSOUTH (European Command of Allied Forces South) halted the reintegration of France into the NATO military command structure. Similarly, friction between Spain and the United Kingdom over Gibraltar, and between Spain and Portugal over the Canary Islands, underscored the obstacles to sustaining consensus within the alliance. The selection of the three new entrants also sparked contention, as a majority of European NATO members pushed for the inclusion of Romania and Slovenia in the first trench alongside the central Europeans. Most importantly, the ongoing dispute over the projected long-term costs of absorbing the three new members into NATO, and whether the European or the American side ought to shoulder the lion's share of the cost, goes to the core of intra-alliance strain associated with the enlargement issue. As defense budgets in Europe decline, the question must be asked, What can the three new entrants expect in terms of actual NATO assistance, and consequently, will the new NATO periphery be properly provided for or overextended? This is even more significant as Europe continues to fall behind the United States in terms of defense technology, leaving the United States in the position of principal provider of security to the new member states.

Another issue is whether, after 1999, the process of NATO enlargement can be kept open through the Partnership for Peace program, and whether the process will ultimately succeed in stabilizing the transitional postcommunist states. Notwithstanding official pronouncements about the "open process" and the movement from collective defense to cooperative security, it is unclear what the long-term consequences of enlargement will be. The impact of the new entrants on the alliance should serve as an indicator of how this evolution will proceed. If NATO successfully completes its transformation, it will become an institution for coordinating security-projecting military operations extending beyond the territory of its members. In other words, if NATO completes the transition to a democratic security community, it will not need a permanent threat in order to endure, and it will thrive in the current low-threat environment in Europe. It was this assumption that initially pushed NATO to negotiate and formalize a new relationship with Russia, and it seems to underlie the preference to rely on interoperability, integration, and reinforcement in place of the traditional stationing of troops to provide for the security of the new entrants. It remains to be seen, however, whether the Poles, Hungarians, and Czechs fully appreciate the implications of this NATO strategy and the security environment in the region it is likely to create for them.

The position of Russia vis-à-vis the alliance is critical in this regard. It is unclear to the new entrants, or to NATO itself, what the limits of the new partnership with Russia might be. That is, what would constitute grounds for NATO to rethink or terminate its "special relationship" with Russia?[2] The core of the alliance has retained the characteristics of the traditional collective defense organization, while at the same time NATO has moved to assert the "democratic security community" aspect of enlargement. The NATO reform process now in place is increasingly driven by considerations other than the single overriding geopolitical imperative that defined the cycles of enlargement during the Cold War era. The three new members join NATO at a time when the alliance continues to work through the central dilemmas of its structure and mission.

Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic expect to receive real security guarantees from NATO, on a par with those extended to members in

the Cold War era. In that sense, their view of the alliance is closer to the traditional concept of collective defense. They have made considerable progress in reforming their economies and political systems, and they have begun working on military reform. Among the questions that will be answered in the first decade of the twenty-first century are what the ultimate impact of the new allies' membership in NATO will be on Russia and Ukraine, what the long-term enlargement costs will be, and whether the first round of enlargement will also turn out to be the final one. Answers to these questions depend on what kind of allies Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic prove to be. Their relative influence within the alliance and the value the alliance guarantees to them will ultimately depend on their ability to contribute to the alliance missions. Whether or not they will be treated as full members in the alliance will rest on the qualitative value of their contribution, in both the military and the political arenas. As long as they are not perceived as meaningful contributors, they will continue to have inferior status. The important question that this book seeks to address is whether the appropriate yardstick to measure their contribution ought to be found on the military or the political side of the equation.

The long-term success or failure of NATO enlargement has an important dimension in American foreign policy. Although the end of the Cold War has led to an increase in isolationist sentiments in the United States, the recent experience of the Balkan wars has demonstrated to all but the most skeptical how important NATO and American leadership of the alliance remain to the future security of Europe. That in Europe today no imminent threat confronts the core continental powers is in large part a testimony to America's success in stabilizing and transforming this formerly explosive region of the world. As NATO takes its first step into the area that during the Cold War was "enemy territory," and as Washington works to reshape the trans-Atlantic core of NATO, it is imperative that we consider the implications of the enlargement decision on NATO and the U.S. security position in Europe.

