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Partnership For Peace

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Partnership For Peace

Summary

NATO's Partnership for Peace program seeks to encourage eligible states, above all the states of the former Warsaw Pact and the former Soviet Union, to build democracy and undertake greater responsibilities in international security. The program could open the door to, but does not promise, NATO membership. U.S. and NATO relations with Russia are likely to be the determining factor in deciding whether states move from Partnership to NATO membership.

The Partnership program, established at NATO's summit of January 10-11, 1994, does not extend the Alliance's mutual security commitment to members. The program requires that member states take steps towards an open defense budget and civilian control of the military, and urges them to join with NATO in future peacekeeping efforts. It establishes an institutional structure in Brussels for consultation with NATO states. As of August 3, 1994, 22 states had joined.

The Clinton Administration and NATO's initially stated intent was that Partnership members would bear the brunt of the program's costs, with Alliance members contributing little. President Clinton may alter this course, however, as he has said he would seek \$100 million for the program in the FY1996 budget.

Russia will likely play a pivotal role in the program's success or failure. Russia, a Partnership adherent, could use its membership as a step to strengthen cooperation with the Alliance and former members of the Warsaw Pact by joining in peacekeeping operations and encouraging diplomatic settlements of international disputes. Some observers, however, believe that the program opens the door to Moscow's interference in the affairs of other Partnership states.

Several east European governments express concern that NATO, by allowing Russia into the Partnership for Peace, has established a "soft Yalta", in which Moscow can influence their future. They believe that the United States and its allies may wish above all to avoid tension with Russia and accede, for example, to Russian efforts to dissuade the Alliance from ever allowing their entry into NATO.

Some critics of the Partnership program believe that it may deflect the effort to build a European security apparatus, by providing Moscow with opportunities to influence NATO decisionmaking more directly than in the past, and by diverting European states from developing new security institutions at a moment when the United States is reducing its military presence on the continent.

In response, the Administration contends that the end of the Cold War presents an historic opportunity to include Russia in building a democratic Europe in which major security decisions are made in concert, rather than across ideological or battle lines, and that the Partnership for Peace is a vehicle for such decisionmaking. They also point out that no credible alternative institution to NATO exists to insure European security.

ABSTRACT

This report examines the origins of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in 1994. It analyzes such questions as whether PfP was meant to be a substitute for NATO expansion; early cost estimates of the program; Russia's envisioned role in PfP; and the Clinton Administration's long-term objectives for PfP. The report will not be updated. See also CRS Issue Brief 95076: *NATO: Congress Addresses Expansion of the Alliance*, and CRS Report 97-477: *NATO Enlargement and Russia*.

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Partnership For Peace

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States and its NATO allies have sought means to give renewed purpose to NATO and to bring stability to eastern Europe and the states of the former Soviet Union. The NATO summit in Brussels on January 10-11, 1994, addressed these issues. At the summit, the United States endorsed European Union (EU) efforts to build a security and defense identity through the Western European Union (WEU). To provide more flexibility for NATO and selected non-NATO forces to meet contingencies, the allies established the Combined Joint Task Forces to perform missions in and beyond Europe.¹ Finally, the United States proposed, and NATO adopted, the Partnership for Peace, intended to build stability in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union by outlining a plan for greater cooperation in several military and civilian spheres between NATO members and non-NATO states.

Background

NATO members began to design means for cooperation with the former Warsaw Pact states during the period when the Soviet Union was in early stages of collapse in 1991. NATO's intention was to address the security concerns of eastern European countries and to assure former adversaries of assistance in the transition to democratic rule.

The NACC

In June 1991, NATO adopted a joint U.S.-German proposal to establish the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), a forum for consultation and cooperation, and in some ways, a forerunner to Partnership for Peace. Consisting of the NATO countries and open to former Warsaw Pact states and republics of the former Soviet Union, it now has 38 members. The NACC, as a group, holds general discussions on security, as well as consultations on implementation of arms control agreements, relations between civilian and military sectors in a democracy, and means to convert defense industries to civilian industries. Member states also discuss a range of environmental issues raised by the reliance on large militaries and defense industries during the Cold War. It has no institutional apparatus.

