The Debate Over NATO Expansion: A Critique of the Clinton Administration's Responses to Key Questions

1. What is the military threat that NATO expansion is designed to counter? How does expansion increase the security of Europe and the American people?

**Administration's Response:** Europe's security is a vital American interest, as we have seen through two world wars and the Cold War. Over the past half century, NATO has been our primary shield to protect that interest. With the Cold War over, NATO remains the foundation of trans Atlantic security. A larger, stronger NATO that includes Europe's new democracies will be even better able to provide for Europe's security and make America safer. It will help deter future threats, expand our collective defense capability to address traditional and non traditional security challenges and secure the historic gains of democracy in Europe. It is a key part of our strategy to build an undivided, democratic, peaceful Europe for the first time in history.

NATO's very existence is an important reason its current members and prospective new members face no imminent threat of attack. By adding new members to its strength, the world's most effective deterrent force will be even better able to prevent conflict from arising in the first place.

Enlargement will help NATO address the security challenges that do arise. It will make NATO more effective in meeting its core mission: countering aggression against its member states. In addition, rogue states, the poisoned appeal of extreme nationalism, and ethnic, racial and religious hatreds continue to threaten trans Atlantic security—as we know from Bosnia. A larger, increasingly cohesive community of trans Atlantic states able to combine their security resources will be better able to address whatever contingencies arise.

Enlargement will help guard against non traditional security threats from outside Europe that threaten NATO members, such as the spread of weapons of mass destruction and long range delivery systems. None of us can deal effectively with such threats alone. Enlargement will help broaden and intensify multinational coordination through NATO—one of our most effective instruments to counter these problems.

The alliance must be prepared for other contingencies, including the possibility that Russia could abandon democracy and return to the threatening behavior of the Soviet period, although we see such a turn as unlikely. Through our policy of engaging Russia we seek to provide strong incentives to deepen its commitment to democracy and peaceful relations with its neighbors. These efforts, combined with the process of NATO enlargement and the NATO Russia Founding Act, increase the likelihood that Russia will continue on the path of democratic and peaceful development.
Finally, enlargement will help secure the historic gains of democracy in Europe and erase Stalin's artificial dividing line. For 50 years, NATO has helped prevent a return to local rivalries, strengthen democracy and create stable environment for prosperity. Each previous instance of enlargement—Greece and Turkey in 1952, West Germany in 1955 and Spain in 1982—strengthened democracy and stability within the new member states and added to the alliance countries committed to defend the trans Atlantic community. Now, enlargement can do for Europe's East what it did for the West. Already, the prospect of membership has helped consolidate democracy in Central Europe, strengthen free market reform and encourage NATO aspirants to settle disputes with their neighbors.

Critique: The administration admits NATO faces "no imminent threat of attack" [emphasis added], and claims a larger NATO will be "better able to prevent conflict from arising in the first place" and better able to address "rogue states, the poisoned appeal of extreme nationalism, and ethnic, racial and religious hatreds," such as Bosnia. The administration does not explain how NATO might actually accomplish this. Would a larger NATO have prevented Bosnia or Chechnya or Nagorno Karabakh? Does the administration mean that, at a time when we are wavering in our commitment to the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia, the United States would be more willing to lead a larger NATO into additional peacekeeping activities? The Bosnia experience suggests that expanding NATO will not affect the willingness or reluctance of national capitals to deal with "ethnic, racial and religious" problems.

The administration argues that expansion "will help guard against non traditional security threats from outside Europe that threaten NATO members, such as the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and long range delivery systems." NATO expansion is irrelevant to the spread of WMD and ballistic missiles outside of Europe, whereas cooperation with Russia on such issues as arms control, arms sales and dealings with "rogue" states is clearly critical. NATO expansion actually makes more complicated the problem of "guarding" against external threats should they arise. An expanded NATO will have more area to defend, static resources to defend it with and will require a major modernization program to integrate outdated, Soviet trained militaries.

The administration then notes that the alliance must be prepared for "the possibility that Russia could...return to the threatening behavior of the Soviet period, although we see such a turn as unlikely." [Emphasis added.] The administration claims that "our policy of engaging Russia...the process of NATO enlargement and the NATO Russia Founding Act, increase the likelihood that Russia will continue on the path of democratic and peaceful development." In reality, NATO enlargement has undercut Russian democrats, hampered efforts to reduce and make more secure Russia's nuclear arsenal, and made President Boris Yeltsin's political life much more difficult. The Founding Act has been equally controversial; it has been vigorously attacked by the right in the United States (for providing too much influence to Russia) and in Russia (for not providing Russia with enough influence), and its basic meaning is in dispute.

The administration's final point is that NATO expansion "will help secure the historic gains of democracy in Europe and erase Stalin's artificial dividing line." [Emphasis added.] A military alliance is not the preferred means for extending democracy in Central Europe—that task should fall to the European Union (EU). But that organization, primarily for economic reasons, has identified potential new members but is not expected to extend them membership until at least the middle of the next decade. NATO can do little, if anything, to affect the political processes in its potential new members; those are more dependent on economic (privatizing, markets, aid) and social developments (standard of living, freedom of expression, civil rights). It is worth recalling that the Marshall Plan, not NATO, helped Germany become economically strong and politically stable.

