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NATO: July 1997 Madrid Summit Outcome

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Summary

President Clinton and the other NATO heads of state and government, meeting in Madrid, Spain on July 8-9, 1997, invited the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to begin accession talks with the Alliance. Initiating the enlargement process was the major goal set for the summit meeting, but the outcome was achieved only after some hard bargaining. French President Jacques Chirac came to Madrid strongly advocating inclusion of Romania and Slovenia in the first group of invitees. He argued successfully for some indication that these two southern European countries would be next on the list of candidates. The leaders affirmed that enlargement would be a process and that they would review candidacies of additional countries at a meeting in April 1999 when they hope to welcome the three current invitees as NATO members. The other goals of the summit were met only in part. The allies had hoped to be able to celebrate a “new NATO” at Madrid, but the celebration was qualified by failure to agree on reform of the NATO command structure and by France’s decision that NATO had not changed sufficiently to warrant its return to full military participation in the Alliance.

Opening to the East

When the NATO leaders convened in Madrid, Spain, on July 8-9, 1997, the most prominent agenda item was to issue invitations to “one or more” countries to begin negotiating terms for entry into the Alliance. Prior to the summit, some 12 European governments had said they would like to join.¹ At Madrid, the leaders invited the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to begin accession negotiations.² Other candidates were reassured that NATO would maintain “an active relationship” with them and that the NATO summit scheduled for April 1999 to welcome the three new members would also

¹ Governments having indicated a desire to join NATO are: Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

² NATO Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation, Issued by the Heads of State and Government, Madrid, Spain, July 8, 1997.

review the status of other aspirants. Romania and Slovenia were mentioned as leading candidates for future selection.

The judgment of NATO countries concerning which applicants to invite was based in part on the guidelines laid out in the September 1995 NATO Enlargement Study. The study suggested that successful applicants would have to demonstrate established democratic practices, economic reform toward free market systems, respect for human rights, peaceful relations with neighboring states, civilian control of the military, and the willingness and ability to contribute to the security of the Alliance. In practice, the outcome was also influenced by factors not outlined in the NATO study including, for example, the strategic importance of the candidate, Russian political sensitivities, the North-South balance of NATO membership, various domestic political constituencies in NATO countries, and considerations related to cost and ratification procedures.³

Following the meeting of NATO foreign minister in Sintra, Portugal, on May 29-30, it appeared that all NATO members were prepared to issue invitations to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Some, including France and other southern European NATO states, wanted to include Romania and Slovenia. On June 12, the United States announced that it would support only Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary for inclusion in the first group. U.S. officials argued that these three countries are the best qualified for the first round and that they raise the fewest complications for the ratification process. The allies were not surprised at the U.S. position, and several supported it. Many allied officials were disappointed, however, that the United States came across as trying to dictate the Madrid outcome.

Now that invitations have been issued, the process of accession will have to move quickly to meet the goal of welcoming new members on the 50th anniversary of NATO's founding on April 4, 1999. The leaders said that negotiations with the applicants should be concluded by the end of 1997 and the accession protocol prepared for the ratification procedures of all member states. The U.S. Senate presumably will be asked to give its advice and consent to ratification early in 1998.

Failed Suitors. One of the most sensitive issues for the allies has been how to deal with those countries who wish to join the Alliance but who are not invited in Madrid. In addition to the pledge to make enlargement a continuing process, the leaders emphasized the importance for potential candidates to participate actively in the new Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), which was established by the Sintra meeting, and to make full use of the Partnership for Peace (PfP). The PfP program will be "enhanced" to permit partners to participate in a wider range of NATO activities. For example, they will be invited to assign liaison officers at NATO major commands to participate in peacekeeping planning and other activities.

Russia and Ukraine. The summit leaders declared that evidence of a "new NATO" is also provided by the special relationships established with Russia and Ukraine. NATO's relationship with Ukraine is not as problematic as that with Russia. The government of Ukraine does not oppose NATO enlargement and supports developing an

³ See CRS Issue Brief 95076, NATO: Congress Addresses Expansion of the Alliance, by Paul Gallis.

intensified consultative and cooperative relationship with NATO. At Sintra, NATO and Ukraine initialled a “Charter on Distinctive Partnership” which was signed at Madrid. Ukraine is not currently seeking NATO membership.

Russia has lobbied strenuously against NATO enlargement while at the same time negotiating a formalized relationship with the Alliance. On May 14 those negotiations concluded successfully when Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny M. Primakov and NATO Javier Solana initialled a “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between NATO and the Russian Federation.” The accord is not a “legally” binding document, but it confirms a variety of NATO commitments intended to reassure Russia that its security will not be threatened by NATO enlargement. The Act, signed by Presidents Yeltsin and Clinton and other NATO heads of state and government in Paris on May 27, also creates a special NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council intended to ensure opportunities for continuing consultation and cooperation.

