

The Expansion of NATO into the Baltic Sea Region: Prague 2002 and Beyond

Dmitry Gorenburg
Melissa Henton
Debra Roepke
Daniel Whiteneck
with contributions by
LCDR Jim Dick and Susan McArver



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Alexia Suma
Director, International Affairs Group
Center for Strategic Studies

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Summary

Background

In August 2001, the Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (CINCUSNAVEUR) asked the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) to analyze defense, political, and economic trends among Baltic Sea littoral states in light of U.S. interests and objectives. Further, the command asked that we assess the contribution that the U.S. Navy can make in support of these objectives, and make specific recommendations for planning U.S. Navy peacetime activities in the region. This report completes Task 1 of the project, which seeks to address the effect of further NATO enlargement on Baltic regional security.

How will NATO expansion affect current activities, new unilateral and multilateral initiatives by the United States Navy and the larger countries of the region, and security cooperation with allies and friends? How will Russia react to NATO expansion that envelops the three Baltic States in the Alliance? What avenues for future cooperation with non-NATO countries are created by the potential expansion of the Alliance into the Baltic States? How these questions influence the policies and practices of United States naval forces in the Baltic is the subject of this report. The following pages analyze the ability of the Baltic States to contribute to the Alliance, the positions of United States and the Baltic Sea littoral states on NATO enlargement, and the effect of a likely NATO enlargement to include the Baltic States on U.S. Navy activities in the region.

Impact of NATO enlargement

NATO will expand again at the end of 2002. Although the exact countries to be invited have yet to be decided, most signs point toward a large expansion of five to seven new members. All of the states in the

region have come out publicly in support of the inclusion of the Baltic States in NATO. While the United States has not yet publicly announced which countries it will support for membership in Prague, there is widespread agreement among analysts that the Baltic States will be included in this list.

While the military contribution of the Baltic States to NATO will be limited, their militaries are as capable of functioning in NATO as the militaries of the states that were admitted in the first round were in 1997. Their admission would be beneficial for political and strategic reasons. It would demonstrate that a national commitment to join Western institutions pays off. The populations of the Baltic States have been willing to shift resources from social needs to the defense budget in order to prepare their militaries for NATO membership. They are convinced that NATO membership will provide their countries with added security from Russian interference and will allow them to improve their relations with Russia in the medium term. While an improvement in relations with Russia will require additional effort on their part, NATO membership will increase stability in the region simply by taking off the table the question of where the Baltic States belong in the European security system.

If the Baltic States' accession to NATO proceeds smoothly, it is likely that Finland and Sweden will seek to join NATO as well within the next 5 years. These two states would contribute significantly to NATO military capabilities both in and out of area. Their admission would turn the Baltic Sea almost completely into a NATO lake. This could lead to the establishment of a real security community in the region, where cooperation among NATO and EU members would flourish, where Russia would not be threatened, where Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia could rejoin the West, and where allied militaries could work together in a very useful environment.

Relations with Russia

The decision to admit the Baltic States into NATO is likely to result in a small but significant outpouring of criticism by Russian political leaders. It is unlikely to last long, or to affect President Putin's efforts to bring

Russia closer to the West. If Russians perceive that Baltic membership is accompanied by an effective incorporation of Russia into NATO consultation structures through the NATO-Russia Council, even this criticism may be muted or limited to leftist and nationalist politicians.

In the long run, relations between Russia and the Baltic States are likely to improve, because the most significant source of tension and uncertainty will be removed. Improvements in relations will not occur automatically. Repairing the history of distrust between political elites in Moscow and in the Baltic capitals will require active measures.

NATO enlargement is unlikely to have a significant impact on relations between the U.S. Navy and its Russian counterpart. Regardless of the outcome of the Prague summit, the Russian Navy is likely to gradually increase its participation in multinational exercises in the Baltic Sea. The political factors that limited cooperation in the late 1990s are unlikely to do so over the next 10-12 years, but resources will remain constrained.

At the same time, Russian naval interaction with the Baltic States will remain limited. The Russian Navy perceives the Baltic navies as relatively insignificant and does not see many advantages to bilateral cooperation. For this reason, multilateral exercises in the Baltic Sea will be particularly important as a venue for Baltic-Russian interaction. The U.S. Navy should seek to promote such exercises and to participate in them whenever possible in order to engage Russia in multilateral cooperation in the Baltic region and in this way increase trust and stability in the region.

The future of U.S. naval activities after expansion

We conclude that the expansion of NATO to include the Baltic States will have minimal effects on the U.S. Navy's exercises, security cooperation, and port visits in the region. Exercises in the region will continue to have a strong multilateral character, with broad participation from NATO and PfP countries. They will cover a range of military capabilities (from humanitarian assistance to peace support, from naval gunfire support to amphibious operations), with those at the higher end involving the United States and the most capable allied navies. The

limited capabilities of the naval forces of the Baltic States will restrict their involvement and cooperation with U.S. forces.

Given this context, U.S. forces should focus their security cooperation efforts on alliance maintenance, professional training and interoperability, and the gradual inclusion of new members. Alliance maintenance and professional development will require the continuation of long-standing American support for Baltic integration efforts, such as the Baltic Defense College, the Baltic Air Defense Network (BALTNET), and the Baltic Squadron (BALTRON). It will also require support for exchanges with Baltic military personnel and Ministry of Defense officials that will serve to institutionalize the practices put into place to qualify for NATO membership. These commitments are low level in terms of resources and personnel, but nevertheless represent U.S. commitment to integrating the new members into NATO and Western military organizations.

Baltic membership in NATO may signal a change in U.S. port visits. Routine port visits by U.S. Navy ships visiting the region may be taken as a signal of support for the new members and tangible evidence of the NATO security commitment. The type of ship will be less important than the fact that U.S. warships make routine stops in each of the new member states.

An increase in the number of port calls at Russian ports may further U.S. efforts to bring Russia into a more cooperative relationship with NATO. This could lead to greater contact between the U.S. and Russian fleets, and perhaps lay the groundwork for increased involvement by Russia in U.S.-led naval activities in the region. It would also signal to Russia that NATO expansion to the Baltic States is not meant to counter Russian interests in the region, that future expansion to Sweden and Finland would also not serve to exclude Russia from participating in Baltic regional cooperation, and that the possibility of even closer NATO-Russia cooperation is open for the future. With the general security and stability of the Baltic region strengthened by expansion of NATO and the EU, the last great game in Northern Europe is the successful integration of Russia into a transatlantic security framework.

Introduction

In August 2001, CINCUSNAVEUR asked the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) to analyze defense, political, and economic trends among the Baltic Sea littoral states in light of U.S. interests and objectives. Further, the command asked that we assess the contribution that the U.S. Navy can make to support these objectives, and recommend specific initiatives for planning U.S. Navy peacetime activities in the region. This report completes Task 1 of the project, which seeks to address the effect of further NATO enlargement on Baltic regional security.

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO's expansion has been a central element in the creation of a Europe “whole and free,” and a feature of every U.S. administration's European policy since 1990. The next round of decisions on enlargement will take place at NATO's Prague summit, in November 2002. The outcome will not only shape the future of NATO, but will also affect the role of American military forces in the European theater, the developing role of European forces within the Alliance, the relationship of NATO and its member states to Russia, and the creation of sub-regional security cooperation structures throughout Europe.

This report examines how these developments will affect the policies and practices of U.S. naval forces in the Baltic region.¹ How will NATO expansion change current activities, shape the development of new unilateral and multilateral initiatives by the U.S. Navy and the larger countries of the region, and affect security cooperation with allies and friends? How will Russia react to a NATO expansion that envelops the three Baltic States—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—in the Alliance? What avenues for future cooperation with non-NATO countries will be created by the expansion of the Alliance into the Baltic States?

¹ The Baltic region comprises the nine Baltic Sea littoral states: Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland.

Approach

We started by examining the political and security environment in the nine Baltic Sea littoral states, with the objective of understanding the policy and operational environment facing the U.S. Navy in this region. To this end, the study team reviewed the academic literature and intelligence analyses. The team then interviewed current and retired U.S. government officials, academic experts, and defense attachés. Members of the team traveled to London and Brussels to interview NATO officials and military staff and to Stuttgart to speak with U.S. European Command staff. We then traveled to the Baltic Sea littoral states to conduct interviews with U.S. embassy officers, senior government officials, military officers, and academics. These interviews were conducted using a uniform set of questions adapted to the specific conditions of each country. We then evaluated the impact of NATO enlargement on regional security and U.S. naval activities in the region in the light of these interviews and reviews.

This report is the first of several that will result from this project. Subsequent reports will analyze political, economic, and security developments in each of the littoral states, the state of the Baltic States' navies, and security patterns and their impact on U.S. naval activities.