If, as the administration claims, NATO is a democratizing influence, then presumably Russia should be among the first nations invited to join. Finally, NATO expansion will not "erase" Stalin's dividing line—it was lifted by the collapse of communism. But NATO expansion could well draw another line in Central Europe, between the "ins" and the "outs," with far reaching implications.

2. How will NATO expansion strengthen stability in Europe when the nations that face the greatest potential threats to their own security, including the Baltic states and several other nations, will not
be included in the first NATO expansion?

**Administration's Response:** NATO enlargement will enhance stability throughout Europe and improve the security of all Europe's democracies, not just those admitted first. This is true for a number of reasons.

First, NATO enlargement is not a one time event, but a process that will continue after the first round. The Madrid communique specifically notes that NATO will "maintain an open door to the admission of additional alliance members in the future." States that are credible candidates for future admission to the alliance will benefit from the knowledge that the alliance is attentive to their security.

Second, NATO is taking a range of direct steps to improve the security of states that will not be initially admitted, from enhancements to the Partnership for Peace program to creation of the Euro Atlantic Partnership Council and the completion of a NATO Ukraine Charter.

Finally, as it has in the past, NATO will continue to promote stability and cooperation beyond the borders of its members. The prospect of enlargement has already prompted major progress in resolving disputes and tensions within Central and Eastern Europe, and encouraged many of the new democracies to contribute in tangible ways to promoting long term security, as seen by their participation in the NATO led Stabilization Force in Bosnia.

Enlargement had to start with the strongest candidates or else it would not have started at all. The Baltic states understand that NATO enlargement, as a process which extends stability toward their own borders, increases their security even though they have not yet been invited to become alliance members. They have expressed support for our policy and have publicly endorsed the decisions taken at the Madrid summit. Ukrainian leaders have taken a similar position, seeing the presence of prospective NATO members on their western borders as a contribution to Ukraine's long term security.

**Critique:** If NATO expansion is not a one time event, but an open door, then the United States and its allies will eventually be obligated, for example:

- to defend the Baltics from an external threat (that is, Russia), a commitment that can only be carried out by the substantial deployment of troops backed up by threat of the use of nuclear weapons. (Neither policy has been discussed by the administration.);

- to protect Ukraine, whose population is one third Russian, from Russia; and

- to intervene between Romania and Hungary, whose ethnic quarrels have a very long history.

Moreover, Russia has made it absolutely clear that it considers unacceptable the admission to NATO of any former Soviet republic and that such a move would render the Founding Act a dead letter. Thus, if the Baltics or Ukraine are actually incorporated into NATO (and Russia is not), we risk re militarizing Europe.

Consequently, if the United States were to press to bring the Baltics into NATO, it is almost certain that our major European allies would not support that stark a challenge to Moscow. The allies have already indicated they prefer to seek the admission of Slovenia and Romania to NATO.

As a result, the United States has endorsed an "open door" policy through which only a few additional states are likely to enter. But the issue of Baltic state membership will remain the focus of active controversy inside the alliance and between the alliance and Russia.

**3. Are we creating a new dividing line that will breed instability and friction in Europe?**

**Administration's Response:** No. We are erasing the old, artificial dividing line and fostering integration and partnership in its place. Because NATO enlargement has been designed as an ongoing process rather than a one time event, states not initially invited into the alliance have no
reason to believe they are permanently excluded. On the contrary, the Madrid summit sent a direct message to them that any European democracy remains eligible for membership, and that the NATO leaders will consider the next steps in the process of enlargement before the end of this decade. Moreover, the alliance's outreach to the East—through the Partnership for Peace, the Euro Atlantic Partnership Council and the NATO Russia and NATO Ukraine relationships—is designed precisely to promote an undivided European security system and ensure that no new dividing lines are created.

Virtually all neighbors of those states invited to become members, including states that have not applied for membership, support the alliance's enlargement. Indeed, after Madrid the president and Secretaries Albright and Cohen were met with enthusiastic crowds and warm receptions in Romania, Slovenia, the Baltics, Ukraine and other states in the region that will not be in the first round of new members.

One reason for the lack of tension between states that will and will not initially be admitted to the alliance is that NATO has no offensive aims or record of aggression. Moreover, states in the region understand that the distinction between those invited and not invited for membership is based on various objective factors—such as a state's present ability to contribute to NATO's military and strategic goals, and the depth and durability of its democratic and military reforms. The distinction between those invited and not invited is unlike the arbitrary line that would divide Europe if NATO stood still and declined to enlarge. And those not invited understand they have a stake in the successful integration of the first new members, whose success will contribute to the overall process.