U.S. and NATO officials would have liked to have completed a “framework agreement” on revision of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. Revision of this Treaty to reflect the changed European security environment is seen as one way to reassure Russia concerning its future security requirements. But the leaders were only able to make note of this CFE goal in their communique.

Internal Adaptation

Since the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union disappeared, the NATO allies have been working to build a “new” NATO oriented toward their post-Cold War security priorities and organized to deal with contemporary security concerns. The allies hoped at the Madrid summit to be able to show off a NATO that is not only “opening” to other countries but is also changing to reflect new defense priorities and a new balance between U.S. and European responsibilities in the Alliance.

The allies failed to produce significant conclusions to the process of adaptation of the alliance. They were only able to note progress made to implement the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept and practical steps designed to facilitate formation of a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) within the framework of the Alliance. They were not able to complete the reform of NATO’s integrated command structure, and France announced prior to the summit that NATO had not yet changed sufficiently to permit it to enter into full military cooperation with a “new NATO.” The government of Spain, on the other hand, issued a unilateral declaration, noted by the summit leaders, that Spain would join the new integrated command structure when it was formed. The leaders set the goal of completing work on a new command structure by the December 1997 NATO ministerial meetings. They also agreed to review NATO’s Strategic Concept “to ensure that it is fully consistent with Europe’s new security situation and challenges.”

The Adaptation Process. In November 1991, NATO leaders approved a “new strategic concept” intended to guide the Alliance into the post-Cold War world. The allies recognized that NATO was moving beyond a mission focused on collective defense and toward more diverse tasks. In the new strategic concept, they agreed that “...Alliance security must also take account of the global context. Alliance security interests can be

affected by other risks of a wider nature.” They affirmed that, under Article 4 of the Treaty of Washington, they could consult on and coordinate responses to such risks.

The allies took the next major steps at the January 1994 Brussels summit. In Brussels, President Clinton warmly embraced European unity goals and institutions. The allies supported the U.S. initiative to establish CJTF headquarters that could be used to assemble tailored military responses to varied challenges. The initiative was designed primarily to give NATO a more flexible set of options for organizing and conducting military operations, but it was promoted at and after the summit largely as a vehicle for the European allies to mount military operations relying on NATO infrastructure but without active or major U.S. participation. The allies also agreed to create the Partnership for Peace which would facilitate non-NATO members cooperation with the Alliance, including joining in future CJTF operations.

Soon after the Brussels summit, the United States and France fell into fundamental disagreements about how CJTF operations should be controlled. An impasse on implementation of the CJTF decision persisted for over a year. But after Jacques Chirac succeeded François Mitterrand as French President in May 1995, France started moving decisively toward an accommodation with NATO. In December 1995, the French government announced a partial return to participation in NATO military bodies and consultations. France made a full return to NATO’s integrated command structure dependent on sufficient revamping of NATO to make it a “new NATO” that created political and operational space for realization of a European Security and Defense Identity within the transatlantic alliance.

The NATO allies, believing that France’s return to full participation in NATO would facilitate a more rational organization of transatlantic and European defense cooperation, attempted to accommodate French perspectives. Paris argued that, particularly for new non-collective defense (Article V) missions, there should be more intrusive political control over military operations. France wanted to shift more influence over NATO decisions from the U.S. (SACEUR) and the Defense Planning Committee to the Alliance’s key decisionmaking body, the North Atlantic Council. As a concession to France, allied Defense Ministers still meet in the framework of the Defense Planning Committee to handle routine matters, but serious business is conducted with the French minister participating in meetings of the North Atlantic Council “in Defense Ministers Session.” Further, a “Policy Coordination Group” was established to help integrate NATO political objectives and military operations.

Meanwhile, in Bosnia, the allies demonstrated that they could make CJTFs work in practice even though they had not been able to agree on how to restructure NATO’s military organization to reflect the CJTF concept. Both the Bosnia Implementation Force (IFOR) and the current Stabilization Force (SFOR) are combined joint task forces under NATO command and control.

June 1996 Berlin Ministerial. After some hard bargaining over the shape of “a new NATO,” a framework agreement was reached at a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Berlin in June 1996. The allies agreed that a European Security and Defense Identity would be created within the framework of the transatlantic alliance by opening the possibility for European officers in the NATO structure to wear a Western European

Union (WEU) command “hat” as well as their NATO hat. It was also agreed that the NATO structure and assets could, with the agreement of all the allies, be made available for future military operations commanded by the Western European Union. It was agreed that the senior European officer who in the future holds the position of Deputy SACEUR would also be the senior WEU commander and would assume control of a WEU-run military operation, should one be undertaken. After Berlin, French officials suggested that if such reforms were implemented, France would return to full participation in NATO’s command structure.