¹See U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) and New Missions for NATO, by Stanley R. Sloan. CRS Report 94-249. March 17, 1994.

NATO leadership stated explicitly that the NACC could not be used by east European countries and the former Soviet republics as a stepping stone to NATO membership. NATO wished to avoid involvement in instability to its east and did not wish to dilute the Alliance's military effectiveness with new, untried partners. Some east European states in particular have complained that the consultations are often no more than seminars, and that their exclusion from NATO, in the face of turmoil in Russia, has eroded stability.

The Partnership for Peace

Rising instability in Russia, beginning in 1992, led to renewed debate over how to secure a principal gain from the end of the Cold War, the independence of the east European states. Some European allies, such as Germany, have urged NATO membership for selected east European states as one avenue to that end. At the same time, Russian officials warned that extending NATO's frontiers to the east would be interpreted in Russia as an aggressive and destabilizing move. In the fall of 1993, then Secretary of Defense Les Aspin began to sketch a program called "Partnership for Peace." Secretary Aspin said that the United States, having seen the Iron Curtain lifted, did not wish "to replace it by drawing another line" in Europe that would exclude Russia from new security arrangements.² Russian legislative elections in December 1993 made the party of extreme nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy the largest in the *Duma*. The strong popular support for Zhirinovskiy stirred the debate over whether a future government in Moscow might return to imperialist policies, and over possible NATO initiatives to forestall such policies.

At the Brussels summit of January 10-11, 1994, NATO members endorsed the Partnership for Peace and opened the program to all NACC members as well as to "other CSCE countries able and willing to contribute...." The Partnership's purpose is to strengthen NATO's "ties with the democratic states to [the] East." Under the plan, NATO will not extend Article V protection (the NATO Treaty's mutual defense commitment in the event of attack) nor promise eventual membership to Partnership countries. To join the Partnership for Peace, each state must sign a "framework document" that commits it to pursue the following "objectives":

- ! develop "transparency" in its defense budget and planning in order for its public and other states to understand its military capabilities;
- ! establish civilian control of its armed forces;
- ! develop a capability in its military to contribute to operations under the authority of the United Nations and/or the responsibility of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE);
- ! build cooperative military relations with NATO for the purpose of joint planning and training to be able to undertake joint missions for peacekeeping, search and rescue, and humanitarian operations; and

²Remarks by Les Aspin at the Atlantic Council. Washington, DC. Dec. 3, 1993. P. 4.

! improve the quality of its military forces for interoperability with NATO.³

The Clinton Administration contends that such steps will build stability to NATO's east, strengthen NATO's capacity to respond to security contingencies beyond the Alliance's mission of collective defense, and open a path to Partnership countries for future membership in NATO. However, the United States and its NATO allies do not view the "framework document" as a checklist that, once fulfilled, necessarily qualifies a state for NATO membership. Rather, NATO retains wholly in its own hands any eventual decision to invite a country to become a NATO member.

After signing the framework document, Partnership members must then negotiate with NATO a "presentation document" that describes how they intend to meet the framework document's objectives. These states might be asked to provide, for example, a schedule for achieving civilian control of the military, and budgetary outlays for improving their armed forces. In negotiation with NATO, each state chooses its own pace for reaching agreed objectives; each "presentation document" will therefore be different.

NATO has established a barebones institutional apparatus to link Partnership members to NATO. Partnership states may send a liaison officer at the level of colonel to a planning cell at SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe) in Mons, Belgium, and a political representative to NATO offices in Brussels. Responsibilities of the planning cell representative might include, for example, arranging the attachment of some of a country's forces to Combined Joint Task Forces operations.

By August 3, 1994, 22 countries had joined the Partnership.⁴ Some countries that have joined, such as Sweden and Finland, have limited objectives and do not intend to use the program as a path to NATO membership, but rather as a cooperative venture with NATO in training for peacekeeping operations. Others, including most east European states, view the program as a step to reach NATO membership.⁵

Joint exercises of willing Partnership states will begin in September with an exercise in Poland. A range of additional exercises has been planned for the rest of 1994 and 1995.

