

**Statement
by the Honorable Fred C. Iklé
before the Committee on National Security
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The Adulteration of NATO

Mr. Chairman, at last a serious debate is beginning to take place in Congress about the proposed expansion of NATO. This Committee deserves a great deal of credit for having raised the right questions; and with a recent letter that both of you -- Mr. Chairman and Mr. Dellums -- sent to the President you have taken an outstanding bipartisan initiative. Your letter will help the Clinton Administration to look beyond the niceties of diplomacy and public relations and to address the serious strategic problems of NATO expansion.

These problems confound many of us. Indeed, I cannot recall a national security issue in the last half century that has so strangely cut across all political alignments. This NATO issue divides both Republicans and Democrats among themselves, it divides hawks as well as doves, conservatives as well as liberals. This by itself may be a symptom of national confusion.

Like the picture seen through a rotating kaleidoscope, the case for expanding NATO keeps changing. The case made by the Clinton Administration keeps changing as does the advocacy offered by former officials and other experts. If one points out that the Soviet military threat against which the Atlantic alliance was created and sustained for forty years has disappeared, one is being told that NATO must now move Eastward to consolidate new democracies. If one points out that there are other, more appropriate organizations to foster democracy, one is being told that only NATO with its long and successful tradition can protect the peace in Europe. And that leads to the question where Europe ends in the East and what is supposed to happen beyond that line.

I shall try to impose some order on the varied and changing arguments for expansion, and align them with the countervailing points of those of us who have concluded that to expand NATO is a serious mistake. Let me start with the military issue, since NATO -- during its first successful forty years -- has been truly a defensive military alliance.

Fred C. Iklé was Undersecretary of Defense for Policy in the Reagan Administration and is now affiliated with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.

Military Protection -- From Which Threat?

Both those in favor and those opposed to expanding NATO should certainly be able to agree on at least one thing: that for the Eurasian continent, the United States must consider more than one type of military contingency. The first type of military contingency that comes to mind in connection with NATO expansion is, of course, the one that was the historic rationale for the alliance during its first forty years.

(1) A Westward Attack by Russia's Armed Forces. -- This is the historic contingency. It is only natural that people in Eastern Europe, given what they experienced from 1944 to the end of the Cold War, should still worry that massive Russian forces might some day again coerce or even invade their new democracies -- a latter day version of Stalin's Red Army. Indeed, the North Atlantic Alliance was created after Stalin, in 1948, had used his overwhelming military superiority in Eastern Europe to coerce the destruction of Czechoslovakia's democracy and to replace it with his chosen Communist dictatorship. Today, however, the situation is totally different. Communism is discredited throughout Europe. Unlike in 1948, there are no Russian armies stationed in Poland, East Germany, Austria, Hungary. And the Russian army is in a pitiful state compared with the Soviet forces after the end of World War II.

I think it is fair to say that all serious proponents of NATO expansion concede that for the foreseeable future one need not fear a new version of the Red Army marching westward. Our French and British allies certainly agree. With admirable frankness, President Chirac declared that "France does not intend to raise its contribution to NATO because of the cost of enlargement," and the British government has made the same point. If the Senate does approve the addition of new members, I would expect the same sentiment will prevail here. Despite the lobbying by American defense industries, it seems unlikely that Congress would appropriate significant monies to equip the new allies for fighting a re-appearance of Stalin's ghost. For those who think otherwise and fear an expansionist Russia some 25 years from now, it might be instructive to take some facts into account: even if Russia re-incorporated Belarus and Ukraine, NATO with just sixteen members would in the year 2025 have a combined population at least four times larger and an economy six to eight times larger than the resources commanded by Moscow.

The NATO-Russia relationship, however, is significant for three other types of military contingencies that are rightly of great concern to our Defense Department:

(2) Another War in the Persian Gulf. -- The possibility of another Gulf war, with perhaps Iran or Iraq as the aggressor, looms large in the Pentagon's planning. I assume, Mr. Chairman, your Committee has been briefed on this risk and on how this "Major Military Contingency" has been factored into the recent Quadrennial Defense Review. If our forces had to fight such a war again, Russia's neutrality would be an immense advantage -- as it was in the last Gulf war. Would NATO expansion make this Russian neutrality more or less likely? That, surely, is one of the most critical questions that ought to be considered. Astonishingly, those who favor NATO expansion are silent on it.

(3) Russia's Role in Asia. -- All too frequently, advocates of NATO expansion look at the issue as if the United States and Russia had a military relationship only in Europe. Our military planners in the Defense Department know better; they consider the risk of a North Korean attack as one of the most important Major Military Contingencies. Should North Korea use nuclear weapons, a cooperative role of Russia's strategic forces would instantly be of utmost importance to us. Other risks in Asia that we ought to consider concern China -- its possible use of force against Taiwan, Chinese military expansion toward the South, or military threats against Japan. Has the Clinton Administration given thought to Russia's role in such conflicts and how this role might be affected by NATO expansion? We must certainly avert a twenty-first century version of a Stalin-Hitler Pact. Evidently, as the Russian-Chinese friendship pact was signed in Beijing a few months ago, some Russians wanted to give us a whiff of this possibility. It would be irresponsibly complacent to disregard this danger by counting on Russia's differences with China to prevent a temporary Beijing-Moscow axis in all future contingencies. In the 1930s the British assumed that Hitler and Stalin, those arch-enemies, would never gang up against the West.