That is why the bigger danger of instability and friction would come from a failure to enlarge NATO. That course would represent an abandonment of NATO's founding principle, reaffirmed by allied leaders at their 1994 and 1997 summits, that alliance remains open "to any other European State in a position to...contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area." A failure to enlarge would set Stalin's dividing line in stone, and subject Europe's new democracies to double jeopardy—punished first by being under Soviet domination, and punished again by being barred from membership in NATO for reasons that have nothing to do with present day circumstances. With the process of enlargement that NATO has begun, no European democracy is permanently excluded; without NATO enlargement, every new European democracy would be permanently excluded.

**Critique:** If the "open door" process stumbles, which is likely, there will be another dividing line in Europe—actually two lines—between the NATO "ins" and the NATO "outs," and between NATO and Russia. Membership cannot be selectively extended and then defined as creating an undivided Europe.

If expansion continues—and that is a very big if—then the main dividing line in Europe will be between NATO and Russia and relations between them will in all likelihood be confrontational.

If Russia is brought into NATO, which no one—least of all Moscow—believes will happen, NATO will be so fundamentally changed that none of these arguments will be relevant.

It is unclear how "a bigger danger of instability and friction" could come from not enlarging NATO. The reality is just the reverse: The biggest danger to Europe would come if enlargement drives Russia away from the West, away from democratization, away from continuing its involvement in nuclear and conventional arms control, and into a confrontational policy.

In any case, failure to expand NATO would not set Stalin's dividing line in stone. That dividing line no longer exists: Germany has been united; the Warsaw Pact is no more; the Baltics, Ukraine and Belarus are independent; Russia accepts NATO's presence; and "no imminent threat" exists. Now is the time for the alliance to encourage the abandonment of any adherence to Stalin's dividing line rather than create a new division.

If the new democracies are being punished by the West, it is by the failure of the European Union to integrate them into the existing pan European economic and political structures, not by the failure of NATO to integrate their military forces into the alliance.

4. **Under Article V of the treaty, NATO's security guarantees will extend to all new NATO members.**
U.S. troops will be committed to respond to conflicts involving any of the new member nations of Central Europe. Is a border dispute involving one or several of the new NATO members so vital a national security threat to the United States that we are willing to risk American lives?

**Administration's Response:** Article V states that members will consider an attack against one to be an attack against all. It does not define what actions would constitute "an attack" or prejudge what alliance decisions might then be made in such circumstances. Member states, acting in accordance with established constitutional processes, are required to exercise individual and collective judgment over this question.

While it is not possible to delineate in advance what NATO’s response would be to a "border dispute" involving a NATO member, we do know that NATO enlargement makes such disputes less likely by creating an incentive—namely, membership in or partnership with NATO—for countries to resolve their problems peacefully. Already, we have seen 10 major accords in the region settling old border and ethnic disputes: Each of these achievements was driven, at least in part, by the desires of the states involved to demonstrate their credentials for membership in NATO and, more broadly, for fuller integration into the Western community of liberal democracies. These accords include:

- The 1991 Border Agreement between Poland and Germany;
- The 1991 Good Neighborliness and Cooperation Treaty between Poland and Germany;
- The 1992 Good Neighborly Relations and Mutual Cooperation Treaty between Poland and Ukraine;
- The 1994 Good Neighborly Relations and Military Cooperation Agreement between Poland and Lithuania;
- The 1996 Treaty on Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation between Hungary and Slovakia;
- The 1996 Bilateral Defense Cooperation Agreement between Hungary and Slovenia;
- The 1996 Bilateral Friendship Treaty between Hungary and Romania;
- The 1996 Associate Agreement with the European Union between Slovenia and Italy;
- The 1997 Joint Declaration on Czech German Bilateral Relations;
- The 1997 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Romania and Ukraine.

It is important to remember that no NATO nation has ever been attacked, and during its half century of existence NATO has never once had to fire a shot in anger in order to fulfill the security guarantees in the Washington Treaty of 1949. Bringing Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into NATO will make it less likely, not more likely, that American troops might be drawn into another war in Europe.

**Critique:** Joining NATO may be an incentive for peaceably solving problems with other members, but even that argument has been sorely tested by Greece and Turkey (which have not gone to war, but neither have they resolved their dispute over Cyprus). The question is more applicable to disputes between NATO and non-NATO nations, such as Hungary and Romania over minorities in Transylvania or Romania and Ukraine over Bukovina. Clearly, the potential for encountering border disputes increases as NATO moves east. But such disputes, unless they involve Russia, are not likely to pose a vital security threat to the alliance and therefore NATO will be very reluctant—if not politically unable—to intervene. As a result, an expanded NATO is just as likely to be stuck with an old set of unresolved problems on its agenda than it is to create new incentives for their resolution.

In any case, the administration does not answer the last part of Senator Hutchison’s question at all—whether these disputes are so vital to U.S. security that we would risk our troops. Instead, they list a number of friendship and cooperation treaties in Central Europe—including at least three concluded before NATO expansion was even announced—as evidence NATO expansion has brought
a new standard of international conduct to the region.

