

**“An Expanded NATO Confronts Terrorism and Instability”**

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**Prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the Southern Political Science  
Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, January 5, 2007**

## **An Expanded NATO Confronts Terrorism and Instability**

Why did the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) outlast the end of the Cold War in 1989-91? Further, what impelled the alliance to expand its membership by two-thirds between 1999 and 2004? After all, the Warsaw Treaty Organization disappeared within a few years of the end of the Cold War, and some seemingly prophetic voices proposed that NATO would follow the same fate. The answer to such questions lies in the lethal combination of terrorism and instability. Both forces destroy lives, undermine confidence in existing political processes, and fan each other's flames. The thesis of this paper is three-fold. First, post-Cold War terrorism and instability reinforced the need to preserve and expand the NATO organization. Second, raging terrorism and instability both coincided with and complicated the NATO admission process. Third, an expanded NATO offered both increased capabilities and new challenges in devising strategies to counter terrorism and instability. Most of the evidence in the paper will more fully develop the third part of this thesis.

First, the peace dividend that was eagerly anticipated after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its East European Empire never materialized. By 1992 major wars in the Balkans erupted from pre-existing ethnic instability. Many asked why traditional West European powers did so little to control that type of conflict. Why could the neighborhood not police itself? Given the reluctance of individual countries to react, eyes turned toward NATO. The military alliance did begin to respond by taking a series of proactive steps to contain the Balkan Wars. Hendrickson (2006, pp. 39-116) demonstrates how a series of NATO Secretaries General took gradually escalating actions to dampen the conflict. For example, Manfred Wornat was able to get NATO to

endorse a more aggressive stance in 1994 to protect UN safe havens in Bosnia. Willy Claes prodded the organization to use limited military force in Bosnia just prior to the Dayton Accords of 1995. Javier Solana coordinated plans with the United States to carry out the Kosovo bombing campaign of 1999. Given that turbulent situation, expansion of the military alliance also made sense, for the new NATO members would be much closer to the Balkans and more able to contain the instability/terrorism spiral.

Second, once NATO planners had opted to expand their organization through the Partners for Peace Program of the mid-1990s, the Balkan conflicts clearly propelled movement to the next step of full NATO membership. The organization admitted three nations in 1999 and seven more in 2004. In the middle of that process, the attack by al Qaeda on American targets took place on September 9, 2001. Since the source of the attacks was in the Persian Gulf region, further NATO expansion took on a greater urgency. In fact, Bulgaria and Romania were added to list of potential new members in part because they offered a kind of buffer against the violence that threatened to flow in from the east. Although the Iraq War of 2003 was not a NATO mission, the organization and its Secretary General George Robertson took responsibility for protecting alliance member Turkey from retaliation by Iraq (Hendrickson, pp. 117-141). The admission process was further complicated by the emergence of new nuclear powers at roughly the same time. Both India and Pakistan successfully tested nuclear weapons in successive weeks in 1998. Accelerated work on nuclear capabilities proceeded in Iraq, North Korea, and possibly Iraq (Terzuolo, 2006, p. 45). The weak alliance reaction was partly based on preoccupation with the demanding NATO admission process.

Third, after NATO had expanded from sixteen to twenty-six members by the middle of 2004, the alliance was positioned to confront in a more broad-based way the confluence of terrorism and instability connected with the Balkans, al Qaeda, the war in Iraq, and actual nuclear proliferation. On the one hand, an enlarged alliance was able to manage the Kosovo conflict from start to finish. Further, this larger organization planned the peace-making operations in Bosnia before turning over technical control in 2004 to the European Union (EU). Then in 2006, NATO took full charge of the military missions in increasingly troubled Afghanistan. Also, the ten new alliance members were more likely to feel some obligation to “help out” in the “coalition of the willing” in Iraq, in light of their recently acquired NATO obligations. On the other hand, the expanded alliance of necessity had more potential internal conflict to manage. Would Bulgarians and Turks work smoothly together when on the same assignment, in light of the historic ethnic conflicts between them? Would troops from the Baltic countries in the north of Europe be easily integrated in units that contained troops from nations formally occupied by the Soviet Union?