Background

NATO's first expansion after the Cold War took place after the reunification of Germany in 1990. The "2 + 4" agreement between West Germany, East Germany, France, Great Britain, Russia, and the United States not only reunified Germany, it extended NATO's frontier to the eastern Polish border.²

² NATO and Russia also agreed that the Alliance would not station nuclear weapons on the territory of the former East Germany, that it would adapt its military doctrine to reflect the changed strategic environment in central Europe, that Germany would pay for the transfer of large numbers of Russian troops back to Russia, and that German conventional military strength would be limited. See Jeffrey Simon, *NATO Enlargement and Central Europe*, (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 1996); *Europe in the Balance: Securing the Peace Won in the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment, 1995); Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza

The next phase of NATO expansion took place in 1997. At the Madrid summit, the members agreed to extend membership invitations to three states: Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. They also agreed that the process of enlargement would remain open to any European democracy that applied for membership, fulfilled the requirements laid out in a Membership Action Plan (MAP), and could contribute to collective defense and participate in non-Article V missions. The three new members were officially welcomed into NATO at the 50th anniversary summit in Washington in 1999.³

During the same time period, the EU also moved to extend its presence into the Baltic region, welcoming Sweden and Finland as new members during the 1990s. The EU is currently in the midst of its own enlargement process, which could encompass the three new NATO members and as many as seven to ten other states by 2004.⁴

NATO's Baltic presence now extends along the Polish coast, and is in direct contact with sovereign Russian territory at the Kaliningrad Oblast. This expansion reflected Germany's desire to be surrounded by friendly allied states for the first time in its history, and was made possible by the strong support of the United States. At a time when NATO was struggling with a new organizational structure, new concepts for "coalitions of the willing," and the ongoing mission in the Balkans, enlargement underscored its predominant role as the guarantor of European security.

Once NATO decided to expand the Alliance in 1997, prospective members began planning to meet the requirements in preparation for another round of enlargement.

Arguments for expanding the Alliance to the Balkans are advanced by those who want to use the Alliance to bring stability and security to that

Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

³ For an extensive treatment of the expansion debates in NATO and the EU throughout the 1990s and into 2000, see Gale Mattox and Arthur Rachwald (eds.), *Enlarging NATO: The National Debates* (Boulder, CO: Lynne-Rienner Publishers, 2000); James Sperling (ed.), *Two Tiers or Two Speeds? The European Security Order and the Enlargement of the European Union and NATO* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

⁴ The leading candidates for EU membership are Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria.

war-torn region. Italy, Hungary, Greece, and France argue that NATO must add new members on its southern flank to prevent the renewal of conflict in the Balkans and to prevent other states in the region from backsliding during their transition to the West. If Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovenia become members, they argue, NATO would have a solid platform for supporting current missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia, and a bridgehead to the troubled Middle East, the Caucasus, and Southwest Asia.

At the other end of Europe, Denmark, Poland, and non-NATO members Sweden and Finland argue for the inclusion of the Baltic States in the Alliance. While the security climate in the Baltic Sea region is decidedly more placid than that in the Balkans, enlargement would turn the Baltic into a “NATO lake.” The Nordic states argue that a real security community could be established, in which cooperation between NATO and EU members would flourish, Russia would remain unthreatened, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia would rejoin the West, and allied militaries would work together.

Political elites in Russia do not share this optimistic view. While Russian opposition to NATO expansion has abated in the aftermath of September 11 and Presidents Bush and Putin held positive meetings in 2001, many in Russia still have serious reservations about NATO extending into the territory of the former Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, NATO is on track to expand again at the end of 2002. Although the exact countries to be invited have yet to be decided, most signs point toward five to seven new members. The following pages analyze the ability of the Baltic States to contribute to the Alliance, the positions of United States and the Baltic Sea littoral states on NATO enlargement, and the effect of a likely NATO enlargement to include the Baltic States on U.S. Navy activities in the region.

The Baltic States in NATO?

Over the last two years, Western observers of the Baltic region have rapidly changed their views regarding the prospects for the Baltic States' entry into NATO. As recently as the summer of 2001, many believed the likelihood of Baltic admission to be no greater than 50 percent. Even many supporters argued that NATO should admit a single Baltic state, just to show that Russia did not have a veto over enlargement. Now, these states are considered frontrunners for admission at the Prague summit in November 2002.

While the change in the conventional wisdom has been due largely to a decrease in Russian opposition, the Baltic States themselves have improved their chances by demonstrating their commitment to improving their forces and training.

This section of our report addresses the extent of Baltic preparedness for NATO membership, the limitations of their armed forces, the contributions they could make to the Alliance despite these limitations, and ways to avoid some of the problems encountered by new members in the first round of NATO accession.

State of preparedness

In terms of military preparations for joining NATO, the Baltic States can be favorably compared to the efforts of the other candidates for this round of enlargement and those of the three countries that joined NATO in 1997. All three have dedicated themselves to strengthening their militaries. They have committed themselves to spending 2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defense for the next several years. Lithuania and Estonia have reached that target with their FY 2002 budgets. Latvia will spend 1.95 percent in 2002 and is planning to reach 2 percent in 2003. Considering that these countries were spending only 0.9 percent to 1.4 percent of GDP on defense as recently as 1999, this

represents a 50- to 100-percent increase in defense spending in a relatively short period of time. It also compares favorably with spending by other NATO aspirants, such as Slovenia (approximately 1.5 percent of GDP in 2001) and Slovakia (1.89 percent of GDP in 2002), and with spending by new NATO members such as the Czech Republic (1.8 percent in 1997) and Hungary (1.1 percent in 1997) at the time of their admission.

The Baltic militaries have one relative advantage in seeking NATO membership when compared to other aspirant countries and recently admitted members. These three countries were not saddled with the former Warsaw Pact states' massively large militaries, which fielded outdated equipment and followed incompatible procedures. Baltic militaries have not had to cut the size of their forces by tens of thousands of soldiers, as Poland did. Nor did they need to develop entirely new procedures and organizational structures in order to make their militaries interoperable with NATO. In setting up their armed forces, all three states adopted NATO procedures wholesale from the beginning. Baltic militaries have been training some of their units to NATO standards for several years, and have plans to train most of their military personnel to these standards within a few years. In doing so, they do not have to deal with national military traditions that hinder change, since no state's armed forces are more than 10 years old.

Adoption of NATO procedures has been more effective because of the progress the Baltic States have made in training their officers to use NATO languages. The language training program has been relatively successful; for example, 70 percent of Lithuanian naval officers speak English, French, or German. The ships of all the Baltic navies communicate among themselves in English. Language training in the other services is generally not quite as advanced as in the navies, but is still ahead of that in new NATO members such as Poland and Hungary. Because of their success in providing officers with language training, the Baltic militaries have been able to use NATO operating manuals in the original languages, instead of struggling to translate NATO documents into local languages. Of course, more work remains to be done to ensure

that all military officers are able to operate in multinational operations where the command language is usually English.

Finally, the Baltic States have the advantage of not having to figure out how to integrate old Soviet equipment into their NATO forces. Lack of old equipment is also a disadvantage, as it is the result of a lack of equipment altogether, rather than an overabundance of new, modern equipment. Nevertheless, the Baltic States are seeking to ensure that all new weapon and communication systems that they purchase are compatible with NATO. To this end, several of the Baltic States have recently purchased Harris radios and Javelin anti-tank missiles and are hoping to purchase Stinger anti-aircraft missiles.

Limitations

Despite their relatively advanced state of preparation, the Baltic States' small size and limited resources mean that they will never be significant contributors to NATO military forces. Their air forces are entirely dedicated to surveillance, with no attack and limited air defense capability. Their navies are primarily focused on mine clearance and counter-measures, although they have shown themselves to be quite effective at maritime interdiction and preventing illegal migrants from using their harbors as ports of embarkation. Their armies are currently capable of fielding no more than one NATO-interoperable battalion per country, although there are plans to increase this to a brigade per country by 2006.

With a combined population of about 8 million people and economies that are well developed by East European standards but still relatively small compared to West or even Central European states, the Baltic countries are unlikely to develop fully modernized militaries in the next several years. Nor do they feel the need to spend a lot of resources on increasing military capabilities, given the lack of short- or medium-term military threats in their region. They hope that Russia, the only country they find potentially threatening in the long term, will be deterred or co-opted by NATO.

Benefits of having the Baltic States in NATO

Given their small size, the Baltic States will not greatly enhance NATO's military capability. Nevertheless, they will provide certain advantages as members. Most important, their inclusion will extend NATO's air surveillance system to cover the entire Baltic Sea and a large part of northwestern Russia. The BALTNET air surveillance system uses modern NATO-compatible equipment and will shortly be upgraded to use 3D radars built by Lockheed Martin. As Baltic officials have made clear, this system can be connected to the NATO air surveillance network at any time. All that is lacking is a political decision.

The Baltic States have also shown their willingness and ability to send peacekeeping and peace support troops to conflict areas, such as the former Yugoslavia and the region around Afghanistan. Estonia, for example, has sent approximately 900 peacekeepers to Bosnia and Kosovo over the last eight years. On a per capita basis, this is more than almost any other country that has sent forces.

On the strategic side, the Baltic States are likely to prove useful in NATO's efforts to improve cooperation with other states that were previously part of the Soviet Union. They have good contacts with the Georgian military and are hoping to train Georgian officers at the Baltic Defense College.⁵ They also provide an example of what a former Soviet republic with a newly formed military can achieve. Inviting the Baltic States to join NATO will make clear that the Alliance rejects the concept of spheres of influence, both in general and specifically in regard to Russian efforts to dominate security relations in the former Soviet republics. The elimination of such red lines along the boundary of the former Soviet Union will, in the long term, encourage other former Soviet republics such as Ukraine and Moldova to build cooperative relations with NATO. If such moves are combined with the development of a new cooperative security relationship between Russia and NATO, this tendency will increase stability in Eastern Europe by erasing dividing lines between East and West European states.