Despite these treaties, local distrust of neighbors still runs high and deep in Central and Eastern Europe. In its September 1996 report on public opinion on NATO enlargement, the U.S. Information Agency showed that 55 percent of Hungarians polled had "unfavorable" opinions toward Romanians, and 42 percent of Romanians (and the same percentage of Slovaks) had unfavorable opinions of Hungarians.

5. The nations of Central Europe have a long history of border, ethnic, nationalist and religious disputes. What guidelines will NATO establish to resolve these types of disputes or other problems that may well arise among the new member nations? What would be the impact of extending coverage of the U.S. nuclear umbrella to them?

Administration's Response: The process of NATO enlargement will make such disputes less likely and increase the chances that they will be peacefully resolved. While the alliance's core mission is collective defense, NATO's normal operation also functions as a conflict prevention mechanism. In part, this is because states must settle disputes with their neighbors as a precondition for entry into NATO. The three states NATO has decided to invite to begin accession talks—Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic—already have settled all outstanding border and ethnic disputes with their neighbors.

Once states join NATO, their ongoing participation in the alliance will give them a powerful incentive to resolve any future problems with their neighbors peacefully. Constant consultation in the North Atlantic Council and other NATO structures will provide members with a means to resolve any disputes. For this and other reasons, NATO has tended to moderate those tensions that do arise among its members, such as between Greece and Turkey.

While it is true that there have been many strands of conflict within Central and East European history, it would be a mistake to think of this condition as either unique or immutable. Western Europe also had a long history of border, ethnic, nationalist and religious disputes, and none of these flared during the half century of NATO's existence—in part, because NATO has helped its members transcend them. There is nothing in the historical record to suggest that current Central and East European disputes are more deep rooted or violent than, say, past disputes between France and Germany.

If disputes ever were to occur within Central and Eastern Europe, once again the alliance and its members would need to exercise their judgment on a case by case basis in formulating the appropriate response. NATO has never operated through mechanistic guidelines, and it should not.

The benefits that would accrue to these states would be the same that have accrued to all other members of NATO: enhanced security and the assurance of U.S. commitment to their security. The supreme guarantee of the security of the allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the United States. During the Cold War, U.S. nuclear forces provided the principal means by which NATO deterred conventional and nuclear attack by the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. Despite the absence of an overwhelming threat today, they still fulfill an essential role in preserving peace and preventing coercion of any kind.

Critique: After arguing earlier that expanding NATO will help "counter aggression against its member states," the administration in the response to this question backs away and notes, correctly, that no preordained response exists for dealing with disputes in Central and Eastern Europe. But it is very misleading to suggest that "all outstanding border and ethnic disputes" have been settled.

The administration also makes the case against "historicism," noting that while "there have been many strands of conflict within Central and Eastern Europe, it would be a mistake to think of this condition as either unique or immutable." A valid argument, of course, but the same analysis should then apply to the possibility for democratization and liberalization in Russia.

It is true that France and Germany have been reconciled after 85 years and three disastrous wars. But this fundamental change stemmed from Germany’s close association after World War II with its
"traditional" enemies, not from its exclusion from European institutions. If Franco German relations set the precedent for how to change a "unique or immutable" condition, then NATO should incorporate, not isolate, Russia.

The basic question is not whether the states of Central Europe can rise above their history, but whether it strengthens NATO or weakens it and whether it is the U.S. interest to have this historical drama played out within the alliance or apart from it.

The administration's response also entirely ignores the effects that NATO expansion would have on the disposition of nuclear weapons. A NATO commitment to defend countries directly bordering on Russia would have a significant effect on nuclear weapons deployments, including tactical nuclear weapons whose overall management is of particularly serious concern. Most immediately, Russia would predictably increase its reliance on these weapons as a counterweight to NATO's unquestionably superior conventional force capabilities. Over the longer term, NATO itself might be driven in this direction in response to Russia's reaction and to any significant future investment in Russia's own conventional forces. The dangers inherent in these interactions have the potential to swamp any of the claimed benefits of NATO expansion.

6. In the administration's February 1997 "Report to Congress on the Enlargement of NATO," you assumed that the United States would pay only 15 percent of the direct enlargement costs, with the new members paying 35 percent of the bill, and the current (non U.S.) members paying 50 percent. Will the new members or the current members pay these amounts? Will you make the cost sharing agreement part of the expansion negotiations? If not how will yours and future administrations handle shortfalls?

Administration's Response: The cost estimates in the administration's February 1997 report to Congress relied in part on standard NATO cost sharing arrangements. Under these procedures, each country pays the cost of maintaining its own national military. The February report assumed that countries would pay for their own direct enlargement enhancements, except for those programs that would qualify for common funding. As a result, the Department of Defense estimated that about 40 percent of direct enlargement enhancements could be nationally funded and 60 percent could be common funded. Out of a total estimated cost of $9 billion to $12 billion, this would mean that new members would pay for approximately 35 percent ($3 billion to $4.5 billion total through 2009, or about $230 million to $350 million per year) of direct enlargement enhancements; current (non U.S.) members would pay about 50 percent ($4.5 billion to $5.5 billion over the period, or around $350 million to $425 million per year); and the United States would pay its 24 percent share of the common funded enhancements (about 15 percent of the total direct enlargement bill, or approximately $1.5 billion to $2 billion over the 2000 to 2009 timeframe), averaging between $150 million and $200 million per year.