Exploration of this three-fold thesis will include four specific steps. First, what has been the reality of joint NATO operations in the conflicted areas between 1995 and 2006? What kinds of missions have been most important for the alliance, and how have old and new members worked together? Second, how well have recent NATO summits worked both to address common problems and to plot new strategy? Third, how is the expanded alliance developing new capabilities that can more easily contend with the joint dynamics of terrorism and instability in the extended neighborhood? Fourth, what elements from NATO’s immediate neighborhood could contribute to the missions of the

alliance? What future membership opportunities exist for close-by states in the east? What will be the relationship between NATO and the burgeoning defense infrastructure of the EU to the West? Perhaps, careful analysis of this three-fold thesis can illuminate more fully the fragile relationship between the expanded military alliance and the atmosphere of instability and terrorism in which it is now forced to breath.

### **An Expanded NATO and Military Missions that Confront Terrorism and Instability**

#### *Iraq*

Expansion of NATO paid dividends initially for an American bent on invasion of Iraq. The alliance itself confined its mission to guarantees of Turkey's security. Initially, Turkey had considered permitting its territory to be used as a jumping off point for troops going into northern Iraq. Even after they backed off from that plan, there was concern that their link to NATO might make them into an inviting target by Iraqi forces and their allies in other nations. Thus, the organization gave them protection but did not endorse the wider plans for full-scale war in Iraq. However, the three nations that had joined NATO in 1999 teamed up with the seven who were slated for membership in 2004 to sign the Vilnius Ten Agreement just before the war began. The Agreement gave actual support for the U.S. plans to eliminate Saddam's regime from power (Terzuolo, 118). While this support was partly based on the fear that weapons of mass destruction were so close to the new member states from Central Europe, its was also predicated on the parallel experiences of those nations with leaders who had also unleashed terrorist acts against their own populations.

A number of the new alliance members also provided more concrete support for the mission both during and after the initial phases of the war. For example, the Czechs

led a twelve-nation Chemical/Biological/Radiological/Nuclear (CBRN) Defense Battalion during the course of the war. They sent their own CBRN unit to Kuwait to be on hand for any use of such weapons, and they dispatched their field hospital to Iraq itself (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic 2005a). After the first few months of war, the Czechs sent a one hundred person contingent to train local police officials and to strengthen policy security for the multinational forces (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic 2006a). Soldiers have rotated in and out of that unit every three months and have worked as military policy instructors at a new academy called JTA. In this way an important new NATO member has had direct experience with the instability in Iraq and with the terrorism that has accompanied the entire post-2003 operation.

Poland also was a major player after the fall of Saddam, for they received major command responsibilities of the Central South area of Iraq, just south of Baghdad. More than half the nations making up this strategically important peacemaking operation were new NATO members. The others included Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005a). Although Bulgaria was not part of that Polish-led operation, they did send four hundred troops to the mid south region (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005b). Similarly, the Slovaks during this time period kept 105 defensive personnel in Iraq, and they also trained a small number of Iraqi security forces. These Slovak troops also played a role in de-mining operations and destruction of munitions (SME 2005a).

NATO as a military alliance did provide a training center in Iraq for senior Iraqi security and defense officials. Some alliance partners actually assisted on the ground in Iraq, while others provided equipment and finances from the outside. NATO did not

manage the mission by itself but shared administration with the U.S.-led Multinational Force (MNF) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005c).

Most of these new members of NATO began to think about a pull out of their troops at the end of 2006 or sometime in 2007. Those nations undergoing such a debate included the Czech Republic Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. However, they promised to continue their work in training Iraqi officers and in engaging in patrols and searches. During the summer 2006 elections in Slovakia, continuation of troops entered the political campaign itself. The political party Smer won the June elections, and it had promised during the election to pull out all troops by February 2007 (SME 2006a). Even such a staunch ally as Poland began to rethink its initial willingness to take on such a large role in the program to stabilize post-war Iraq. In late 2006 stories emerged about the request of Secretary of State Colin Powell for an initial dispatch of 1,000 Polish soldiers. At the time he justified the request on the basis of al Qaeda activity in Iraq. However, the controversy in Poland in December 2006, centered on the issue of whether he actually had knowledge of such al Qaeda movements (iDNES 2006a).