³See Partnership for Peace - Invitation; and Partnership for Peace: Framework Document, both issued by the North Atlantic Council, Brussels, January 10-11, 1994.

⁴In chronological order of entry: Romania, Lithuania, Poland, Estonia, Hungary, Ukraine, the Slovak Republic, Latvia, Bulgaria, Albania, the Czech Republic, Moldova, Georgia, Slovenia, Azerbaijan, Finland, Sweden, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan.

⁵Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and the Baltic states have expressed a clear desire to join NATO. Several other east European states have expressed less clear intentions to join.

Costs

At the creation of Partnership for Peace, NATO members expressed an intention to keep Alliance costs minimal in the program. The likely heavy expense of bringing new members' militaries to standards near those of NATO is one factor serving as an impediment to expansion of the Alliance. U.S. officials have estimated that NATO's 1994 costs for the program will be \$14 million, with the United States absorbing one-quarter of that amount. Administration officials testified before Congress in February 1994 that minimal long-term costs to the United States and its allies are envisioned in the program.⁶ President Clinton, while in eastern Europe in July 1994, appeared to change course on the issue of costs. He told host governments that he would seek \$100 million from Congress in FY1996 for Partnership for Peace. He indicated that \$10 million of that amount would be for the three Baltic states and \$25 million for Poland.⁷

Partnership members agree in the framework document to "fund their own participation in Partnership activities," including sharing the costs of exercises. Costs borne by Partnership members could be substantial, and prove especially difficult to undertake in an era when their economies are restructuring and their publics are opposed to increased defense expenditures. For example, Poland, one of the first members, now has defense expenditures at 35 percent of its 1986 levels. The Polish Government has estimated that its participation will cost \$22 million annually for the next several years.⁸

Russia's Role

Russia is a pivot around which the debate over the effectiveness of Partnership for Peace revolves. The policy of the Clinton Administration for involving Russia in European security affairs remains in evolution. The policy of "not drawing new lines in Europe" seeks to include Russia in new European security arrangements, including possible membership one day in NATO. The Administration wishes to persuade Russia to play a constructive role in Europe; U.S. officials cite the peace brokered in Sarajevo between Serbs and Bosnians in February 1994 as evidence of such a role.

Russia's role in the continuing effort to bring a peace settlement to all of Bosnia is more ambivalent. Russian officials joined with U.S. and European Union (EU) officials in a "contact group" to draw a map dividing territory between Serbs and Bosnians as the basis of a settlement. U.S. officials believe that Russia played a constructive role in devising the proposed settlement. However, Moscow refused to

⁶Testimony of Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Frank G. Wisner before the Subcommittee on Coalition Defense of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Subcommittee on Europe of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 1, 1994.

⁷Clinton offers Poles funds to adapt to NATO. Financial Times (FT). July 8, 1994. P. 3.

⁸Poles' Link with NATO Will Raise Spending. Financial Times. Sept. 14, 1993. P. 3.; NATO to Send 'Partnership' Missions to East Europe. FBIS-WEU-94-020. Jan. 31, 1994. P. 6-7.

criticize Serb leaders after they rejected the proposed settlement.⁹ While some U.S. and EU officials believe that Russia will ultimately press the Serbs to accept the settlement, other observers saw the Russian stance as an indication of Moscow's intention to back brethren Slavs against Muslim forces. In the larger picture, it is possible that Russia will selectively utilize its newly found inclusion in western "institutions" such as the contact group to back a potential client, rather than pursuing a solution deemed equitable and achieved through consensus.