⁵ As long as such cooperation is limited to the realm of training and education, rather than material assistance, it should not stir up significant hostility on the part of Russia.

Finally, given the close cooperation between NATO and Sweden and Finland, the act of including the Baltic States in NATO will essentially turn the Baltic Sea into a NATO lake. If the admission of the Baltic States into NATO goes well, Sweden and Finland themselves are likely to decide to join NATO within the next 5–10 years. These two states have capable militaries that would provide a valuable addition to NATO capabilities.

Lessons learned from round 1: Poland

Significant differences between Poland and her Baltic neighbors preclude the latter from seeking to replicate the Polish experience. First is the obvious disparity in both the size and population of the countries. Furthermore, Poland's post-Cold War circumstances have required it to restructure, downsize, and modernize its military. The Baltic States, on the other hand, have no legacy forces and have sought to build their militaries from the ground up. Nonetheless, the Polish accession experience does offer a number of lessons from which aspiring NATO candidates can benefit.

Once Poland became a NATO member, the country heaved a collective sigh of relief. Of the three new members who joined the Alliance in 1999, Poland was the one that most aggressively sought membership and has remained the partner most dedicated to fulfilling its political and military commitments. But Poles nevertheless admit to a sense of complacency in the wake of their country's newfound security.⁶

Some assert that much of the initiative for further—and difficult—reforms is lost upon entry.⁷ Because NATO has no provisions to expel or penalize a member, they argue, it should consider creating a mechanism to compel new members to follow through on their commitments. Any such mechanisms or inducements will necessarily be country specific.

⁶ Interview with officials from the U.S. Embassy Warsaw, Office of the Secretary of the Defense, and the Polish Academy of Sciences Institute of Political Science, February 2002.

⁷ Interviews with officials from the U.S. Embassy Budapest, U.S. Embassy Warsaw, and the Office of the Secretary of the Defense., October 2000 and February 2002.

The other difficult lesson relates to the many acquisition programs new members find themselves saddled with. New members seeking to prove their credentials as contributing members of the Alliance often enter into expensive contracts to buy new weapons systems which, while desirable for the future, may not be in their best current interest. Some kind of orderly, requirements-based acquisition process would help new members better plan for short-term, mid-term, and long-term military needs.⁸

Attempts to do too much with too little can lead to unwise cost-cutting measures on the ancillary pieces of an acquisition package, especially training. For example, fewer than one-third of the sailors scheduled for training associated with the transfer of Perry-class frigates to the Polish Navy received that training. As a result, the Polish Navy has encountered difficulties in operating and maintaining the ship's sophisticated systems.⁹

Here again, the prospects for affecting change are limited. Pressures from the defense industry, other allies, and internal bureaucratic factors will make it difficult to make prudent choices. However, the United States and USN can encourage new members to operate within their means and capabilities. EDA and FMS agreements, for example, should seek to ensure that the recipient military makes financial commitments to properly train personnel and to plan for the necessary maintenance of the systems and platforms that are being transferred.

Several other, more practical lessons can be learned from the Polish experience. First, the Poles have said that investing time and money to translate NATO documents into Polish was a mistake—that it is far better to teach English to as many personnel as possible. Some noted that it is better to pass on an opportunity to fill a NATO billet than to send someone with only limited English.¹⁰

Second, the Polish Navy has found that maintaining a system of dual procedures, both national and NATO, is difficult and confusing. New members should train to and implement NATO procedures. Commitment

8 Interview with officials from the U.S. Embassy Warsaw, February 2002.

9 Interviews with officials from the Polish Navy Staff and the U.S. Embassy Warsaw, February 2002.

10 Interviews with officials from the Polish Navy Staff and U.S. Embassy officials, February 2002.

to this training, and any necessary conversion of national procedures, should be made as soon as possible in the accession process.¹¹

The concept of interoperability has also caused confusion as Poland has worked to integrate itself into the NATO military structure. Some Poles have not understood that interoperability does not require weapons of the same make or model, but rather is a matter of how the weapon is employed. As one Polish interlocutor described the issue, it does not much matter to someone who has been shot whether the round that wounded him was fired from an M-16 or a Kalashnikov; in either case he has still been shot.¹²

Finally, security clearances were a problem for Poland. There was little understanding of how many officials within the government should have NATO clearances. Poles were uncertain as to which officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense, and other segments of the government should be NATO cleared. Polish officials were also poorly informed about what the clearance process entails and what individuals would be expected to do in order to get the clearance.¹³

Conclusion

While the military contribution of the Baltic States to NATO will be limited, their militaries are as capable of functioning as part of NATO as the militaries of the states that were admitted in the first round were in 1997. Their admission will be beneficial for political and strategic reasons. It will demonstrate that a national commitment to join Western institutions pays off. The populations of the Baltic States have been willing to shift resources from social needs to the defense budget in order to prepare their militaries for NATO membership. They are convinced that NATO membership will provide their countries with added security from Russian interference and will allow them to improve their relations with Russia in the medium term. While an improvement in relations will require additional effort on their part, NATO membership will increase

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Interviews with officials from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 2002.

stability in the region simply by eliminating the question of where the Baltic States belong in the European security system.

Major players and their perspectives

The United States

Between the 1997 Madrid Summit and the summer of 2001, after the first round of enlargement, the United States maintained that NATO expansion was not complete. It also held that the door was open to any aspirant that met the criteria set out in NATO's Membership Action Plans, and that no nation would be denied entrance to NATO because of a Russian "veto."

In June 2001, President George W. Bush, speaking in Poland, laid out an American position that ruled out the "zero option" (no new memberships at the Prague Summit). He made a strong commitment to NATO expansion, won the support of NATO's Secretary General Robertson for that position, and reiterated that no country would be denied entrance based on opposition from Russia.¹⁴ This speech helped convince many Europeans in NATO and the Baltic States that the United States favored NATO membership for the Baltic countries.

Why this U.S. position? Baltic membership in NATO will not increase the military capabilities of the Alliance beyond the addition of a deployable battalion for peace support operations and a few specialist units (engineers, medical staff). The Baltic Sea region does not require increased membership to enhance ongoing operations or make capabilities available in case of new hostilities (like the Balkans). Threats to the security of the Baltic States are judged as minimal by all concerned (Americans, Europeans, and even some Balts).

U.S. support for Baltic membership in NATO is based on positive assessments of Baltic economic, political, and military progress, particularly in comparison with other candidates, such as Romania and

¹⁴ See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/06/20010615-1.html> for the text of the speech.

Bulgaria. There is also strong political support within the Bush administration, especially given improved U.S.-Russian relations after September 11.

Economically, all three states have shown steady growth, with Estonia leading the way at about 5 percent per year. They have also made important strides in reducing corruption and instituting the legal reforms needed to maintain a liberal trading system tied to the Nordic States and other members of the EU.¹⁵

All three states have met NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) requirements for settling minority issues with their Russian-speaking populations. In 2001, the OSCE signaled that each of the Baltic States was in compliance with European standards with regard to domestic laws. Each had also concluded an agreement with Russia on this issue. (Russia has not ratified these treaties because of the opposition of some Russian parties to NATO membership for the Baltic States.)

Lastly, each has committed to spending 2 percent of its gross national product on defense. They have agreed to integrate certain forces for greater efficiency and impact, contributed to NATO missions in the Balkans, and instituted "good practices" (such as firm civilian control of militaries and the absence of serving officers from non-military government positions) for militaries in democratic societies.

NATO, and especially the United States, identified these measures as keys to acceptance in the next round of expansion. The U.S. has noticed the Baltic States' efforts in each of these areas, and its support for their membership has increased accordingly.

Another major hurdle for Baltic membership was the potential impact on relations between the United States and Russia. The first Bush-Putin meeting in Europe in May 2001 resulted in Russian acquiescence to expansion. Russian views of NATO also evolved after September 11, as Moscow became an informal ally in the war on terrorism.

¹⁵ Interviews with NATO Defense Planning and Operations Division Staff, Brussels, October 2001.

Finally, within the Bush administration there is strong support for NATO expansion into the Baltic States. Including the Baltic States would be a step into the actual territory of the former Soviet Union and signal to the Russians that the new administration would not let them have veto power over NATO expansion.¹⁶ Expansion has also been strongly supported by the Baltic immigrant community in the United States. While the community is relatively small, it is very active politically and has lobbied the administration aggressively. The Bush administration is also aware that this round of enlargement has less support in Europe than did the first round and that the Americans must be the driving force for expansion.¹⁷

Germany

Germany's position on NATO expansion in 2002 is very different from what it was in 1997. Then, Germany played a public and prominent role as the leading European advocate of expansion. Today, German leaders support enlargement, but seek to balance the interests of expanding the alliance, expanding the EU into eastern and central Europe, and maintaining positive relations with Russia.¹⁸

The ruling Social Democratic/Green coalition has placed a high priority on good German-Russian relations, based in part on the strong personal relationship between Chancellor Schroeder and President Putin.¹⁹ The government also worked hard to embed German foreign policy within NATO and the EU. Coalition representatives believe that both of these objectives can be accomplished through activist NATO and EU policies toward Russia, thus forging more intimate security and economic relationships with an eye toward bringing Russia into trans-Atlantic

16 Interviews, U.S. State Department, 3 January 2002.

17 Sperling, *Two Tiers or Two Speeds?*

18 Public speeches, Markus Merkel, Member of the Bundestag, Washington, DC, 12 August 2001, and Fritz Machnig, Member of the Bundestag, Washington, DC, 13 December 2001.