In this way, new NATO members got a taste of what it was like to send military forces into a highly unstable situation enmeshed in a whirlpool of various kinds of terrorist activities. While very little of the activity of their militaries was linked to NATO operations per se, the fact that all of them had just joined NATO made them both more willing to follow the U.S. lead and to prove their value to the alliance. However, after several years the leaders in most of these countries felt increased pressure from their populations to re-think this particular commitment in the global battle against terrorism. In fact, several of these new alliance members wondered whether involvement in Iraq

might make their own territory more vulnerable to an attack by terrorists, a worry that would emerge on a number of other NATO-related issues as well.

### *Afghanistan*

Afghanistan was also the sight of considerable activity by new NATO members. Both key themes of this paper are dramatically represented by this involvement. The country itself has been characterized by continuing instability since 2001, and the terrorist bin Laden has continued to operate out of the country or somewhere along its border with Pakistan. The NATO connection in these operations became a formal one at the end of 2006, when the alliance assumed responsibility for all military activities there.

The original name of the allied mission in Afghanistan was the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and thirty-five NATO and non-NATO nations contributed over 12,000 troops. Romania played a particularly significant role that force. For example, in October 2004, they took part in a 2,000 member team whose key goal was maintenance of security during the elections being held there. The same team monitored the September 2005 national legislative and provincial council elections. In 2005, Romanians also sent their 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry “Red Scorpions” Battalion to assist the Afghan Transitional Authority in developing security structures and identifying reconstruction needs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005d).

Czech soldiers also played a role in peace-making operations in Afghanistan at several points in time. First, in 2004, they sent military units to assist in disarmament, demobilization, re-integration, anti-drug policy, and defense of the Kabul airport. In addition, they worked with provincial reconstruction teams outside of Kabul, guarded VIP’s and NATO vehicles, and took on additional responsibilities in the remote

northeastern part of the country (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic 2006b). Then, in March 2006, their 601<sup>st</sup> Group of Special Forces set up Prostějov Base in Kandahar Province. This 120-person unit was very specialized and included parachutists, divers, pyrotechnicians, and new experts (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic 2006c).

Throughout 2006 a number of additional issues emerged that added to the complexity of the activities by new member states. In May, the U.S. Senate approved an immigration bill that would temporarily interrupt visas for Poles. The rationale was that Poles had not fulfilled their promised quota of troops for Iraq and Iran. Czechs and Slovaks were similarly threatened (iDNES 2006b). By September the Poles had responded by promising an additional 900 troops to their 100-person contingent already in Afghanistan. However, the Poles delayed the dispatch of the additional troops until February 2007, and they refused to permit them to be deployed in the volatile south of the country (USATODAY 2006a). In the fall Romania again promised more assistance in the form of an additional 190 troops, for a grand total of nearly 800 soldiers (iDNES 2006c). The biggest change occurred on September 28, a date on which NATO decided to take full control of all military operations across Afghanistan. In fact, in July the alliance had taken control of all operations in the troubled southern portion of the country, and so this was an extension to the entire nation (USATODAY 2006b).

Further, in 2006 the ambiguity of reactions by new member states became apparent. There was, of course, some pride in the contributions made by the small NATO newcomers. For instance, Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek visited the Prostějov Base actually located in the Czech Republic, and he used the occasion to hand out medals

to Czech researchers and pyrotechnicians who had just returned from Afghanistan (iDNES 2006d). The new Slovak government under Robert Fico initially responded to NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer by agreeing to locate its 570-member engineering unit in the conflicted southern part of Afghanistan (SME 2006b). Later they decided to delay that decision until March 2007 (SME 2006c). At the same time, many of the new NATO partners had requested “caveats” that limited their operations in Afghanistan. Some were concerned about the inadequate equipment provided to their troops. Romanian troops at the base in Qalat did not possess military vehicles that could navigate the difficult terrain, and thus U.S. troops in Humvees took over such operations. Others added conditions that prevented their troops from going into combat (USATODAY 2006c).