In addition to the direct costs of enlargement, individual allies will need to continue to improve their capabilities for force projection, consistent with their commitments under the alliance's new strategic concept adopted in 1991. Force projection capabilities will take on increased importance as NATO enlarges, in view of the allies' conclusion that the defense of new members' territory will be based primarily on reinforcement in times of danger rather than through the permanent stationing of substantial combat forces. Because the United States already possesses substantial force projection capabilities, the United States will not bear a significant portion of this category of costs. We will continue, through the NATO collective force planning process, to encourage our European allies to continue to develop their force projection capabilities.

Past estimates of enlargement costs, including those produced by the administration, have necessarily been notional. Now that NATO has decided which states to invite to begin accession talks, it will be possible to assess more precisely their security needs and assets, and to define the implications for NATO's budgets. This process will begin immediately and will be tied closely to the accession process. While each of the three invited states has indicated its willingness to contribute to the NATO funded and national costs of membership, the accession talks will help to clarify those obligations and commitments.

Enlargement will not be cost free. However, it is affordable for both current and prospective
members. In light of the enormous benefits which enlargement will bring to both Europe and the United States, it represents extraordinary value for the money.

**Critique:** The administration's response is disingenuously worded so that the reader concludes that "out of a total estimated cost of $9 billion to $12 billion" the United States would pay no more than $1.5 billion to $2 billion over the first 10 years. The February report actually estimates that the total costs of NATO expansion will be between $27 billion and $35 billion, of which the U.S. share, $1.5 billion to $2 billion by the administration's calculations, would be no more than 6 percent.

The administration's cost study was reportedly based on at most four countries joining NATO but eight are actually in line: the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland in the first tranche; then Slovenia, Romania and the three Baltic states (all have been named in the NATO communique issued at the Madrid summit.) Moreover, the administration's cost estimates assume no new troop deployments. But forces would have to be deployed forward if NATO intends to guarantee the security of the Baltics.

The leaders of Britain, France and Germany, our key NATO allies, declared after the Madrid summit either that they do not intend to pay 1 cent for NATO expansion or that they expect their defense budgets to shrink. The new member states, which under the administration's most optimistic projections will have to spend $10 billion to $13 billion from 1997 to 2009, simply do not have the money for modernization. For Hungary, the $900 million cost of 30 new fighter planes must come out of a government budget that totalled $21 billion in 1995.

It is almost certain that NATO expansion will precipitate a bitter row over sharing the defense burden among the allies. In the end, either the United States will pay most of the expansion costs or NATO will be saddled with second class militaries until well into the next century.

**7. Many of us view the principal threat confronting the 12 nations seeking NATO membership as less a military threat than a struggle for economic stability. Fierce competition exists among these 12 states. By conferring NATO membership on a few nations now, those nations will have a distinct advantage over their neighbors in the competition to attract new business and foreign investment. This type of economic competition and imbalance could well breed friction and instability in Central Europe. Will NATO be obligated to step in and resolve the very conflicts that could be caused by the NATO selection process? Would European Union membership be a better option to achieve the economic stability NATO aspirants are seeking?**

**Administration's Response:** Economic challenges do remain critical for Central and East European states. Most of these states need to advance and deepen aspects of reform—from privatization, to improved regulatory regimes, to efforts against corruption. This is one reason we support enlargement of the European Union to include Central and East European states.

While the role of the EU is critical, there is no reason to insist on a choice between EU enlargement and NATO enlargement. Both are important. Both make independent contributions to European prosperity and security. EU enlargement alone, however, is not sufficient to secure our nation's security interests in post Cold War Europe. Unlike NATO, the EU lacks a military capability. Military capability remains the heart of NATO's strength and continues to be needed to preserve European security.

As free markets take root in Central and Eastern Europe, it is certainly reasonable to expect that economic competition among the region's states will intensify, just as it has in Western Europe and other parts of the world. There is no historical evidence, however, that would suggest NATO membership will become a meaningful distinction in economic competition within Central and Eastern Europe. NATO membership was never used over the past half century to draw foreign investment from, say, Sweden to Norway.

What matters most to firms and investors are economic fundamentals. Central and East European states will attract business through privatization, sound management of their budgets and money supply, and efforts to create a talented workforce and reduced unemployment. For those European states that are economically less developed today, the right answer for them is to deepen such
reforms, and the prospect of NATO membership gives them some additional incentive to do so. In addition, NATO enlargement, together with closer security cooperation through the Partnership for Peace and the Euro Atlantic Partnership Council, will help stability take root throughout Central and Eastern Europe—in member states and non-member states alike—making all of its countries more attractive to investors. Conversely, a failure of NATO to enlarge could undermine the business climate for the entire region. While firms are unlikely to invest in a country solely because it is a NATO member, they might well invest less heavily in a region such as Central and Eastern Europe if its security future were called into question.