19 The German-Russian relationship has been a key aspect of German post-Cold War foreign policy for all political parties. The Kohl and Schroeder governments have both stressed the importance of having economic engagement with Russia, continuing political contacts at the highest levels, negotiating future security arrangements with Russia based on past arms control agreements, and bringing Russia into European structures. These principles have guided German policy on Russia since 1990.

structures.²⁰ Faced with the possibility that Baltic membership in NATO could disrupt Russia's relationship with the West for some time, Germany was reluctant to take a leading role in the debate on enlargement.

This was the position of the German government until spring 2001. President Bush's first trip to Europe, in May and June 2001, marked a turning point. The Bush administration's positive and public position on NATO expansion and the Russian government's moderate reaction, combined with NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson's willingness to remove the "zero option" from consideration, convinced the German government and opposition parties that the United States would be the leading advocate for NATO expansion and that Germany could play a supporting role without any danger of undermining its Russia policy. Since last June, Germany's defense minister, Rudolph Scharping, and the opposition's leading spokesman on international security policy, former defense minister Volcker Ruehe, have traveled to the Baltic States and voiced support for membership of all three in NATO.²¹

German elections in 2002 will not have an impact on this area of policy. The elections will be contested almost exclusively on domestic economic issues (unemployment, budget deficits, restructuring of the social support systems), with little attention to foreign policy outside of the troop commitments to Afghanistan and the Balkans. Currently, the polls are very close, with the government having a slight advantage. Given the public support of all parties (except the former communist PDS) for Baltic membership in NATO, the election results will not affect Germany's position at Prague in November 2002.

Sweden

Sweden has maintained a strict policy of neutrality over the past 200 years. It relied on this policy through the major wars in Europe from the

²⁰ Interviews at German Council of Foreign Relations and Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, January 2002.

²¹ Interviews with Bundestag members of the ruling coalition, Ministry of Defense officials and members of the opposition on the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Bundestag, January 2002.

Napoleonic era through World War II. Even at the height of Cold War tensions between East and West, Sweden officially maintained its non-aligned status and pursued an independent foreign and security policy in Europe and on global issues in the Third World.²²

It is only in the last decade, since Sweden joined the EU in 1993, that changes to these long-held policies and public preferences have come under consideration. Sweden's involvement in multinational peacekeeping operations with NATO and PfP nations have moved it away from a traditional preference for UN leadership of such missions. This has coincided with NATO's evolution and expansion away from its Cold War posture vis-à-vis Russia, which has allowed Sweden to see Western military actions as collective security measures, rather than defense against a hostile bloc of opposing powers.

The February 2002 foreign policy statement by the government and the three leading political parties of the center (excluding the Greens and Socialists) firmly aligned Swedish security objectives with NATO and the EU, admitted the need for active U.S. involvement in European security, and recognized a role for Sweden in collective security missions outside northern Europe.²³ These parties represent a clear majority of Swedish political power and public opinion. This is not to say, however, that there is widespread public support for NATO membership. The public remains focused on the economy, on EU politics and the Euro, and, in foreign affairs, on humanitarian issues in the Balkans and Middle East peace.

Swedish support for NATO expansion

Sweden has strongly supported NATO and EU membership for all three Baltic States, believing that this will enhance cooperative security arrangements and keep the United States engaged in the Baltic Sea region.

²² Declassified documents that have emerged from Sweden and other countries over the past decade show that despite its official neutrality Sweden had a distinct tilt toward NATO during the Cold War. Commission on Neutrality Policy, "Had There Been a War . . . : Preparations for the Reception of Military Assistance, 1949-1969" (Stockholm: Fritzes, 1994).

²³ Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs, 13 February 2002.

Swedish decision-makers understand that the Baltic States will make only a limited contribution to NATO operations, given the size of their armed forces and the inadequate (by NATO standards) preparation of units outside the Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT) and Baltic Squadron (BALTRON) forces.²⁴ All three militaries still emphasize homeland security against Russia. Most resources are devoted to the land forces and specifically to the homeland defense mission. Support for that mission undermines NATO initiatives, such as making airfields ready to receive forces, and improving port facilities for naval reinforcement.

However, Sweden hopes that turning the Baltic Sea into a "NATO lake" will make it into a cooperative security community. In this region, no single state would be a threat to any other, every country would belong to larger security and economic communities, and the militaries' focus would be multilateral peace support operations, rather than territorial defense. This goal is shared by the leading parties in Sweden, both inside and outside the government.²⁵

To this end, Sweden has taken a number of steps to help prepare the Baltic militaries for NATO and EU membership. Assistance to the militaries in all three Baltic States has been consistently high over the past decade (making up 40 percent of all Western aid). It has encompassed the export of military hardware, extensive training and maintenance, education and training of officers and officials in Western military structures, and education in civil-military relations.²⁶

Swedish attitudes on security cooperation with the United States

To Sweden, the United States and Russia are the keys to a positive outcome for NATO expansion. In the case of the United States, Sweden looks to Washington to play an active political and military role in the region as a counterweight to Russia's size and influence. Most Swedish political elites accept a regular American presence in the Baltic, but would not accept a robust military presence. They

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Interviews at Swedish Institute of International Affairs, January 2002.

²⁶ Interviews at Swedish Armed Services Headquarters, January 2002.

would prefer to see regular low-level American presence in multilateral fora and cooperative activities.²⁷ They believe this presence assures open access to the entire Baltic Sea, reinforces the balancing of Russia, and guarantees the participation of outside navies and PfP nations in cooperative activities.

Among some members of the Green Party and remnants of the Socialsit governments of the 1980s, there is opposition to U.S.-Swedish military cooperation involving the presence of nuclear-powered submarines and U.S. Marines. There is no such opposition within the military or among those who want Sweden to join NATO. These groups would welcome closer political and military ties to the United States, and see their country as a well-qualified partner with a strong naval history and a commitment to transformation and modernization.²⁸ Sweden's armed forces place a high value on combined operations and have patterned their joint staff after the United States in an attempt to work well with NATO on non-Article 5 missions.²⁹ They are also investing heavily in interoperability programs, such as information technology, intelligence gathering, and data links.

Swedish concerns about Russia

The other key factor in the Swedish equation is Russia. For Sweden, Kaliningrad and the Baltic States themselves are potential sources of destabilization. Some Swedish decision-makers are concerned that after expansion the Baltic States may not observe treaties with Russia about the treatment of Russian minorities.³⁰ While the OSCE and other European organizations have noted the steady improvement in the treatment of ethnic Russian minorities, those minorities could still provide a potential justification for Russian political involvement in the region. So far, the Baltic governments have tried hard to implement policies to undercut this issue as a source of contention with Russia.

27 Interviews at Swedish Institute of International Affairs, January 2002.

28 Interviews at Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters and the Swedish Defense Research Agency, January 2002.

29 Ibid.

30 Interviews at Swedish Foreign Ministry, January 2002.

Kaliningrad's bad economic situation increases the possibility that its problems with organized crime, smuggling, migration, and drug and human trafficking will spill over into Lithuania, Poland, or other states bordering the Baltic Sea. The military situation is much less threatening. Russian forces in Kaliningrad are mainly engaged in testing new equipment for sale overseas, and Swedish military planners believe that they lack the resources to pose an offensive threat to the region.³¹

Swedish officials believe that Kaliningrad's military leaders and most of its population want closer ties with the EU for economic benefits. Both the leaders and the population support reaching agreements with the West on travel, transit rights, and trade. According to Swedish assessments, there has been little progress on these fronts, because of Moscow's fears of EU dominance, and its concern that EU influence could lead to an eventual vote by the populace to leave Russia and form a separate city-state with ties to the EU.³² Therefore, Sweden would like to see NATO work with Russia on cooperative programs to reduce potential tensions if Kaliningrad is surrounded by NATO territory.

Conclusion

Sweden's commitment to NATO and EU expansion in the Baltics is predicated on its leaders' desire to create a community of nations that share their conception of cooperative regional security, economic development, and the maintenance of the Baltic as an international sea (with the regular presence of navies from outside the region).

Moreover, Swedish security and foreign policy elites believe that this development will provide a strong incentive for Finland to join NATO sometime after 2004. At such time (given continued good relations between Russia and NATO), regional stability and collective security cooperation in the region should be very strong. Swedish elites believe that it will then be possible to move Sweden away from its history of non-alignment. Swedish public opinion and elite opinion then would be

³¹ Interview with Swedish Armed Forces Intelligence Assessment Office, January 2002.

³² Ibid.

able to support NATO membership without the traditional concerns about Russia or unrest in the Baltic States.

Denmark

Denmark has been the leading supporter of the Baltic States' membership in NATO and the EU, believing that their inclusion will stabilize the region. The ensuing security cooperation and foreign investment should lead to greater stability, Danish decision-makers argue, to the benefit of all the countries in the region.