Obviously, the movement into Afghanistan of troops from NATO exposed the militaries of some new members to the risks that accompanied the battle against terrorism. They met their obligations with growing confidence but also developed doubts about the price paid for such obligations.

### *Kosovo*

Kosovo was a third site of NATO peace-making operations, and the new alliance partners made significant contributions. Since this mission was in Europe itself, the contributions to it were a logical extension of the Partnership for Peace Plan of the 1990s and an answer to the critics who said Europe did too little during the 1992-95 Bosnian War. The operation was called KFOR, and by 2005 all new alliance members were involved in the province in some way. It was a logical follow-up to the NATO-led bombing campaign of 1999. Estonia, for example, sent one platoon to a specialized

police unit that operated in Priština. They interacted with the local population in order to build trust and also investigated both organized crime and crimes in the military (SME 2005b). Further, Estonia and Latvia contributed to protection of the economically important Mitrovica area in the northeast (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005e). Polish and Lithuanian troops located in Urosevac worked to switch law and order functions from military units to a civilian agency (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005f). Bulgaria and Romania found themselves involved in quite a different category of activity in the southeastern city of Prizren. They helped to protect minority enclaves, patrimonial sites, and freedom of movement. Bulgarian engineers helped deactivate mines and unexploded ordnance in the same area (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005g). A similar mission involved protection of the Serb minority in the southwest of the province. Czechs, Lithuanians, and Slovaks assisted in ensuring the right of return of refugees, in supporting the work of humanitarian operations, and in monitoring the Serb-Kosovo border (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005h). As well as these operations went, Slovaks in particular learned that potential costs to them could be high. In January 2006, a plane bringing over forty of their soldiers back from Kosovo crashed on the Hungarian-Slovak border, and there was only one survivor (SME 2006d).

Czechs were particularly proud of their contributions in Kosovo. Like the Poles in Iraq, the Czech Republic received command responsibilities of the multinational brigade “Střed,” a unit with the important task of administering the central hub of Priština. Their overall troop number there was 500, and they commanded units consisting of 1,600 troops. These responsibilities extended from July 2005 until the end

of 2006 (Ministry of Defense of the Czech Republic 2006a). They acquired a number of unanticipated functions such as presenting school programs on the danger of land mines, protecting the forests against illegal tree cutting, and halting the drug traffic through the area (iDNES 2006e). Even after the end of the command portion of this activity, the Czechs would remain active in the unit under new leadership in 2007.

In sum, Kosovo had been highly unstable in the latter part of the 1990s. A province with a 90% Albanian majority was stapled into the nation of Yugoslavia in which the Serbs were overwhelmingly dominant. It was a classic example of instability that afflicted former communist space after the end of the Cold War. Following the NATO air strikes of 1999, there was a desperate need to prevent future violent outbreaks and terrorist actions by one ethnic group against the other. NATO peacemaking forces helped to keep the lid on after 1999, and new NATO members played a critical role. This made sense as they were closer to the scene of action and able to offer positive models of post-communist development. As such, they contributed to the twin battles against terrorism and instability in ways quite different from tactics needed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

### *Bosnia*

Bosnia presents yet a very different case study of security needs in the post-Cold War period. Both instability and internal terrorism by various ethnic groups against one another were common features of the country's experience during the three years leading up to the Dayton Accords of 1995. Against much skepticism NATO established its SFOR unit in order to prevent future outbreaks of ethnic unrest and violence. For the most part, the mission was a successful one, so successful in fact that NATO turned the

operation over to the EU at the end of 2004. For the last two years, nations have contributed to that regional peace-making mission under the aegis of EUFOR. New alliance members were involved in the original NATO-led mission but have continued to contribute in recent years under EU leadership.