Critique: The administration admits that "the role of the EU is critical" and that such economic fundamentals as "sound management of...budgets and money supply" matter most in attracting investment. In fact, EU membership is the most logical means of assuring continuing economic and political reform in Central and Eastern Europe, and EU enlargement negotiations will begin next year with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. These countries will probably ultimately enter the EU, even though the EU has not been in a rush to offer membership to these countries because of the cost (in agricultural and infrastructure support) and the constraints placed on EU member budgets by the Maastricht criteria for a common currency.

The administration's call for "sound budget management" rings hollow when its own cost projections for expansion place a multi billion dollar defense burden (about 37 percent of the total cost) on the new members. The potential new members have themselves cut way back on their defense expenditures to provide for social welfare and capital investment: the Czech Republic's defense expenditures are running at one fifth those of Czechoslovakia in the late 1980s and the defense budgets of Hungary and Poland have taken similar cuts (one sixth and one fifth, respectively).

In brief, this is a poor time to oblige these three countries, which are struggling to modernize, stabilize and humanize their economies and societies, and to prepare for EU membership, to increase their defense expenditures in order to carry out a modernization program which the administration estimates will cost $10 billion and other analyses conclude will be considerably higher. NATO membership will, in fact, make countries less attractive to investors if their budgets are stressed by the demands of NATO modernization and if they lose the support of international financial institutions.

8. Does NATO membership by the new Eastern European democracies force them to spend money for arms, when expenditures for the infrastructure critical to economic growth are more pressing?

Administration's Response: The new NATO members will need to invest in order to upgrade their militaries. But these states were already planning to make substantial improvements in their militaries, quite apart from their possible membership in NATO. These investments were needed because these states emerged from the Warsaw Pact with military forces that were poorly structured and inadequately equipped for modern warfare. The impact of NATO membership will not be so much to increase Central and East European defense budgets as to ensure that anticipated increases result in greater compatibility with NATO defense plans and equipment.

Moreover, alliances save money over the long term. Many leaders in the region have said their states might well spend more on their militaries if they were not included in NATO, because then they would feel less secure outside the alliance's collective defense structure. States that have remained outside of NATO in the past have not necessarily enjoyed lower defense budgets. Sweden, for example, has higher per capita defense expenditures than many of its NATO neighbors.

Central and East European countries will face difficult decisions between defense and domestic spending, as does the United States and all of our current allies. Yet the necessary investments needed to participate in the alliance do not need to take place overnight. The Defense Department's analysis foresees a gradual process of modernization, with new members attaining a "mature capability" over a period of about a decade. Moreover, projected real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates in Central and Eastern Europe as high as 4 to 5 percent suggest that the new members will be able to make needed defense investments without damaging their domestic economies and social efforts. In fact, the Defense Department has urged these countries to concentrate first on personnel, training, communications, logistics and infrastructure improvement needed to make them
compatible with NATO before devoting large sums to purchase new weapons systems.

Critique: The major nations of Western Europe are having difficulty sustaining their domestic economies and social efforts, and have made it absolutely clear they do not intend to increase their spending for NATO enlargement. The Czech Republic and Poland already equal or exceed the rates of NATO’s European members for military expenditures as percentage of gross national product (GNP) and percentage of central government expenditures (CGE). The administration is, at best, unrealistic when it claims that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which have much larger economic and social needs, can make additional investments in defense "without damag[e]." Secretary of Defense William Cohen has said that "the bulk of the costs will be borne by the three new member countries. They...will have to measure up. There is no free lunch."1

Paying the enlargement bill will not be easy for the new members. With per capita GNPs of under $10,000, the Czech Republic and Poland (but not Hungary) are already spending at or above the rate of current NATO members. According to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency,2 in 1995:

NATO Europe had $184 billion of military expenditures which represented 2.4 percent of GNP and 5.6 percent of CGE;

the Czech Republic had $2.4 billion of military expenditures which represented 2.8 percent of its GNP and 6.9 percent of CGE;

Hungary had $1 billion of military expenditures which represented 1.5 percent of GNP and 4.6 percent of CGE; and

Poland had $4.8 billion of military expenditures which represented 2.3 percent of GNP and 5.4 percent of CGE.

9. Do Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic have the military capabilities to make a positive contribution to the security of NATO, or will they be net consumers of security for the foreseeable future?

Administration's Response: Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic have all taken significant steps to reform their militaries, upgrade their military capabilities, and contribute to European security beyond their borders. The Defense Department estimates that they can achieve a "mature capability" within about a decade after joining the alliance. The new members will be expected to contribute to the range of NATO security functions and missions.