The Administration has altered its position towards Russia as the government of Boris Yeltsin has voiced a right to influence the policies of states in the Russian "near abroad" (the former republics of the Soviet Union). In February 1994, Secretary of Defense William Perry said that Partnership for Peace could be used to form "a protective grouping against Russia if things go wrong in Moscow." Russia should pursue legitimate concerns on its borders, but not "by relying on the old Soviet practices of intimidation and domination...."¹⁰

The NATO states are sorting through Moscow's policies towards the "near abroad" in an effort to determine allied courses of action that will nurture the Russian reform movement and deflect the Yeltsin government and its successors from aggressive steps towards its neighbors. Some observers believe that Russia will not relinquish longstanding efforts to manage former Soviet republics and parts of eastern Europe as spheres of influence. This view holds that some Russians believe that their country was politically and militarily diminished by the break-up of the Soviet empire. The Russian center of that empire was confident and assured in dealing with European states when it held European peoples, such as the Balts, under its wing, or with central Asian states such as Turkey and Iran when it controlled republics such as Georgia and Turkmenistan. In this view, the logical continuation of such policies today is to exercise influence over European and central Asian regions that have escaped Moscow's direct control in the last several years.¹¹

Russia's new (post-Cold War) military doctrine emerged in late 1993. Its postulates include maintaining influence over the "near abroad". Russia has sent its armed forces into several former central Asian republics for "peacekeeping" purposes. Russian forces back compliant, conservative regimes in countries such as Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.¹² In Georgia, Russian forces, after aiding rebels against the Tblisi government, ultimately rescued the regime in power. Russia has now established military bases there. In an evident effort to win legitimacy for the policy of placing forces in former republics, Moscow has attempted to gain

⁹U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. Yugoslav Crisis and U.S. Policy, by Steven J. Woehrel and Julie Kim. Issue Brief 91089, regularly updated. Washington, 1989.

¹⁰Cited in NATO Peace Partnership's New Look: A Protective Shield Against Moscow. Washington Post (WP). February 8, 1994. P. A11.

¹¹Marie Mendras, La Russie cherche-t-elle à reconquérir l'empire? Relations internationales et stratégiques. Spring 1994. P. 71-72.

¹²See Library of Congress. CRS. Russia's Emerging Foreign and Defense Policy, by Stuart D. Goldman. Report 94-493F. June 8, 1994. P. 2-5.

recognition of such forces by the UN and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as working in "peacekeeping" operations. Russia has invited the United States and other western countries to join with it in such operations. These countries have declined the offer. On July 21, 1994, the United States and several of its allies sponsored a UN resolution, which passed, approving the Russian deployment in Georgia; the resolution also provided for the presence of UN observers to monitor the activities of the Russian troops.¹³

Russia has warned that NATO must not seek to exert influence in the former Soviet empire. Its new military doctrine states that the placing of foreign troops in states adjacent to Russia would constitute an "immediate threat."¹⁴ A member of Yeltsin's Presidential Council charged in June 1994 that the United States was using NATO to "preserve and consolidate its military and political leadership in Europe." The Partnership program, "with the ultimate goal of restricting and disciplining Russia itself," was but a means to this end.¹⁵ Russian officials often describe NATO in geostrategic terms: the existence of NATO forces in new states, they contend, would represent an extension of the use of resources, such as railroads, airfields, and ports, all able to contribute to NATO's military strength and to diminish Russian influence in Europe.¹⁶

Russia's interest in Partnership for Peace and eventual membership in NATO has ebbed and flowed. Moscow several times delayed application for Partnership status. Some Russian officials say that Russia wishes to become integrated in Europe; the country could benefit from greater access to European and U.S. markets, and progress in political reform would be more likely with increased exposure to open political systems. In this view, Russian exclusion from NATO would lead to a sense that the West seeks to isolate Russia should countries such as Poland or the Baltic states eventually gain entry.

In the negotiating process leading to Russia's entry into the Partnership, some Russian officials characterized the program as an affront to Russia. They contended that NATO should give Russia a special status and consult Moscow as an equal on all major security issues in Europe. NATO must treat Russia as a "great power" having the right to influence the affairs of unstable states on its borders in order to protect its own interests. Some western officials present during the negotiations compared Russian negotiating style to the heavy-handed tactics common during the Soviet era, and discerned a pejorative tone towards Russia's former Warsaw Pact allies. One observer characterized the Russian attitude at the discussions: "Russia wished not to be treated as a little country from eastern Europe having vulgar quarrels over the backyard fence with its neighbors, or as a protagonist of instability, but

¹³UN endorses Russian troops for peacekeeping in Caucasus. New York Times. July 22, 1994. P. A2.