Second, as a small NATO nation, Denmark feels a certain kinship with the Baltic States as the latter struggle to justify their inclusion in military and political terms. As a former front-line state, Danish leaders see important political roles for small nations because these are often able to pursue or promote issues that would be far too controversial for a larger power to espouse. This perception has been an important driver of the German-Danish relationship and its influence in the region. Danish officials believe that they were able to challenge other European states within NATO more easily than Germany, even though German officials shared their views. Germany was constrained by its history and its relationship with other large states, while Denmark was freer to challenge them.

Danish decision-makers also see the inclusion of more small states in NATO and EU as a way to dilute the power of Germany and France.³³ As a small NATO nation, Denmark believes it is uniquely qualified to advise the Baltic States on using their limited resources to play meaningful roles in the larger communities of NATO and EU. It emphasizes cooperation and acting/voting as a northern European bloc to support common economic, environmental, social, and military interests.

Denmark has supported Baltic membership in NATO in three ways. First, it has actively lobbied for their membership in NATO and the EU. Denmark's support for the Baltic States started in 1991, when it was the first nation to recognize the Baltic States' independence from Russia

³³ Interviews at NATO and European Defense and Security Policy Division, Danish Ministry of Defense, January 2002.

(inviting them to be guests of the Danish delegation to the OSCE over Russian and French opposition). By early 1994, Denmark had signed broad defense agreements with the Baltic States, Poland, and Russia. Denmark openly advocated full NATO membership for the Baltic States in 1996 despite Russian opposition.

Second, Denmark has assisted their progress towards meeting NATO MAP goals. Danish support has occurred at all levels—political, economic, and military (for example, Danish economic assistance to the Baltic States represents about 45 percent of all government aid to Central and Eastern Europe).³⁴ Direct military support from Denmark to the Baltic States has focused particularly on defense cooperation efforts such as BALTBAT and Baltic Defense College. A primary task has been education in how civil-military relations work in a democracy. Another high priority has been education in peace support operations. Hands-on experience in this area was provided when BALTBAT was integrated into the German-Danish-Polish unit in the Balkans.

Third, Denmark has supported Poland's development as a new NATO nation as an example of its continuing commitment to new members after expansion. Danish officials believe that successful integration of Poland into NATO will demonstrate that the same process can be used for the Baltic States. This would also serve as a role model for other former members of the Warsaw Pact seeking NATO membership. Successful integration would help answer critics of enlargement, who argue that new members of the Alliance do not maintain their commitments to increased defense spending and promised military reforms.

If the Baltic States are invited to become NATO members this fall, each could be paired with a current NATO member to support their continuing efforts to meet NATO requirements and understand NATO activities. Denmark is well prepared to take on the job of building each state's military capabilities, as it has with Poland. Denmark will seek to continue its role as advisor and supporter of the Baltic military and economic integration. This means that Sweden and Finland, because they are not NATO nations, will need to step back from their lead roles in building military capabilities for Latvia and Estonia, but that Denmark could increase its position as a role model for new members within the alliance.

³⁴ *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2000.*

Finland

Given its traditional neutrality, until recently Finland has been ambivalent about encouraging Baltic aspirations to join NATO. This changed after September 2001, when Russian President Putin stated in Helsinki that he believed it was up to the Baltic States to decide whether to join or not. His statement enabled the Finnish president to come out in favor of Baltic membership.³⁵ Since then, the leaders of the Finnish security and defense communities have expressed support for Baltic membership. Finnish defense planners believe that Baltic membership in NATO would contribute to regional stability as long as Russia is comfortable with the idea. Indeed, their analyses show that Russia is shifting its security focus to threats from the south and east, and away from the Baltics.³⁶

The admission of the Baltic States into NATO is likely to have a profound effect on the Finnish role in European security. Provided that enlargement does not adversely affect relations with Russia, Finland is likely to begin the process of joining NATO within the next 5 years. As the director of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs said, "The main reason Finland did not want to join NATO was Russia, but now that Russia is seeking cooperation with NATO, and it is comfortable with the Baltics joining, Finland is running out of reasons not to join." Supporters of Finnish accession argue that Finland must be at the table when decisions on European security are made. They do not necessarily see ESDP as an adequate substitute.³⁷

Yet, more than three-quarters of the Finnish population oppose joining NATO. This opposition stems from Finland's post-war history, during which the population was constantly told that a neutral foreign policy was the only way to preserve the country's independence. During this period, the Finnish public became accustomed to accepting the government's position on security matters with minimal debate. Most Finnish observers

35 Interviews at Finnish Ministry of Defense, 31 January 2002.

36 Interviews at Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1 February 2002.

37 Interviews at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 4 February 2002.

therefore believe that if the government came out strongly in favor of NATO membership, more than 50 percent of Finns would as well.³⁸

At present, the political parties are divided on NATO membership, with the conservative Moderate and Swedish People's Parties most in favor. The leftist parties and the Center Party are opposed. The Social Democrats are divided, with the current prime minister in favor and the foreign minister opposed. The politicians' rhetoric on this topic is hard to read, as they rarely openly state their support or opposition to joining NATO. Instead, statements about the need for policy review on joining NATO usually convey support for membership, whereas statements about the need for a referendum convey opposition.³⁹

The issue of NATO enlargement will come out into the open during the March 2003 parliamentary election campaign. With only one of the three major parties (the Center Party) firmly opposed to joining NATO, it is likely that a pro-NATO government will be formed. The next Finnish security white paper is due in 2004; the Council of State will start to draft it as soon as the new government is in place. Provided that the government is in favor of joining NATO, this white paper will spell out the reasons and its publication will be the first step in a public relations campaign that could lead to an application for membership as soon as 2005.⁴⁰

Were Finland to join NATO, it would make a significant military contribution. Its forces are technologically advanced, especially in communications. The recently completed purchase of 64 F-18 aircraft means that the Finnish Air Force would be highly interoperable with NATO and could contribute a great deal to NATO military capabilities. Army and navy contributions would be less significant—the former because of its focus on territorial defense through mobilization of reserves, and the latter because of its almost exclusively coastal mission.

Finnish military relations with the Baltic States are undergoing some fundamental changes, as Finland concludes a decade-long security

38 Interviews at U.S. Embassy in Finland, 31 January 2002.

39 Interviews at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 4 February 2002.

40 Based on interviews at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and at the Department of Strategic and Defense Studies of the Finnish National Defense College, 4 February 2002.

assistance project with Estonia in favor of developing bilateral military cooperation with all three states.

Finnish advice has been instrumental in the development of Estonia's territorial defense structure. Finland has also helped Estonia create its artillery, has conducted extensive training of staff and reserve officers, and has allowed Estonian forces to conduct live-fire exercises on Finnish territory. Finland is now decreasing its assistance to Estonia, as Finnish officials believe that Estonia's need for such assistance has decreased substantially in the last several years. They also do not want to have a military support structure in place for a NATO member state as long as Finland is not itself a NATO member.⁴¹ As a result, the Estonian assistance program will be ended by 2004, at which time Finland hopes to move to normal bilateral cooperation with Estonia in the military and security spheres.⁴²

At the same time, the Finnish government has decided to increase bilateral military cooperation with Latvia and Lithuania. This cooperation initiative is the result of a decision to treat all three Baltic States as normal partners in the security sphere, rather than as transitioning countries in need of assistance. Finland has signed MOUs with all three Baltic States regarding consultation, exchanges, and staff talks. It expects the Baltic States to contribute more to these interactions once they join NATO.

Poland

As it emerged from Soviet domination, Poland was an early and aggressive proponent of NATO expansion. The rationale Poles offered for wanting to join was, to a large degree, limited to ensuring Polish sovereignty. By the mid-1990s, however, the Poles became a more sophisticated interlocutor, presenting a comprehensive view of what Poland would bring to the Alliance both politically and militarily. As a new member, Poland now embraces the "shared values" concept so important to NATO's sustainability. Poland has also committed itself to

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Interviews at Finnish Ministry of Defense, 31 January 2002.

investing in a military force that will be interoperable with other NATO nations.

Changes in government have not affected Poland's position regarding NATO and enlargement. Throughout Polish society there is strong support for Poland's membership in NATO and, despite a recent downturn in the economy, the country is expected to proceed with military modernization programs.

Since Poland joined NATO at the Washington Summit in 1999 it has steadfastly supported further Alliance expansion. Its position regarding who should be included in the next round, however, has fluctuated.⁴³ At first, the Poles supported membership for Slovenia and Slovakia only. By mid-2001, the Polish position had shifted to include Lithuania. Polish efforts to help Lithuania prepare for membership are extensive. In addition to ongoing consultations, the two countries have developed the joint Polish-Lithuanian Battalion (LITPOLBAT) for which Poland has provided supplies and equipment, and nearly 40 Lithuanian officers have attended various Polish military academies tuition-free.⁴⁴

With the realization that NATO membership for the Baltic States was not evoking the adverse Russian reaction feared by many, and the new enthusiasm for membership demonstrated by Latvia and Estonia, the Polish position expanded to endorse an invitation for the Baltic States as an inseparable block. Latvia and Estonia have actively sought Polish counsel on all issues related to NATO. Estonia in particular has impressed Poland with its officials' eagerness to ask questions about the latter's accession experiences without fear of embarrassment.⁴⁵ As with Lithuania, Poland is engaging Latvia and Estonia in a variety of political and military activities designed to help the Baltics prepare for NATO membership.

43 Discussions with the Polish Ambassador to the United States, May 2001. Interviews with officials assigned to the U.S. Embassy Warsaw; Polish Academy of Sciences Institute of Political Studies; Officers from the Polish Navy Staff; and Officials from the Polish Ministries of National Defense and Foreign Affairs, February 2002.