Even today, the three states bring significant assets to NATO's security work. Together, they bring over 300,000 troops to the alliance. All three have firmly established civilian control of their militaries. Their initial defense reform efforts have focused on low cost, high return enhancements to interoperability to allow effective near term security contributions. Over time, they will increase their ability to operate with NATO forces in their own countries and elsewhere.

Moreover, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic have demonstrated their readiness to contribute to security beyond their borders. Both Poland and the Czech Republic contributed forces to the Gulf War coalition. Poland has been a leader in its region, helping Lithuania and Ukraine develop their armed forces and creating joint units with both countries. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic now provide over 1500 troops to the NATO led [SFOR] mission in Bosnia Herzegovina, and Hungary provides the base from which U.S. forces deploy into Bosnia. Through individual efforts and participation in numerous Partnership for Peace exercises, the three states have begun to improve their abilities to work with NATO forces.

Each of the states will need to pursue an active and sustained program of reform and modernization in order to achieve a higher level of NATO interoperability and broader military capabilities over the next decade. Leaders from all three states have stated their willingness to do so and have demonstrated that their countries will become net security producers over time as full members of NATO.
**Critique:** While the administration claimed earlier that expanding NATO will make it stronger, in the response to question eight it notes that "these states emerged from the Warsaw Pact with military forces that were poorly structured and inadequately equipped for modern warfare." The administration also notes that it will take at least a decade for the military forces of the new members to achieve a "mature capability."

Unless the United States is prepared to foot most of the bill, it is certain that modernization of the forces of these three countries will take longer than a decade. In addition, since the administration claims the NATO expansion process is an "open door," much greater costs will be associated with some of the potential second tranche members such as Romania and the Baltics, (not to mention Ukraine).

Thus, for the foreseeable future, NATO expansion is likely to stress the alliance by adding sub standard forces and increasing the amount of territory and length of borders to defend. On the other hand, some would argue that, with the possible exception of Germany, most of the members of NATO are already "consumers" of security and adding three to eight more nations will not alter this condition.

10. *When one looks at the threats to American national security interests, foremost among these is Russia's substantial nuclear arsenal. Considerable progress has been made to lessen nuclear tensions through dramatic arms reductions in the past decade. And, for the moment, the current leadership in Russia is becoming reconciled to the likelihood of NATO expansion. But what of tomorrow's Russian leaders? By expanding eastward, are we not creating an incentive for Moscow to withhold its support for further strategic arms reductions and perhaps even develop an early first use nuclear policy?*

**Administration's Response:** The objective of our trans Atlantic security policy is an undivided, democratic and peaceful Europe. NATO enlargement is an important part of that strategy. So is our effort to support the development of a Russia that is democratic, prosperous, at peace with its neighbors, and cooperating with us and other states on a range of security challenges, including mutual reductions in our nuclear arsenals. So also is our effort, which bore fruit in May in the signing of the NATO Russia Founding Act, to institutionalize a broad and cooperative relationship between the alliance and Russia.

President Yeltsin and other Russian leaders oppose NATO enlargement, reflecting in part a lingering misperception among many Russian political leaders that the alliance poses a threat to Russia's security. That is an issue on which we have decided to disagree, while working together to manage that disagreement. But, judging by the evidence, it is unlikely that NATO enlargement will undermine Russian reform or strengthen Russian hardliners. Those who suggest this would be the case see Russian democracy as far more fragile than has proven the reality over the last few years. NATO enlargement is not a significant concern for most of the Russian public, which understandably remains far more concerned about wages, pensions, corruption and other domestic issues.

Over the past year, against the backdrop of NATO enlargement, Russian reform and security cooperation have continued to advance. President Yeltsin was re elected. He brought new officials into the government who are committed to economic modernization and integration with Western and global structures. He brought in a new defense minister who supports the START II nuclear arms reduction treaty. At the Helsinki summit in March, President Yeltsin agreed to press for Duma ratification of START II, and to pursue a START III treaty with further reductions once START II has entered into force. And of course, Russia joined with NATO in May to conclude the Founding Act. Indeed, as NATO enlargement has gone forward, Russia has drawn closer to the West.

These recent positive developments call into question the theory that NATO enlargement erodes Russian reform and security cooperation. In any case, it would be counterproductive to make our NATO policies hostage to Duma intransigence on START II. Doing so would send a message to the Duma that we will hold up NATO enlargement as long as they hold up START II. In that case, we likely would get neither.

**Critique:** The administration recognizes that "President Yeltsin and other Russian leaders oppose
NATO enlargement," but it rather off handedly dismisses Russian opposition as based on a "misperception" of NATO as posing a threat to Russia's security. The origins of this "misperception" about NATO expansion are left unanalyzed by the administration, but they are not difficult to discern. The administration itself points out that enlargement would "make NATO more effective in meeting its core mission: countering aggression against its member states." And one of the principal, and undisguised, reasons the Central and Eastern European countries seek to join NATO is protection against aggression by Russia.