In fact, a number of new members played a role even when they were simply engaged in the Partnership for Peace Program. For example, a 250-member Slovenian air force unit flew helicopters and planes into Belgrade in late 2002. Their medics, doctors, and nurses were also part of an important medical cell at Butmir (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005i). Then Hungarians and Romanians joined them in a unit trained in riot control (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005j). In fact, Slovakia made its first contribution to a NATO operation in the same year in the form of a small helicopter unit (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005k). Hungary too became involved, as they sent a light cavalry regiment to assist in hostage rescue as well as search and rescue missions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005l).

After the EU took over control of the mission, a number of the new NATO members continued on in the same vein under the new leadership. Czech airmen based at Píerov operate helicopters in investigative flights over Bosnia, and they also transport military material. A unit of eighty Czech soldiers supplements the Austrians in protecting the base at Tuzla (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic 2005b). They are also involved in rooting out corruption and in defeating organized crime. Of course, these kinds of activities redound to the credit of the EU rather than NATO. However, in most cases, skills, infrastructure, equipment, and experience are bequests of the military alliance.

Activities to control instability and terrorism in Bosnia are interesting and useful for a number of reasons. Many have worried about the potential connections between the Islamic or Albanian community there and unrest in places further east. Further, in a sense Bosnia is a microcosm of a larger struggle among some of the world's great religions/cultures. Also, activities by new NATO members have actually occurred at three distinct points. Some contributed when they were Partners for Peace. For three nations that period extended up until 1999, and for an additional seven it continued until spring of 2004. Further involvement continued by the three nations admitted to NATO in 1999. From 1999 until 2004, they contributed as full alliance members. Those countries included Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. Finally, a third period of involvement was the period beginning in early 2005. At that point all ten members were technically part of an EU mission. However, their background in NATO and in its admission process prepared them for the challenges to which they had grown accustomed.

### **Summitry**

Several NATO Summits have underlined the importance of the new members for the continuing struggle against terrorism and instability. The 2002 summit in Prague was notable for several reasons. First, it was actually held on the territory of one of the new members admitted in 1999. Already, the Czech Republic had something of a track record of support for alliance activities. After extended discussion they had given the green light to the bombing campaign in Kosovo the same year they joined. As the summit was held in November of 2002, it was clear that requests would come to the Czechs for assistance in the form of specialized units in the upcoming Iraq War. Second, it was at

the Prague Summit that the decision was made to expand the alliance by seven during the next few years. Inclusion of the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia was meaningful, since they had formerly been part of the Soviet Union. Slovakia received an invitation that it had not obtained in 1999, the year in which the Czech Republic came in with Hungary and Poland. Elections had removed strongly nationalist forces from their leadership, and by 2002 their patterns of political and economic evolution matched those of the Czechs. Slovenia was the post-Yugoslav nation that was most prepared to contribute to NATO and thus they entered the admission track. As noted above, the surprising choices were Bulgaria and Romania. Economically, they lagged behind the others being offered admission, and they also needed to make further progress in political democratization. However, they did offer a large buffer against the violence and instability so characteristic of the Gulf and Southwest Asian regions. Thus, their admission itself was linked to the new type of regional and even global war.

Another significant meeting was the one held at the end of September 2006, in Slovenia. Again, the site was one of the new members admitted only two years before. Much of the discussion centered on Afghanistan, and a key concern was obtaining commitments of more troops. In addition, pressure was put on all alliance partners to consider donations of equipment to the Afghan Army, even if it was not possible to increase troop levels from individual countries. Problems also existed in the restrictions that some members had put on the operations of their own troops in the country. Some had prohibited their militaries from operating in the most dangerous parts of the country, and others had permitted their forces to operate only during the daylight hours. In particular, the Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld pushed the new members to loosen

these restrictions so that American troops should not have to such a heavy burden of risk(USATODAY 2006d).