(4) Nuclear Dangers from Russia. -- I need not take the time of this Committee to explain the several nuclear dangers inherent in the thousands of weapons and tons of nuclear materials scattered throughout Russia, such as theft of plutonium or enriched uranium, theft of finished weapons, a hair-triggered alert posture, an accidental missile launch, and so on. The many Congressional hearings on this subject have established that these dangers, while hard to estimate with precision, present the greatest threat to our security which, indeed, could suddenly become a threat to the very survival of our country. Some critics of NATO expansion have said that it aggravates these nuclear dangers by impeding the Duma's ratification of START II and by making Russia's military more hostile towards us. I would put it differently: the management of NATO enlargement diverts us from these much higher priority nuclear issues. To explain and arrange Russia's relationship to NATO enlargement preoccupies our diplomatic and military relations with Moscow. There is only so much time in high level meetings to cover multiple agendas. The nuclear issues that require Russian action are so important, so overarching, that we must focus on them all our leverage and influence with Moscow, all the "carrots and sticks" that we can command for this continuing negotiation with the Russian authorities.

NATO as an HMO for Democracy?

Proponents of NATO's expansion assert that it will "extend the zone of democracy." They are thus unwittingly calling for a transformation of our foremost defensive military alliance into -- shall we say -- a Health Maintenance Organization for fragile democracies. During its successful first forty years, it has never been one of NATO's principal missions to preserve democratic governments among its members. Portugal, a charter member of NATO, had a non-democratic government for twenty-five years. Greece had been a member of the alliance in good standing for fifteen years when a coup led to seven years of military rule. And the North Atlantic Treaty, while mentioning democracy in the preamble, has no provision for expelling a

member whose government turned into a totalitarian dictatorship.

NATO as a Health Maintenance Organization for democracies would soon become detached from the territorial exigencies of military defense. The alliance would invite new members that are cut off from its logistic supply lines and without the necessary sea-lanes or land-routes to come to the member's assistance in the event of attack. Remarkably, it has barely been noticed that Hungary, one of the three new candidates for membership, cannot be reached from the rest of NATO territory. As if to underline the irrelevance of any strategic rationale or military defensibility of new members, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright recently asserted that "no European democracy will be excluded because of its position on the map."

Vaclav Havel, the distinguished President of the Czech Republic who was one of the principal early promoters of NATO expansion, has no doubt that NATO must undergo a metamorphosis: "The alliance should urgently remind itself that it is first and foremost an instrument of democracy" he wrote. "It must not see itself as a pact of nations against a more or less obvious enemy, but as a guarantor of Euro-American civilization and thus a pillar of global security." It is perhaps just as well that Vaclav Havel has not spent much time at American colleges and universities; otherwise he would have been admonished that his Euro-American civilization is passé in the United States and has been replaced now by non-Eurocentric multi-culturalism.

From Common Defense to Collective Security

It has now been noted both by proponents and by opponents of NATO expansion that the way the expansion is being implemented will dilute the traditional common defense function of the alliance and replace it with some kind of collective security system. Dr. Henry Kissinger, in a lucid analysis, has pointed out that the so-called Founding Act (the agreement that relates an expanding NATO to Russia) "seeks to graft a system of collective security on top of an alliance system." I think Dr. Kissinger is too optimistic. As the expansion of NATO rolls forward, there will be no "alliance system" left, except on paper. The de facto functioning of the new structure will be akin to the Organization of the American States, useful perhaps (as is the OAS) as an "HMO" for democracy.

By blaming the Founding Act for this outcome, however, one would underestimate the dynamic that the expansion process has unleashed. President Clinton's effort to patch up some agreement with President Yeltsin was necessary -- not so much to "appease" Russia -- but to accommodate the European allies, both the old members and in particular the new prospective members. I have heard many senior officials from Poland and Hungary stress that, while their countries ardently desire to join the Atlantic club, they do not want to antagonize Russia. As one senior Hungarian official put it, NATO must be seen by Russia as something friendly like the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Vaclav Havel said: "the Eastern European countries now being considered for NATO membership have all agreed that we would be willing to join the alliance only against the backdrop of a strategic partnership with [Russia]. [With the] Founding Act, this is now happening."

If the expansion goes forward and thereby transforms NATO into a European "OAS," I am sure some ten, fifteen years from now we will ask ourselves how we could have failed to foresee this outcome. Was it not predictable that this would happen if our alliance -- after having strenuously maintained its *common defense* against a clear and ever-present danger for a harrowing forty years -- added new members and began to stress new, non-military missions at a time when that danger had vanished? The public can't be fooled; it sees the invoked threat of an expansionist Russia as a hypothetical future, and realizes that for the present threat from Russia's nuclear detritus the new NATO will be irrelevant, if not harmful.