¹⁴See Goldman, Russia's Emerging Policy, p. 15.

¹⁵Andranik Migranyan, Partnership for Peace: No, Russia is too big for this exercise. International Herald Tribune. June 24, 1994. P. 6.

¹⁶Interviews of Russian officials, spring 1994.

rather as a power acting to guarantee order."¹⁷ In the Russian view, the Partnership program instead treats Russia as inferior, requiring Moscow to jump through political hoops to attain Western standards.¹⁸ Some observers believe that this stance by the Yeltsin government reflects an effort to mollify the nationalist wing of the *Duma*.

Russia joined the Partnership for Peace on June 22, 1994. NATO states agreed to consult with Russia on major issues such as proliferation and the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, but did not give Moscow a right of review over NATO decision-making. The Alliance and Russia agreed to "a broad, enhanced dialogue and cooperation in areas where Russia has unique and important contributions to make, commensurate with its weight and responsibility as a major European, international and nuclear power...."¹⁹ Secretary of State Warren Christopher described the agreement as one promising "Sixteen plus one" discussions between NATO and Russia, but he denied that such an arrangement gives Russia a higher status than that of other signatories. He reiterated earlier U.S. strictures for improved relations between NATO and Russia:

European stability depends on respecting the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of all the states that emerged from the Soviet empire. We recognize Russia's legitimate concerns in this region, but we have made it clear that no country has a right to assert a role that is inconsistent with international norms.²⁰

Eastern Europe

East European states opposed inclusion of Russia in the Partnership program and continue to oppose its possible inclusion in NATO. Some officials of east European governments contend Russia will enjoy a special status that amounts to a "soft Yalta," a reference to the allied powers' meeting near the end of the Second World War where, in the absence of east European representatives, decisions were made contributing to the post-war division of Europe. In this view, NATO is allowing Moscow to drive Western policy on expansion of the Alliance, and signalling Russia that it may pursue a policy of intimidation towards its former Warsaw Pact allies if it so desires. Elements of the German government are sympathetic to these east European views. Some German officials, concerned that turmoil in eastern Europe will bring a flow of refugees and possible instability on its own soil, advocate a rapid pace of NATO expansion that will include some east European states and exclude Russia. Several east European leaders believe that their countries embrace Western values and should be admitted to NATO now. NATO's mutual defense guarantee, in their view, would provide the stability necessary to

¹⁷Daniel Vernet. La Russie veut faire reconnaître son statut de grande puissance, *Le Monde*. May 24, 1994. P. 1.

¹⁸See, for example, Yeltsin Vents Anger at NATO, WP, April 13, 1994; Vladimir Lukin, No More Delusions, WP, April 3, 1994.

¹⁹Summary of Conclusions. NATO. Brussels. June 22, 1994. P. 1.

²⁰Christopher intervention in the NAC. NATO press release. Istanbul. June 9, 1994. P. 5.

attract foreign investment, promote economic growth, and build democratic structures; NATO's reluctance to provide a shield is a signal that Moscow may interfere in their affairs and thereby impede the path to free markets and democracy.

Some critics of Partnership for Peace believe that the program is a de facto recognition of Russian influence in eastern Europe. One observer contends that the program "retards rather than reinforces European unity" by keeping east European states at arms' length; its seeming promise of security through eventual membership in NATO masks an unwillingness of the United States and west European NATO members to come to the aid of east European states in the event of a crisis. In so doing, it deflects European states from the task of building their own effective security apparatus and, more specifically, east European states from strengthening such political building blocks as the Visegrad group.²¹

U.S. interests beyond eastern Europe are also at issue. For example, the United States wishes to see democracy take root in Ukraine as a step towards providing stability on Russia's borders and building a state close to the West that abjures the maintenance and use of nuclear weapons. Ukraine is a member of Partnership for Peace. Some Ukrainian officials believe that inclusion of east European states in NATO and exclusion of Ukraine would isolate Kiev under Russian influence. Many officials in NATO countries believe that geography and Russia's traditional interests in Ukraine, and the Baltic states (also Partnership members), make the ultimate inclusion of these states in NATO unlikely.