Command Structure Changes and the “Long-Term Study”. The task of adjusting NATO’s command structure to the new circumstances now will continue beyond Madrid. The allies had hoped to have a package in place before the summit that would specify the number, locations and procedures for CJTF commands as well as reorganize the command structure with new provisions enhancing the European role in the alliance. They were not able to meet that objective. The allies have already reduced NATO strategic commands from three to two, eliminating the Allied Command Channel (ACCHAN), leaving only Allied Command Europe (ACEUR), headquartered in Mons, Belgium and led by a U.S. officer serving as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), and Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT), in Norfolk, VA, also led by a U.S. officer serving as Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (SACLANT). Meanwhile, NATO’s Military Committee has been conducting a Long-Term Study aimed at further rationalizing NATO’s command structure.

A major direction of the Long-Term Study has been toward a reduction of the number of Major Subordinate Commands (MSCs) within Allied Command Europe (ACEUR) from three to two. The study suggests NATO will consolidate the North West and Central commands to produce two MSC’s in ACEUR — one in the north, and one in the south. Such a reduction, and other anticipated rationalizations, will reduce the number of “flag” positions available for national distribution in the new structure. This reduction comes at a time when the number of allies in the command structure is likely to increase — fewer flags for more nations.

The AFSOUTH Command Issue. The command allocation dilemma has focused on the French desire, articulated following Berlin, to have a European officer take over from an American as Commander of AFSOUTH. The logic of the French position was that, in the new structure, the United States will continue to control the positions of SACEUR and SACLANT. The two MSCs under SACEUR, according to the French view, should therefore go to European officers. The United States has argued that the strategic importance of the Mediterranean and the critical role of the U.S. Sixth Fleet for Middle Eastern contingencies require that the United States keep the command. The French argued that the Mediterranean region is of particular importance to Europeans. Even with a European officer in charge of AFSOUTH, they pointed out, the Sixth Fleet would remain under U.S. command and available for Middle Eastern or other missions based on U.S. national decisions. Allied officials had hoped that some compromise package could be fashioned that would permit the adaptation package to be assembled and France to become a full participant in the integrated command structure. This possibility vanished with the advent of a leftist coalition in Paris following French parliamentary elections on May 25 and June 1. The French Socialists have been severely critical of Chirac’s movement toward full participation in NATO’s integrated command structure.

President Chirac's defense spending and force posture decisions since coming to office suggest he believes France cannot effectively ensure its future security interests except in cooperation with its allies, including the United States. A "new" NATO arguably provides the best framework for such cooperation. The fact that Chirac will now have to share management of foreign and defense policy with the new government of the left, led by Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, denied NATO the chance to celebrate a full reconciliation with France at Madrid. The United States and France did agree, however, to continue to try to overcome the current impasse.

Madrid Outcome. The outcome in Madrid can be seen as "successful" in some areas, and as leaving much work to be done in some others. With regard to enlargement, the results were largely as hoped by the allies. The three strongest candidates were invited, and other aspirants were given hope for the future. Prior to and at the summit, frameworks were created for special NATO/Russia and NATO/Ukraine relationships. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council became a new forum for consultations between NATO members and non-members on European security issues, and the Partnership for Peace was strengthened. In addition, the desire to enhance NATO's Mediterranean dialogue was acknowledged by the establishment of a new NATO committee, the "Mediterranean Cooperation Group," to assume leading responsibility for the dialogue.

The outcome was, however, marred by the debate over which countries to include of enlargement and by the reluctance of France and other allies to accept U.S. ideas about how much enlargement will cost and how those costs should be shared. In addition, the pre-Madrid maneuvering left many allies worried that the United States had adopted a more heavy-handed alliance leadership style. The goal of creating a "new NATO" was only partly met. Command structure reform was not completed. The leaders were able to note important progress toward a stronger European role in the alliance, including the establishment of close operational and consultative ties to the Western European Union, but a European Security and Defense Identity will not have much content unless France is fully in the system.

The ultimate success of Madrid, therefore, may be measured not so much by what was announced at Madrid as by the process of implementing the summit decisions. The implementation process, in turn, will depend to a considerable extent on effective U.S. leadership. That burden falls most heavily on the President, but the Congress seems likely to face treaty and budgetary decisions in the next year that could critically affect the enlargement options and the evolution of Alliance missions and structures.