In November 2006, Riga, Latvia was the site of another NATO Summit. Of course, Latvia was one of the new members admitted to NATO in 2004. In addition, some of the new alliance partners played a crucial role in the security arrangements for the meeting. Security was particularly challenging due to the existence there of a port. The renowned Czech chemical unit, for example, received the job of setting up a decontamination center in the heart of the city (iDNES 2006f). Crucially, the alliance made decisions about admitting additional new members. They invited Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia-Hercegovina to become members of the Partnership for Peace Program. However, they also warned both Serbia and Bosnia-Hercogovina that they needed to cooperate closely with the World Court at The Hague in turning over alleged war criminals from the Balkan Wars of the 1990s. Presumably, the Partnership for Peace period would be a time of testing of their resolve in those important matters. Alliance leaders commented on the progress being made by Croatia, Macedonia, and Albania. However, they did not set any timetable for the movement of those nations onto the NATO track (iDNES 2006 g, SME 2006e).

Overall, it is clear that NATO used its summits both to cement the activities of the new members into the alliance agenda and to prepare the way for additional members in the future. Their newest Partners for Peace were the strongest remaining non-NATO members in the Balkans, and their potential contributions to the battle against terrorism further east seemed to outweigh their decade-long resistance to overtures from the World Court to turn over suspected war criminals in a timely manner. Location of a number of

summits on the territory of the new member states stood as a symbol of their military contributions and of their general support for U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

### **New NATO Capabilities**

In light of the alliance's complicated battle with terrorism, thoughts turned in part to new capabilities and infrastructure. Several of those plans in which the new partners were most necessary were creation of a NATO Reaction Force (NRF) and location of a new U.S. and future NATO base on the territory of a new member. The Reaction Force would enable alliance strategists to count on a flexible, mobile unit that could move quickly to meet an emerging threat. A new base would be located closer to the Persian Gulf region and would also be geographically in a country that had been more accepting of U. S. military operations after 9/11. In both of these debates, the new members were counted on to play an important role.

NATO's Rapid Reaction Force was a product of the 2002 Prague Summit. Its potential missions were to include civil defense, peacekeeping, enforcement of sanction, demonstrations of force, and evacuation of civilians. Such activities would not duplicate current missions like KFOR in Kosovo, for the NRF would not stay long in one place. In particular, this new capability would offer an ideal opportunity to integrate new members with older ones and, at the same time, spread out broadly the responsibilities entailed in its future missions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic 2004a). A good example of its usage was the radiological and chemical company that came into existence at the end of 2003. Some of its earliest exercises were held in Valencia, Spain. In those exercises four senior NATO members played critical roles. However, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Poland also took part. In fact, the Czechs played the lead role in

this unit from December 2003 to January 2005. At that point, the Spanish took over the guiding role (Ministry of Defense of the Czech Republic 2005a). Leadership was thus evenly shared between old and new members. The Czech Republic is a good example of the types of additional contributions that were expected. They also supplied a mechanized battalion, a chemical defense company, a special forces company, a mobile unit for a passive tracer system, and several aircraft (Ministry of Defense of the Czech Republic 2006b).

Hopes existed to have the NFR fully operational by the end of 2006 and they announced at the Riga Summit in November that they had met that goal. Although it was fully operational and ready for dispatch to any place threatened by terrorist actions, there was some controversy over its usage. France, for instance, had blocked its use in Lebanon in summer 2006, a time at which the Israeli Army and Hezbollah were fighting one another (SME 2006f). In general, this unit possessed the capability to re-locate to anywhere in the world with five days notice (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2006a). A level of flexibility of this nature was a step in modernization of a military alliance set up for set piece battles in Europe during the Cold War.

Discussion peaked in 2006 in reference to placement of a future U.S. anti-rocket base in one of the two new NATO members. After a period of transition, the base would shift from American to NATO control. Poland was one country that received careful consideration, and the Czech Republic was another. For example, American experts checked four sites in the Czech Republic and seemed to be leaning towards one in Libavá near Olomouc. The American experts gave the impression that they wanted the exclusive rights to make decisions about use of the base, to carry out inspections, and to control

information about which weapons were actually on the base. Czech officials tried to reassure the population that mutual agreement between the United States and the Czech Republic would determine key issues about the base. However, Czechs citizens remained concerned about the base making their nation into a more likely target of a terrorist attack. For some, the idea of a foreign base set up by a superpower was too reminiscent of the period in which they were occupied by Soviet and Warsaw Treaty Organization forces. At one point in the middle of 2006, a prominent public opinion poll revealed that 83% of the Czech population opposed construction of this base. (iDNES 2006h).