Legislation

On July 1, 1994, Senators Hank Brown and Paul Simon offered an amendment to the FY1995 appropriations for Foreign Operations bill (H.R. 4426) that would allow the President to transfer excess, non-lethal defense articles under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. The Administration had wished to delete references to specific countries that excluded other Partnership members, including Russia. The conference committee dropped the amendment and made a step in the Administration's direction by referring instead to countries "like Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic." The conferees urged the Administration "to submit legislation consistent with the security interests of the United States" that would make non-lethal defense articles available to such countries. However, they underscored the intention of the original Brown-Simon amendment "to send a clear, unambiguous signal to the nations of Central and Eastern Europe that are making swift progress to establish democratic institutions... that their security and stability is of great importance to the United States."²²

²¹Hugh De Santis. Romancing NATO: Partnership for Peace and East European Stability. Draft of July 1994 supplied by the author.

²²Congressional Record (CR), Amendment No. 2152, July 1, 1994. P. S8408; R. Evans and R. Novak. ...And Support for Poland. WP. July 4, 1994. P. A19; for the statement of the conference committee, see CR, Aug. 1, 1994. P. H6498.

Congress has had no formal role in the creation of the Partnership program. Should the Clinton Administration or a succeeding administration seek to enlarge NATO, Article Eleven of the North Atlantic Treaty states that each NATO member must follow its normal procedures for ratification of treaties to revise the existing treaty and admit new members.

Conclusion

Developments in Russia, together with U.S. and NATO policy towards Moscow, are likely to determine the course of the Partnership for Peace program. Today, no European NATO ally favors eventual Alliance membership for Russia, although U.S. officials have left the door open to Russia's possible entry. If Russia follows an evolutionary path towards democracy and adheres to a moderate foreign policy, then eventual NATO membership for east European states could contribute to building a zone of prosperity and stability to Russia's west, a development that could further stability in Russia itself as well as promote its inclusion in a European political framework. Turmoil in Russia, threatening to spill over into neighboring countries, could erode stability in eastern Europe and make some NATO states shy away from extending the security guarantee that NATO membership would carry. Other NATO states may draw a different conclusion and see NATO's expansion as a way to forestall the spread of instability beyond Russia's borders.

Partnership for Peace could play a political role as well. The program could provide time for east European leaders to demonstrate that they can contain ethnic conflict, move forward to build more tolerant, democratic societies, and develop productive, competitive economies. Cooperative peacekeeping efforts in the program could provide an opportunity for them to convince NATO publics that their countries can make contributions to European and global security. In such circumstances, they could strengthen their appeal for NATO membership.

But there is also the possibility that Partnership for Peace contributes to the redrawing of the map of Europe in ways unfavorable to U.S. interests and those of Europeans, east and west. If Russia uses its inclusion in the program, and, for example, in CSCE, or in the "contact group" on the former Yugoslavia, to exert its influence to keep states under its political sway or to deflect NATO from a desired course, then "new lines" reminiscent of the old lines of the Cold War could be drawn again. The stated U.S. policy of preventing the development of new spheres of influence in Europe will have failed. Partnership for Peace opens the door to a Russian role in possible NATO peacekeeping and diplomatic efforts beyond the NATO Treaty area, and therefore in building European security. Should Moscow choose a narrow defense of Russian interests in such a role, the Partnership program could well erode efforts to build that security apparatus.

Quite apart from Russia's role in European security, the United States and its allies continue to grope for a clear mission for NATO. The Alliance remains unwilling to assure stability beyond the current Treaty area. Unless NATO's mission is further clarified, the Partnership program remains only a first, tentative step by the Alliance to assume greater responsibility for European security