44 Interview with officials from the Department of Foreign Military Affairs, Polish Ministry of National Defense, February 2002.

45 Interview with officials from the U.S. Embassy Warsaw, February 2002.

Most recently, Poland has supported the inclusion of seven of the nine current candidate states (Estonia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, and Slovakia), leaving out only Albania and Macedonia. In addition to the assistance Poland is offering the Baltic States in preparing for NATO accession, it has also developed a mentor relationship with Romania.⁴⁶

Polish officials anticipate that by 2006 Finland and Sweden will have begun discussions with NATO regarding membership in the Alliance. They believe that Finland and Sweden have concerns that they may be left out of the emerging relationship between an expanding NATO and Russia.⁴⁷ They argue that Poland would support any future aspirations by the Finns and Swedes to seek inclusion in the Alliance.

⁴⁶ Interview with officials from the Strategic Planning Directorate of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, February 2002.

⁴⁷ Interview with the Deputy Director of the Security Policy Department, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 2002.

Russia and enlargement

Russia has been adamantly opposed to NATO enlargement since the issue first appeared on the international agenda in 1993. Russian politicians expressed dismay at what they perceived as a betrayal; specifically they pointed to the promises made by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to Mikhail Gorbachev during negotiations over German reunification that NATO would not expand to the east. During the early post-Cold War years, Russian leaders expected that Baker's vision of a single security umbrella stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok would be fulfilled, with the United States and Russia acting as equal partners in ensuring security around the world. A combination of lingering Cold War attitudes and reduced Russian international activity, due to its economic decline, derailed these hopes.

Discussion of establishing a new security framework to include Europe, Russia, and the United States proved illusory. Instead, Germany and the United States led an effort to include several former Warsaw Pact member states in NATO, while assuaging Russian opposition with the Founding Act and the establishment of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC). While the establishment of the PJC in 1997 partially ameliorated Russian objections to the first round of enlargement that year, it soon proved a failure. Russia objected to the format of PJC consultations, in which its representatives were usually informed of decisions already made in the North Atlantic Council (NAC), rather than being involved in discussions at a stage where Russia's views might make a difference.

After failing to prevent Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic from being invited to join NATO in 1997, Russia began to talk about establishing a red line along the former border of the Soviet Union that would demarcate Russia's sphere of influence. Russian leaders largely accepted the idea that NATO would admit Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, the remaining former Warsaw Pact states. At the same time, they sought to make it clear that they considered an invitation to any of the Baltic States to join NATO as completely unacceptable. Rhetoric

coming from Moscow suggested dangerous consequences should NATO pursue this direction.⁴⁸ This rhetoric included the threat of using economic weapons such as tariffs against the Baltic States.⁴⁹

This tone persisted through the spring and early summer of 2001. Even a Western-oriented analyst like Sergey Oznobishchev, the director of the Moscow Institute for Strategic Assessments, argued, "Taking the Baltic States into the Alliance would bring a landslide-like deterioration in relations between Russia and the West."⁵⁰ Because statements such as this seemed reminiscent of previous Russian anti-NATO enlargement rhetoric, Western observers increasingly came to believe that Russian threats were empty. Russian politicians made threats about the negative consequences of various actions for Russia's relationship with the West and even for Russia's political stability, but none of these threats were carried out after the action was taken. Eventually, Western leaders and analysts began to dismiss the Yeltsin administration's statements on NATO enlargement as mere rhetoric.

Russian difficulties with NATO

Russian leaders' opposition to NATO enlargement has stood in stark contrast to their acceptance of EU enlargement, despite the widespread Western view that the potential negative consequences of the latter for Russia are much greater. EU enlargement may have a significant economic impact on Russia and will undermine Russian citizens' ability to visit neighboring countries, such as Estonia, Latvia, and Poland. On the other hand, NATO enlargement is likely to have few practical negative effects on Russian security, since the Alliance has stated that it does not see Russia as a threat and has no plans to use military force against it.

Russian opposition to NATO enlargement is primarily psychological. Many in Russia continue to view NATO through the Cold War lens.

48 Mark Kramer, "NATO, the Baltic States, and Russia: A Framework for Enlargement." Forthcoming in *International Affairs* (London).

49 Previous uses of economic measures against the Baltic States have not been successful. Instead, they have spurred the Baltic States to focus their economies on trade with Western Europe.

50 Cited in *Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, 13 July 2001.

Russian leaders grew up surrounded by images of NATO as the embodiment of Western capitalist and imperialist ambitions against the communist world. Soviet propaganda distinguished between the inhabitants of the NATO member states, who were frequently portrayed as oppressed and misguided, and their political and military leaders, whose imperialist ambitions NATO represented.

One subtext of this image that affects Russians' present attitudes toward NATO is the conviction that NATO is a tool of the United States. Russians have long believed that the United States dictates NATO decisions. This belief is a central element in Russian insistence on securing veto power in any new NATO-Russia forum.

Because of this image, Russian politicians have expressed distrust of NATO's transformation from an anti-Soviet alliance to a European collective defense organization. This distrust increased exponentially as a result of NATO's bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. Russians viewed this campaign as a unilateral attack against a sovereign state that significantly weakened both the principle of non-interference in a state's internal affairs and the requirement that the United Nations Security Council approve international intervention.⁵¹

The principle of non-interference was particularly important for Russia, given the perception of similarity between Yugoslavia's actions in Kosovo and Russia's actions in Chechnya. Even though no Western leader has ever discussed intervention in Chechnya, Russian leaders wanted to make sure that unilateral intervention for humanitarian reasons did not become acceptable under international practice. For this reason, Russian leaders strongly objected to the lack of UN Security Council approval for the NATO action in Kosovo.

Finally, Russian opposition to NATO enlargement was grounded in a historical zero-sum view of security. Given their view of NATO as an anti-Russian organization, Russian leaders continue to believe that an increase in NATO security could only represent a decrease in Russian security. Russia has traditionally sought to protect itself by establishing a buffer zone of friendly or neutral states, viewing these states as being

⁵¹ Irina Kobrinskaya, "Russia: Facing the Facts." In Mattox and Rachwald (eds.), *Enlarging NATO*.

within the Russian sphere of influence. Given that the Baltic States were once part of the Soviet Union, whose boundaries are now seen as the limits of Russia's sphere of influence, Russian leaders were particularly opposed to NATO enlargement into the Baltic States.

NATO and Putin's new foreign policy

The regime transition from Yeltsin to Putin led to major changes in Russian policies toward NATO in general, and enlargement in particular. Putin decided that Russian foreign policy should be geared primarily toward Russian economic recovery and growth, rather than its historical emphasis on territorial security and maintaining Russian influence in neighboring states. He saw that a reorientation required a rapprochement with the West, since any economic revival would depend on Western investment.

During 2001, Russian leaders began to soften their opposition to NATO enlargement. Part of this change of attitude had to do with the change of emphasis discussed above, and part resulted from the recognition that Russia could do nothing to stop NATO enlargement. Russian leaders recognized that Yeltsin's threatening rhetoric had served only to provide ammunition to those Westerners who argued that Russia could still pose a threat to Europe. Given Russia's inability to prevent enlargement, it seemed more effective to come to an agreement with NATO that would benefit Russia by improving cooperation after enlargement.

Putin continues to oppose including the Baltic States in NATO, but in a non-threatening manner that emphasizes the need for Russia's inclusion in European security organizations. He has argued, "There are no objective conditions for enlarging and [for] the Baltic countries becoming members of NATO.... Pushing NATO's limits to Russia does not create universal security in Europe, it does not solve any key issue in Europe.... [Baltic membership] only pushes NATO borders closer to Russia."⁵² This statement clearly reflects his new position: that Russia does not see any reason for the Baltic States to join NATO but respects the right of all sovereign states to make their own security decisions. This formulation

⁵² AFP Report, 5 September 2001.

explicitly states that a state can choose to join whatever security umbrella organizations it feels will increase its security and promote its national interest.

The change in tone has accelerated since the terrorist attacks of September 11, when Putin cast Russia's lot with the West. As cooperation in fighting terrorism became the top priority in Russia's relations with the United States and Europe, possibilities for NATO-Russian cooperation increased dramatically, culminating in the proposal made by Lord Robertson and Tony Blair to include Russia in NATO decision-making on certain issues. This proposal was initially dubbed "NATO at 20."

The NATO-Russia Council: NATO at 20?

Tension will persist between NATO and Russia so long as Russia is not a member, because Russia does not like being an outsider in matters of European security. However, it does not want to be a full member of NATO either, at least not for the foreseeable future.

To ameliorate this tension, the NATO countries and Russia have set up a NATO-Russia Council, in which Russia will have a seat at the table for discussions and for consensus-building on issues of concern. The Council was officially approved at the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting held in Reykjavik, Iceland on 14-15 May 2002 and held its first meeting in Rome on 28 May 2002.