In fact, NATO representatives signed an agreement to construct a system of anti-rocket bases only several hours before the opening of the Riga Summit. They noted that it had been one of their announced objectives listed at the Prague Summit of 2002. The NATO Secretary General sought to sell the base as one instrument for protecting alliance soldiers who were involved in military operations, even in the Persian Gulf. It would also be useful in light of the nuclear potential of Iran and North Korea. He noted that soldiers in both Gulf Wars had been vulnerable to and victimized by rocket attacks (iDNES 2006i). Estimates for the date of opening the base ranged from 2010 to 2012. Since the Czech Republic was a prime candidate for location of this base, public opinion polls there became increasingly detailed. Findings included the fact that persons who were generally content with NATO membership were more likely to support the base than those who had drawn the opposite conclusion. Many Czechs did not think that deterrence of a nuclear attack from North Korea or Iran should be a top priority of the alliance. If the base only possessed radar capabilities, then public support increased.

Emplacement of anti-rocket capabilities was the feature of the plan that led to sharp reduction of support (iDNES 2006j).

Both of these new NATO programs addressed deficiencies noted in a number of on-going post-Cold War conflicts. In particular, the new capabilities would provide important added resources for combating terrorism in the Gulf region. NRF would provide the alliance with a temporary offensive tool that could perhaps deter enemies and aggressors. Construction of the anti-rocket base would provide parallel defensive capabilities in case of an unanticipated attack from a rogue state anywhere in the world. It would also provide a bit more cover for alliance militaries engaged in the seemingly unending and dangerous conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan

#### **Further Expansion**

Already, at the end of 2006 summiteers made the decision at Riga to add three Balkan states to the Partners for Peace Program. As noted above, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia-Hercegovina were the nations given this opportunity. All had been part of the larger Yugoslavia that existed from 1918 until 1991. Those nations offered geographic position as an advantage to NATO in the global battle against terrorism. They also offered more strength than did some of the other potential members in the Balkan neighborhood. Croatia may have carried less baggage from the Balkan Wars of the 1990s than did Syria, but they had less to offer NATO. In contrast, Serbia had provided much of the military muscle and officer corps to Cold War Yugoslavia. At the same time, each of these new Partners had much experience with ethnic unrest inside their own nations. Thus, their own tribulations might give them more understandings and skills in operations further east.

Georgia was another potential NATO partner but one afflicted by both its own civil wars and hostility from and towards Russia. Georgia is further distant from the NATO geographic core than even the Balkan nations, but its leaders had clamored for consideration by the alliance. In the fall of 2006 Sergey Ivanov, the Russian Minister of Defense, charged that NATO was providing illegal weapons to Georgia and thus strengthening it in the battle of wits with Russia. In fact, Ivanov pointed at the new alliance partners from the former communist countries as the key culprits (SME 2006g). Clearly, inclusion of Georgia in the alliance was a long way off, in spite of their geopolitical importance as a country bordering on the troubled Persian Gulf area.

Ukraine, since the 2004 Orange Revolution, is another potential partner. This vast nation had the potential to offer much and did in fact contribute to post-9/11 peacemaking missions in the Gulf area. However, the deaths of several of its soldiers both gave the leadership pause and increased popular desires to pull troops out as soon as possible. In fact, in the fall there was a debate between President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yanukovich over NATO prospects. The former was the Orange Revolution winner and in some sense a representative of the largely Ukrainian western portion of the country. The latter is an ethnic Russian who represents so many Russian speakers in the eastern part of the country as well as Crimea. While Yushchenko had been dropping hints about possible overtures to NATO, the Prime Minister was able to get the entire cabinet behind his conclusion that Ukraine was unprepared for alliance membership (IZVESTIYA 2006a).