For the United States, the success of absorbing the new entrants into NATO is important from a very practical perspective. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has radically cut its forces in Europe, from

320,000 to approximately 100,000 in 1999. In addition, there has been a shift of nuclear weapons out of Europe. In short, while the United States continues to provide the bulk of logistics and support, the European military contribution to the alliance is now more important than ever to sustaining NATO's missions and commitments in the region. It has become apparent in the aftermath of NATO's 1999 air campaign against Serbia that the United States will increasingly look to its European allies to contribute ground forces for out-of-area operations. If the NATO objective of promoting transparent defense planning and multilateral information sharing is to result in a genuine European-American cooperative security arrangement, the absorption of the three new members into the alliance must be successfully completed. Their military potential matters to NATO—especially in the case of Poland, the largest of the three new members. In this book, we hope to identify aspects of the process that are likely to facilitate the successful integration of the three countries' armed forces with NATO, as well as those that are likely to hinder it.

Several broadly shared assumptions served as guides for all the contributors. First, the current round of expansion is occurring in a generally benign security environment in central Europe, notwithstanding the turmoil in the neighboring Balkan peninsula. Hence, security considerations for the three entrants run parallel with, and are often overshadowed by, their broader objective of rejoining the affluent West. In that context, for the central Europeans NATO membership is part and parcel of the ongoing postcommunist modernization; as such, it is tied to their aspirations to join the European Union early in the twenty-first century. (Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic anticipate that they will join the EU around 2003–2006). Second, historical memory remains a potent factor shaping the policies of the three new NATO members. They often view NATO as an insurance policy to prevent a repetition of the trauma that marked most of their national existence in the twentieth century. Third, all three are in dire need of military modernization if they are to become meaningful contributors to the alliance. Although they have been making efforts to streamline and upgrade their militaries, they expect that NATO membership will provide them with infrastructure funds to complete their military reform, as well as access to Western armaments

industries. They also expect an overall increase in foreign investment in their economies due to increased investor confidence in their stability and security. In that sense, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic see NATO membership as a step in the direction of the EU, as well as a benefit in and of itself.

Another common thread that runs through this volume is the persistence of residual problems inherited from the communist era. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic share a relative weakness of civilian expertise on national security matters. Also, though the three have established the institutional framework for effective civilian control over the military, they need to consolidate it and to build a military ethos compatible with that of other NATO militaries. One test of the long-term success of the enlargement process is how effectively the the new allies' inclusion in NATO contributes to the consolidation of their democratic institutions and the emergence of a Western military ethos. The contributors to this book address this question by reviewing the new entrants individually and then framing the debate in the broader context of NATO's evolution.

Although the 1999 inclusion of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic is generally considered to be the first round of NATO enlargement after the Cold War, in reality NATO had already expanded into the territory of the former Warsaw Pact in 1990, when it took in the five new Länder of former East Germany. The book opens with a review of the East German case in order to draw lessons that might be pertinent for the current entrants from Germany's eight years of experience since the incorporation of the East German military into the Bundeswehr, the West German army. This is not to suggest that the East German case can be applied directly to the three new allies; indeed, it is different in many respects from those of the 1999 NATO entrants. In the German case, the National People's Army was directly taken over by the Bundeswehr. The East German experience also differs from that of the central Europeans in terms of institutional design and specific policy decisions. Nevertheless, the East German case does provide a rare "ground-floor" insight into the process of democratizing the postcommunist army and the cost of the wholesale transformation of a Warsaw Pact military ethos to make it

compatible with NATO's. The trauma at the "micro level"—that is, the problem the former communist military encounters as it attempts to build a Western-style democratic army—is shared across central Europe. As a social laboratory, East Germany provides fascinating insights for making projections about the new members.