The establishment of the Council was preceded by several months of negotiations between two sides over the rules under which this forum would operate. The initial Russian proposal sought to have Russia participate in the NAC consultations when agreed-upon issues were on the agenda. The thought was that Russia could have a relationship to NATO somewhat analogous to that of France, although on a more limited set of issues. Admiral Kuznetsov, the new Russian representative to the NATO Military Committee, described it as similar to the relationship Russia has with the G8. At G8 summits, there is a list of topics for which all eight states are involved in consultations, and a list of other topics on which seven states meet, without Russia. He thought the same mechanism could be used in NATO, with discussions among 20 states

(including Russia) on some issues and among 19 states (without Russia) on other issues.⁵³ The NATO countries, seeking to establish a "firewall between the new NATO-Russia Council and the North Atlantic Council," rejected this proposal in favor of establishing a separate council for discussion of issues involving Russia.⁵⁴ While the final declaration made clear that the NATO-Russia Council will be entirely separate from the NAC, it also stated that "NATO member states and Russia will work as equal partners in areas of common interest."⁵⁵ The specific mention of member states was meant to reassure Russia that NATO would not come to the table with a pre-agreed position.

To make certain that the new council would not give Russia a de facto veto over NATO decisions, the NATO proposal sought to institute a retrieval mechanism which would allow issues to be withdrawn should consensus in the council prove impossible.⁵⁶ The conditions under which issues would be retrievable were one of the last sticking points in negotiations between the two sides but the NATO position prevailed in the end.⁵⁷ While reports from the summit stated that a retrieval mechanism was in place, the declaration formally establishing the NATO-Russia Council did not mention the possibility of withdrawing issues.⁵⁸

Russia was anxious to avoid a council that is merely a renamed Permanent Joint Council, where the NATO position has been worked out in advance. No real give-and-take would be possible as a result since NATO representatives would be confined to their instructions. Russia wanted to ensure that decisions made by the new NATO-Russia Council would be final, whereas Western negotiators sought to give the NAC the

53 H.H. Gaffney and Dmitry Gorenburg, *U.S.-Russian Cooperation after September 11, 2001: Report of the 15th CNAC-ISKRAN seminar and other discussions, 4-10 December 2001*. CNA Information Memorandum D0005645.A1, January 2002.

54 John Chalmers, "Russia, NATO at odds over stature of new forum." Reuters, 15 March 2002.

55 Declaration by Heads of State and Government of NATO Member States and the Russian Federation, "NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality." 28 May 2002. (The Rome Declaration)

56 Judy Dempsey, "NATO offers Russia a new kind of relationship." *Financial Times*, 25 February 2002.

57 Todd S. Purdum, "NATO Strikes Deal to Accept Russia in a Partnership." *New York Times*, 15 May 2002.

58 David E. Sanger, "NATO Embraces the Russians, but as Non-Voting Partners." *New York Times*, 28 May 2002. (Internet edition)

power to review these decisions.⁵⁹ The United States wanted to make the new council a forum where NATO and Russia will focus on joint discussions leading to specific joint projects, and eventually to the possibility of joint decision-making on key issues.⁶⁰ Both sides got what they wanted. The Rome Declaration made clear that the NATO-Russia Council would operate on the principle of consensus and that NATO members would not come to Council meetings with a prearranged position. It also spelled out several specific projects that would be part of an initial agenda for the Council, including the joint assessment of the terrorist threat to peacekeeping forces in the Balkans, the exchange of WMD consequence management information, and the establishment of cooperation in the field of civil and military airspace control.⁶¹

As Ambassador Vershbow put it, in working out the details and their subsequent implementation, "Russia will need to develop a new 'culture of cooperation'—the spirit of flexibility, understanding, and compromise that is essential to an organization that works on the basis of consensus among nations with differing security perspectives and priorities. This is the way NATO works, and it is the way that NATO-Russia relations also will need to work."⁶² American negotiators hope that by getting involved in the NATO consultation process, Russians will learn that NATO works through consensus rather than votes or vetoes.⁶³ This learning process will be aided by Russian participation in the planning of the semi-annual Foreign Minister, Defense Minister and military Chief of Staff meetings envisioned by the Rome Declaration.⁶⁴

Regardless, any changes in the relationship will be political. As Admiral Kuznetsov made clear, Russia does not want to participate in the integrated military command or to see its troops be commanded by an American general or follow NATO procedures. At the same time, the military cooperation mechanism currently in place will not change much under the new relationship. According to Admiral Kuznetsov, Russia

59 Chalmers, "Russia, NATO at odds."

60 Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, "NATO and Russia: Redefining Relations for the 21st Century." Public Address at St. Petersburg State University, 22 February 2002.

61 The Rome Declaration.

62 Ibid.

63 See "The Golden Rule of Consultation," chapter II, in Harlan Cleveland, *NATO: The Transatlantic Bargain* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

64 The Rome Declaration.

participates in Kosovo peacekeeping operations, in accordance with the Helsinki agreement. There is a group of Russian military planners in Mons. SHAPE plans the KFOR operations, the Russians comment, and then plans are directed to specific units. Previously, Russian planners had just approved what was given to them, but now they participate directly in planning. In either case, Russia has never rejected a SHAPE directive for KFOR. Kuznetsov asserted that Russia has thus gained a stake in the decision-making, while other non-member states just follow NATO directives. Under the NATO-Russia Council mechanism, Russia would still be directly involved in planning for KFOR, while other non-member states participating in an operation would continue to follow directives as they have in the past.⁶⁵

There is broad agreement that the most important substantive issue to be addressed by the two sides in the new council is cooperation in fighting terrorism. As Ambassador Vershbow noted, consultations on issues related to tracking terrorist threats, civil-emergency planning, and the role of the military in combating terrorism have been ongoing since last fall. ⁶⁶ Future initiatives will include developing a common intelligence assessment of terrorist threats and establishing programs that will enable NATO and Russian military forces to conduct joint counter-terrorist operations.

Other areas that were approved for consultation and joint decision-making include crisis management and peacekeeping, counter-proliferation, arms control and confidence-building measures, theater missile defense, search and rescue at sea, military-to-military cooperation and defense reform, emergency planning, and confronting new threats and challenges. Within these areas, the most substantively significant is the proposal to establish an integrated NATO-Russia military training center as part of the improvement in military cooperation and the development of a generic concept for joint NATO-Russia peacekeeping operations.⁶⁷ The training center may spur the progress of military reform in Russia while the peacekeeping concept, if developed, would routinize NATO-Russia cooperation in peacekeeping operations.

⁶⁵ Gaffney and Gorenburg, *U.S.-Russian Cooperation*.

⁶⁶ Vershbow, "NATO and Russia."

⁶⁷ The Rome Declaration.

The Russian side agrees on the importance of addressing these issues, but would eventually like to see the NATO-Russia Council become a venue for cooperation on a broader range of issues. Speaking in December, Admiral Kuznetsov expressed the hope that the list of topics for the council would be developed jointly, rather than simply presented to Russia by NATO. He wanted European security issues to be included in this list as well, noting that the situation in Macedonia could have been resolved with Russian participation from the beginning. (The inclusion of European security issues on the list of topics encountered resistance from both European and American negotiators, and was dropped.) Kuznetsov also sought to have the topic of NATO enlargement discussed in the new council, without claiming the right of veto over NATO decisions on the matter. He argued that better consultation on the whole range of European security issues would resolve some of the problems Russia has with the way these issues are decided.⁶⁸ As the negotiations on the shape of the Council were reaching their conclusion, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stated that the mechanism "may become an important element in creating a future European security architecture in the broader sense."⁶⁹ This statement indicates that Russian officials continue to believe that the NATO-Russia Council is just a first step in achieving their vision of a European security umbrella that includes Russia as a full participant.

The establishment of the NATO-Russia Council will go a long way toward assuaging Russian fears about the admission of the Baltic States to NATO. As long as Russian concerns are addressed, Baltic membership in NATO will appear increasingly inevitable. Since the NATO-Russia relationship seems to be getting stronger, it seems that this issue may have fewer consequences for relations with Russia than many have feared.

Moreover, as the Russians begin to participate in the NATO-Russia Council, they will find out what NATO "decision-making" is. Most NATO decision-making consists of discussions of communiqué phrasing. NATO can be described as a switchboard where countries compare their positions, reconcile them, and then refer back to their capitals for final

⁶⁸ Gaffney and Gorenburg, *U.S.-Russian Cooperation*.

⁶⁹ Michael Wines, "Accord is Near on Giving Russia a Limited Role in NATO." *New York Times*, 23 April 2002.

agreement. Instead of voting, representatives to the NAC follow the silence procedure, where silence signifies concurrence. “Breaking silence” to get changes in draft communiqués is considered a rather drastic step by the participants.

Western officials believe that if the NATO-Russia Council works, it could "become the foundation for a genuine partnership of old enemies on a profound range of issues."⁷⁰ The test for whether it works or not will come over the next several months, as the Council gets down to business. If NATO members and Russia use the Council to share ideas and plan joint actions, this process will inevitably draw them closer together and make the council a success. If Russia uses the Council as a platform to denounce enlargement or refuses to allow new NATO members to join the Council, or if NATO members refuse to allow significant issues to be decided by the Council, then the NATO-Russia Council will go the way of its predecessor, the Permanent Joint Council, and become a moribund and irrelevant institution.

The effect of enlargement

The decision to admit the Baltic States into NATO is likely to result in a small but significant outpouring of criticism by Russian political leaders. It is unlikely to last long, or to affect President Putin's efforts to bring Russia closer to the West. If Russians perceive that Baltic membership is accompanied by an effective incorporation of Russia into NATO consultation structures through the NATO-Russia Council, even this criticism may be muted or limited to leftist and nationalist politicians.