Another possible source of this Russian "misperception" about NATO expansion is the administration position that "the alliance must be prepared for...the possibility that Russia could abandon democracy and return to the threatening behavior of the Soviet period." Although the administration, to its credit, considers this possibility to be "unlikely," other well known political figures, such as Henry Kissinger, argue that NATO expansion must be undertaken to "encourage Russian leaders to interrupt the fateful rhythm of Russian history and discourage Russia's historical policy of creating a security belt of important and, if possible, politically dependent states around its borders."3 [Emphasis added.]

It is too early to tell whether NATO expansion has "created an incentive for Moscow to withhold its support for further strategic arms reductions," but expansion has certainly delayed Duma ratification of START II. It has also negatively affected the views of the Russian political elites on long term prospects for arms control. And expansion has complicated Yeltsin's political fortunes and made it much more difficult for the reformers to deal with the nationalists and communists. Indeed, Yeltsin has already made it absolutely clear that, although he signed the Founding act—which Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of Russia's Communist Party called "a complete and unconditional surrender"—he is " categorically against" NATO offering membership to any former Soviet republic and has threatened that such a move would "fully undermine" relations with Russia.

The administration's response to this question ducks the issue of nuclear use entirely. The fact is, NATO expansion comes at a moment when Russia, sensing its deteriorating security situation, has abandoned its long standing nuclear "no first use" policy and is in the midst of a debate over whether, given the deplorable state of its conventional forces, its lack of budgetary resources and NATO's creep toward its borders, it should increase its reliance on tactical nuclear weapons. In the worst case, Russian reemphasis on nuclear weapons could well be mirrored eventually by NATO policies.

11. What have we given up in terms of NATO's own freedom of action to deploy forces throughout the expanded area of the alliance in order to obtain Russian acquiescence to the expansion plan?

Administration's Response: The NATO Russia Founding Act was not an effort to buy Russian acquiescence to enlargement. It was instead driven by our judgment—and that of the alliance—that a robust NATO Russia relationship could make an important contribution toward the goal of a peaceful and undivided Europe.

The Founding Act institutionalizes this relationship and provides the basis for increased cooperation. At the same time, NATO equities remain fully protected. The North Atlantic Council remains the supreme decision making body of the alliance. The Founding Act, in establishing a Permanent Joint Council between NATO and Russia, provides for consultation, coordination and, to the maximum extent possible, where appropriate, joint decision making and action. The Founding Act is equally clear, however, that NATO retains its independence of decision making and action at all times. The Permanent Joint Council offers Russia a forum in which to express its views and, where possible, to facilitate cooperation between NATO and Russia. But there is not now and will not be a Russian veto over NATO decisions or any restriction on NATO's freedom of action.

If Russia adopts a constructive approach to its relationship with NATO, there is enormous potential for cooperation on a wide range of issue, from non proliferation to humanitarian assistance. If Russia chooses not to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Founding Act, no impediment has been created. NATO retains its strength, autonomy and ability to act.

Nothing in the Founding Act restricts NATO's ability to station troops, deploy weapons or carry out
any of its missions. The final section of the act contains restatements of unilateral NATO policy that existed prior to the Founding Act about how the alliance intends to act "in the current and foreseeable security environment." In its 1995 enlargement study, NATO concluded that enlargement did not require a change to the alliance’s nuclear posture; on this basis, NATO declared in December 1996 that NATO members "have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, nor any need to change any aspects of NATO's nuclear posture or nuclear policy." The Founding Act also restates NATO's March 1997 unilateral declaration that it "will carry out its collective defense and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces." Moreover, none of NATO's unilateral statements regarding military policy cited in the Founding Act restricts the alliance's ability to conduct exercises, establish headquarters or build and maintain infrastructure. Indeed, the Founding Act acknowledges that NATO will "have to rely on adequate infrastructure commensurate with [these] tasks," given that NATO's strategy now revolves around the ability of states to receive reinforcements.

The Founding Act reflects alliance policy in the current and foreseeable security environment. Should we see an unexpected change for the worse, NATO retains the prerogative to reconsider its policies with regard to nuclear and conventional deployments, and the Founding Act would in no way constrain that. It is our hope and expectation, however, that the recent very positive trends within Europe will continue and that the Founding Act will provide a vehicle for greatly expanded cooperation between NATO and Russia.

**Critique:** The administration response is accurate as far as it goes. It fails, however, to acknowledge that a number of ambiguities surround the Founding Act. Specifically, there is obviously a difference of views between officials and observers in Washington and Moscow over whether the act is legally binding or not, whether it gives Russia a "voice" or a "veto" within NATO, and whether it has "bought off" Russia for just the first tranche of three new alliance members or whether it represents a go ahead for NATO's "open door" expansion policy throughout Central and Eastern Europe.

In the long term, Russian "acquiescence" to the first tranche of NATO expansion depends on how these ambiguities are resolved. Russia is not likely to acquiesce to the "open door," however. Thus, with or without the Founding Act, NATO expansion is putting us on a track toward isolating Russia and orienting its foreign, domestic and security policy in an unfavorable and unaccommodating direction.

**NOTES**