Finally, expanded capabilities were on the western horizon in a very different form. The EU had been strengthening the possibilities for its Common Foreign and

Security Policy since the mid-1990s. Although these units would need to depend on NATO capabilities and infrastructure for some time into the future, they did offer hope for expanded resources in battling terrorism and instability. For example, their Rapid Response Force could strengthen NATO's own Response Force in a crisis of large magnitude. Further, the Slovak Defense Minister František Kašický announced in October 2006, that a joint Czech-Slovak battle-group would be in operation by 2009. It was anticipated that the unit would contain 1,500 soldiers. The Slovaks would contribute one-fifth and the Czechs four-fifths. This battle-group would be one of several that could participate in the activities of the EU Rapid Response Force. Even though this was an EU rather than NATO force, the new Czech Defense Minister Jiří Šedivý reminded his audience that this joint unit would consist of technicians. He said this presumably to allay fears that combat fatalities might result (SME 2006h).

At the moment, NATO does not benefit from any of these potential new members and capabilities. Each potential member is very different from the others, and each differs largely from the type of new member admitted in the 1999-2004 period. Certainly, the three Balkan states, Georgia, and Ukraine have all been troubled by their own civil wars. In part, such experience weakens their potential to contribute much to the alliance at an early stage. Further, the residue from their civil wars still resonates in all of them. In part, they each offer an intriguing opportunity to include new members who have had more experience with internal terrorism and instability. In that vein, they may have valuable wisdom and insights to offer the alliance as it undertakes future challenges.

## Conclusion

The history of NATO since the end of the Cold War has been full of surprises. Shortly after 1991, some wondered if the alliance would have anything to do in light of the collapse of the communist empire that had brought the organization into existence in the late 1940s. At the end of 2006, there were many who wondered how the organization could possibly handle all of the challenges that it had inherited. Thus, the heavy workload is a surprise in light of earlier questions.

The reach of the NATO missions themselves has also exceeded expectations. Involvement in Bosnia as a follow-up to the Dayton Accords is understandable in light of the criticism of Europe for inaction during the Bosnian War. Continued policing of Kosovo is a kind of extension of that effort to bring stability to the Balkans. However, NATO's complete assumption of a broad-based operation in Afghanistan the end of 2006 would have been unthinkable in 1990. Even more surprising would have been decisions by many alliance partners to support preemptive war and its aftermath in Saddam's Iraq. Emergence of new patterns of terrorism and instability explain these expanded missions, but they do not totally eliminate the surprise over them.

In a sense, NATO planners handled these surprising developments by transforming the alliance. By opening the membership door to former members of the communist bloc, they empowered former enemy states to help out in the expanded missions. The smaller Baltic and Central European states were able to offer specific skills and capabilities to assist in management of the troubled nations of the Balkans. Although further a-field, Afghanistan and Iraq offered settings in which the new member

states could round out peace-making units and gain experience in operations that were not for the most part NATO directed.

The new members of the alliance could also play a critical role in building new capabilities that could help cope with the new threats in the international environment. Participation in the Response Force better enabled the alliance to move towards a more flexible position and to play a larger role in terrorist-inspired crises that surprised everyone. Willingness to accept limited U.S. and NATO bases on their soil made more meaningful NATO membership and placed the alliance physically and geographically closer to the edge of danger. Given the success of the decisions to incorporate ten new NATO members, it should be no surprise that attention then turned to inclusion of future members and renewed use of the Partnership for Peace Plan.

However, future NATO summits will need to deal with the unexpected by-products of this expansion in both membership and mission. Surprisingly, the alliance is now dealing with aroused and sometimes hostile public opinion, not only in the traditional alliance partners but in many of the new ones as well. Conditions imposed to protect the lives of combatants provided by the smaller new members are understandable but undermine the morale and effectiveness of the overall organization. After decades of Cold War exercises and war gaming in a successful effort to deter a large and bulky enemy, it is difficult to switch to fluid warfare against dexterous and shadowy forces. Even the new members with their restructured militaries are unprepared for continuous danger and wars than never end. A final surprise would be the emergence of a transformed alliance that was capable of distinguishing between those missions in which it could make a difference and those in which it could not.

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