In the long run, relations between Russia and the Baltic States are likely to improve because the most significant source of tension and uncertainty will be removed. Russia is likely to cease stalling on border agreements, since its delaying tactics would no longer serve the purpose of injecting uncertainty into the Baltics' campaign for NATO membership.

Improvements in relations will not occur automatically. Repairing the history of distrust between political elites in Moscow and in the Baltic capitals will require active measures, and Baltic politicians will have to

⁷⁰ Ibid.

make a special effort to promote the advantages of Russian-Baltic cooperation. At the same time, there is a danger that one or more of the Baltic States will do something rash, such as limiting the rights of Russian minorities, once they no longer feel they have to be on their best behavior to gain admission into Western institutions.

NATO enlargement is unlikely to have a significant impact on relations between the U.S. Navy and its Russian counterpart. Regardless of the outcome of the Prague summit, the Russian Navy is likely to gradually increase its participation in multinational exercises in the Baltic Sea. In the short to medium term, its participation is likely to be limited primarily by lack of funding and outdated equipment, mainly old and poorly maintained ships. The political factors that limited cooperation in the late 1990s are unlikely to do so over the next 10–12 years, but resources will remain constrained.

At the same time, Russian naval interaction with the Baltic States will remain limited. The Russian Navy perceives the Baltic navies as relatively insignificant and does not see many advantages to bilateral cooperation. The proximity of Lithuania to the Russian Baltic Fleet headquarters in Kaliningrad will ensure some continuing cooperation between these two states, particularly in patrolling the Curonian lagoon and adjoining sea lanes. Estonia and Latvia have no naval cooperation with Russia, and none is likely to develop in the next several years. On the whole, the Baltic States are, and will continue to be, far more interested in deepening cooperation with NATO and the Nordic navies and will devote their limited engagement funds to those efforts. For this reason, multilateral exercises in the Baltic Sea will be particularly important as a venue for Baltic-Russian interaction. The U.S. Navy should seek to promote such exercises and to participate in them whenever possible in order to engage Russia in multilateral cooperation in the Baltic region and in this way increase trust and stability in the region.⁷¹

71 Multilateral exercises will also benefit the Baltic States' navies by increasing their competence and professionalism, and the U.S. Navy by increasing other participants' ability to be interoperable it.

Expansion and U.S. naval activities in the Baltic Sea

History

U.S. naval presence in the Baltic Sea was a hallmark of America's deterrent posture throughout the Cold War. This presence supported the frontline NATO allies Denmark, Norway, and Germany, as well as the Western, but non-aligned, government of Sweden.

The regular presence of NATO navies from outside the Baltic Sea region (including those of the Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, and the United States) was an important counterpoint to the large Soviet Baltic fleet. The United States led annual naval exercises in the Baltic (BALTOPS), and other NATO members routinely exercised in the Baltic Sea with NATO partners from outside the region. A routine NATO presence reinforced the legal argument that the Baltic Sea was an international body of water, open to the warships of any naval power.

Furthermore, NATO members opposed Russian attempts to develop regional agreements among Baltic littoral states on naval confidence and security-building measures, which would have limited the activities of naval forces from outside the region.

Current activities

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has reduced its naval presence in the Baltic Sea. Since 1992, American (and European) forces have concentrated on providing security on land and at sea in the Balkans. The withering away of the Russian Baltic and Northern fleets, the break-up of the Warsaw Pact and the inclusion of three of its former members in NATO, along with the development of extensive economic

and social contacts between the Nordic States, Germany, Denmark, and the Baltic States have created a region stable enough to justify a reduction in military presence by all powers, including the United States.

The centerpiece of the U.S. Navy's role in the area is the annual BALTOPS exercise. Until recently, BALTOPS was split into two parts: one involving PfP nations, and one for NATO members. The PfP part of the exercise traditionally involved search and rescue operations, humanitarian missions, and peace support operations—i.e., operations outside of traditional warfighting. The NATO phase involved traditional multinational naval exercises focused on undersea and surface warfare. In the last two years, BALTOPS has become a single phase exercise in which NATO member states, PfP states, and Russia all participate together. BALTOPS remains the principal vehicle for maintaining a regional United States naval presence, and signifies continued American commitment to Baltic stability.⁷²

Beyond BALTOPS, there are also bilateral and multilateral exercises involving minehunting and mineclearing assets and diving ships and personnel. In addition to exercises, the Navy uses many other tools to further security cooperation with states on the Baltic littoral, including regular flag officer visits, port visits by U.S. naval units (or flying visitors to U.S. ships in other parts of Europe when they cannot make port visits to Northern Europe), and American participation in exercises run by NATO partners. These provide visible evidence of continued U.S. commitment to Northern Europe and a counterweight to Russia's presence.⁷³

The regional navies consider U.S. involvement in routine naval cooperation activities to be very important. Current and prospective NATO members, as well as Sweden and Finland, want U.S. participation in as many activities as possible. They believe that this is the key to securing Russian involvement in cooperative naval practices, since Russia will, in their opinion, only participate in regional military activities that are important enough for the United States to be involved.

⁷² This was the consensus view of BALTOPS expressed in conversations with naval and Ministry of Defense staffs in Denmark, Germany, and Sweden, as well as personnel in the foreign ministries of those countries, and the officers assigned to NATO Naval Command North.

⁷³ Ibid.

An American presence is also imperative for NATO partners and the Baltic States because they do not want to engage Russia on their own, or to be involved in any military activities with Russia without the American presence.⁷⁴

U.S. naval activities after expansion

How will the expansion of the Alliance affect the activities of the U.S. Navy in the region? We conclude that the expansion of NATO to include the Baltic States will have a minimal effect on the U.S. Navy's exercises, security cooperation, and port visits in the region.

NATO expansion in the Baltic is not likely to change the emphasis of U.S. naval security cooperation efforts in the region. Baltic peace and stability throughout the post-Cold War period has been supported by EU expansion, agreements between the Baltic States and Russia on outstanding minority and border issues, and the inclusion of Poland in NATO. The importance of territorial defense against invasions from other nations has declined, and military spending levels are 25 to 30 percent below their levels at the beginning of the 1990s. With the exception of Russia, every country in the region takes part in NATO and partnership activities, in addition to contributing to NATO peace support missions.

BALTOPS and NATO exercises such as Strong Resolve epitomize current U.S. naval activities in the Baltic Sea. Such exercises will continue to have a strong multilateral character, with broad participation from NATO and PfP countries. They will cover a range of military capabilities (from humanitarian assistance to peace support, from naval gunfire support to amphibious operations), with those at the higher end involving the United States and the most capable allied navies. The limited capabilities of the Baltic States' navies will restrict their involvement and cooperation with U.S. forces. Due to their emphasis on mine warfare and their small numbers of units, they will not take part in

⁷⁴ This was definitely the opinion of Baltic naval attaches in Denmark, and of the Danish and Swedish navies. The German Ministry of Defense was more willing to engage Russia without the constant presence of the United States, but it found no support for this position among other Baltic littoral states. Based on interviews in Copenhagen with naval attaches from the Baltic States, Swedish and Danish naval staffs, and the Director of Baltic Affairs in the German Ministry of Defense, January 2002.

warfighting activities such as strike warfare, naval gunfire support, or undersea warfare, but will concentrate on working with other NATO navies that have skills similar to their own.

Given this context, U.S. forces can focus their security cooperation efforts on alliance maintenance, professional training and interoperability, and the gradual inclusion of new members. Alliance maintenance and professional development will require the continuation of longstanding American support for Baltic integration efforts, such as the Baltic Defense College, BALTNET, and BALTRON. It will also require support for exchanges with Baltic military personnel and ministry of defense officials that will serve to institutionalize the practices put into place to qualify for NATO membership. These commitments are low level in terms of resources and personnel, but nevertheless represent U.S. commitment to integrating the new members into NATO and Western military organizations.

The next logical step after this round of enlargement is the accession of Sweden and Finland. If EU expansion from 2002 to 2004 includes the Baltic States, then by 2005, the entire Baltic Sea region will be integrated into the main Western military, economic, and political institutions—no small triumph. Sweden and Finland both possess the technical capabilities to join NATO. They both have worked with NATO forces over the past decade, and they have mature political-military infrastructures that would quickly integrate with NATO.

Baltic membership in NATO may signal a change in U.S. port visits. Routine port visits by U.S. Navy ships visiting the region may be interpreted as a signal of support for the new members and tangible evidence of the NATO security commitment. The type of ship will be less important than the fact that U.S. warships make routine stops in each of the new member states.

An increase in the number of port calls at Russian ports may further U.S. efforts to bring Russia into a more cooperative relationship with NATO. This could lead to greater contact between the U.S. and Russian fleets, and perhaps lay the groundwork for increased involvement by Russia in U.S.-led naval activities in the region. It would also signal to Russia that NATO expansion to the Baltic States is not meant to counter Russian

interests in the region, that future expansion to Sweden and Finland would also not serve to exclude Russia from participating in Baltic regional cooperation, and that the possibility of even closer NATO-Russia cooperation is open for the future. With the general security and stability of the Baltic region strengthened by expansion of NATO and the EU, the last great game in Northern Europe is the successful integration of Russia into a transatlantic security framework.