Four issues of the East German case are particularly relevant to the 1999 NATO entrants. First, there is the task of ensuring loyalty to NATO through reindoctrination of the former East German military. This is a central question for the Poles, the Hungarians, and the Czechs as well. Second, there is the task of changing the command structure and adapting equipment to fit the NATO model. "Interoperability" is the fundamental goal for all new entrants, and we can learn much about this problem from the German experience. Third, there is the task of preparing former East German personnel to deal with parliamentary oversight, something that is equally at issue in the Polish, Hungarian, and Czech cases. Finally, there is the task of coping with a perceived decline in professional status in society, along with some economic hardship, that is common to all former Warsaw Pact militaries.

The three chapters focusing on Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, respectively, address three crucial "post-enlargement" questions: What are the new entrants likely to get from NATO? What will NATO get from them? And what will the enlargement mean for the alliance as a whole as it continues to adjust to the post–Cold War environment? Each chapter seeks to answer these questions at several levels of analysis. First, it reviews the political dimension of enlargement as seen from Warsaw, Budapest, or Prague, in the belief that the expectations the three bring to the table will have lasting effects on the long-term success of enlargement. Each chapter looks at the way in which NATO enlargement fits in the context of its country's historical experience and the geostrategic transformation of central Europe in the aftermath of the Cold War. It reviews the level of popular support for NATO membership among Poles, Hungarians, or Czechs, as well as the rationale for such support. Each case study discusses the state of the armed forces and the military reform programs of the new members, including their level of modernization and interoperability with NATO, their defense budgets, and their readiness to

participate in NATO operations. The contributors also consider the issue of civil-military relations, as well as the domestic prestige of central European militaries.

The three country studies are followed by a chapter on the practical policy considerations that went into the NATO enlargement decision and that are likely to remain significant for years to come. The goal of this summation is to identify the extent to which the initial objectives of NATO enlargement have become transformed by the inevitable political compromises attendant on the expansion process. The key question here is whether the implications of enlargement for NATO as an international organization are what all its advocates in the West and in central Europe initially hoped to achieve. This task is far more complicated than it might appear at first glance. Many aspects of the enlargement process remain unknown. Since the initial round was only part of a larger process of changing NATO's mission, the decision remains controversial. This continued debate after the 1999 enlargement is tied to different core assumptions about the role of the United States in Europe and the world. It is unlikely to end any time soon because it is a function of ongoing policy deliberations about further enlargement and the evolution of the alliance.

The book's concluding chapter offers projections about the possible contribution the new allies can make in the context of the ongoing restructuring of NATO, as it adjusts to its new role in the Balkans after the 1999 air campaign against Serbia. It also speaks to the implications of NATO enlargement for regional security in central Europe. For Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic—with their recent memories of Soviet domination—national security and military power are still, at the core, first and foremost *national* matters. However, NATO is committed to "de-nationalizing" the security policies of member states and providing an institutional framework for thinking about security in cooperative terms. NATO membership makes it difficult for states to "re-nationalize" their military, and helps weaker countries to build relations with their more powerful neighbors without a heavy element of insecurity. Thus, NATO provides a mechanism to transcend the vagaries of power politics in Europe—something that is especially important for the smaller European

states, and, considering their experience in the twentieth century, for the central Europeans most of all.

Historically, in addition to its primary mission of containing the Soviet Union, NATO has deflected the pressures on member states to compete for regional influence in Europe. Today, an ancillary objective to this fundamental goal is to create a mechanism for managing regional conflicts in Europe and along its periphery, with NATO's intervention in Kosovo providing an important test case. If the 1999 enlargement serves to alter the "national" pattern of the new members' thinking about security, it will be at least a partial success, notwithstanding the shortcomings of the process or the present weakness of their military establishments. The test of 1999 Nato enlargement may ultimately be found in the political rather than the military arena.

Notes

1. See Thomas-Durell Young, *Reforming NATO's Military Structures: The Long-Term Study and Its Implications for Land Forces* (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 1998).

2. See *1998 Strategic Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1998).