Partnership for Peace and beyond

JOHN BORAWSKI

This article examines recent moves towards an enlargement of NATO to include countries of the former Warsaw Pact, possibly including Russia, in the light particularly of the Partnership for Peace proposals that emerged from the NATO summit of January 1994. The author examines the evolution of the US position on possible enlargement and highlights the lack of a consensus view within the alliance on how the issue of enlargement should be addressed, as well as discussing the reactions of Russia and of the Visegrad countries to developments in the alliance posture.*

At the NATO summit in Brussels on 10–11 January 1994, alliance heads of state and government broke partial silence on a fundamental issue of European security in the post–Cold War era: whether the time had arrived to enlarge the Atlantic alliance once again by admitting the new democracies of central Europe—formerly member states of the Warsaw Pact.

Although a pressing political and moral question, the NATO enlargement issue also went to the very heart of the identity and raison d'être of the alliance itself. The British Prime Minister John Major stated on the eve of the summit that reform in Russia, rather than security guarantees, held the best hope of long-term freedom for the former Soviet satellites. Yet, if security guarantees were now less important, as the Prime Minister suggested, why was NATO still needed for Portugal or Canada, but not for Poland or the Czech Republic?

The allied response adopted at the summit was the Partnership for Peace (PFP), an American initiative first unveiled at the meeting of NATO defence ministers in Travemunde, Germany, on 20–21 October 1993—less than three months before the Brussels summit. Building on work already under way in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), the PFP offered six areas of cooperation to all ‘able and willing’ CSCE* participating states: (1) transparency

* Views expressed are the author’s own.
1 Daily Telegraph, 10 January 1994.
2 At its December 1994 Summit, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) decided to institutionalize the arrangement and rename itself the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).
in national defence planning and budgeting processes; (2) ensuring democratic control of defence forces; (3) maintaining the capability and readiness to contribute to operations under the authority of the United Nations or the responsibility of the CSCE; (4) developing cooperative military relations with NATO for the purpose of joint planning, training and exercises in order to strengthen the ability to undertake missions in peacekeeping, search and rescue, humanitarian operations and such other areas as might subsequently be agreed; (5) developing over the longer term forces better able to operate with those of NATO member states; and (6) consultations with NATO for any active participant if it perceived a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence or security. Partners were offered offices at NATO headquarters and at a Partnership Coordination Cell adjacent to SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe). In response to French concerns, the term ‘at Mons’ in Belgium was used, with the Cell physically separated by a fence from SHAPE headquarters.

Beyond these specific areas, some of which were again already being explored within the NACC (or were already features of CSCE agreements or bilateral cooperation), the allies also held out the following prospect regarding the ‘concrete perspective’ on enlargement eagerly sought earlier in the decade by Albania, the Baltic states, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia: ‘We expect and would welcome NATO expansion that would reach to democratic states to our East, as part of an evolutionary process, taking into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe ... Active participation in the Partnership for Peace will play an important role in the evolutionary process of the expansion of NATO.’ The rationale for this programme, according to the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO policy, Joseph Kruzel, was threefold: PFP ‘offers a training ground for NATO membership, provides a security home for those not in the first group of countries that became members—but still able to participate in 95 per cent of what NATO members do, and assures one country that will not be an early NATO member, Russia, that NATO expansion is not a threat to its security.’

At the same time, PFP was deliberately intended to avoid early decisions being taken on NATO enlargement. As US President Bill Clinton stated at the end of the summit, the possibility of expanded NATO membership had been opened to all other non-NATO members in Europe, but ‘in a way that did not have the United States and NATO prematurely drawing another line in Europe to divide it in a different way, but instead gave us a chance to work for the best possible future for Europe—one that includes not only the countries of Eastern Europe, but also the countries that were part of the former Soviet Union and, indeed, Russia itself’.

3 For relevant documentation see NATO Review, 42: 1, February 1994.
Partnership for Peace

Ever since the January 1994 summit, the allies and the intended beneficiary governments of PFP have been debating, some more seriously than others, whether and how the three US objectives behind PFP can all be advanced simultaneously. Can NATO ‘balance’ Russia while at the same time offering membership to it? Would ‘broadening’ NATO mean ‘thinning’ the cohesion of the alliance? Was the failure to bring in the central Europeans early and directly tantamount to a ‘Yalta II’? Would enlargement invariably antagonize Russia or be exploited by Russian politicians wanting to turn away from reform? Did the policy of ‘differentiation’ pursued by prior US administrations vis-à-vis central and eastern Europe encouraging independence from Moscow, no longer apply, given that PFP was extended to all other CSCE states—*rebus sic stantibus* notwithstanding? If PFP was intended, as expressed by US Secretary of Defense William Perry on 24 May 1994, to ‘lay the foundation for a new European security system with NATO at the center’, was this ‘NATO-centric’ vision actually agreed within the alliance itself?

More broadly, given the open-ended invitation of PFP and its focus on peacekeeping, would NATO remain a collective defence organization guarding against ‘risks’ in place of past ‘threats’, taking on ‘additional tasks’ such as peacekeeping outside its zone, or would it evolve more dramatically to serve as a League of Nations for the twenty-first century, subsuming the CSCE but on a NATO-centric basis—as distinct from the Soviet and then Russian view since the 1950s that blocs should be replaced by such an all-European security structure?

Or was the debate much ado about nothing, because geostrategic reality dictated that the Czech Republic would do well to emulate Switzerland; or because NATO, as some pundits had it, was an anachronism, its attempt to maintain relevance having been torpedoed by the debacle in Bosnia; or because the future of European security rested in the overall framework of the CSCE with central European integration most realistically concerning the EU and the WEU, not NATO, setting aside enormous doubts about the viability of such an arrangement?

What, in short, were NATO allies reluctant to enlarge, and what kind of organization did the central European countries think they would one day join?

Russia first?

Informal discussions about NATO enlargement beginning in 1993 received a certain impetus from the Polish–Russian declaration of 25 August 1993, in which President Boris Yeltsin agreed that a decision by Poland to accede to a NATO ‘aiming at all-European integration is not contrary to the interests of other states including also Russia’. Had Russia at last, perhaps, subscribed to the theory that stability on its western frontier would best be served by its neighbours being in an alliance which was supposed to make renationalization of defence a moot point—setting aside the imponderable of how any of Russia’s former Warsaw Pact allies could possibly pose a threat to it—much in the way that eastern Germany was integrated into NATO?
At about the beginning of April 1993, the US view had been that the PFP would be a substitute for NATO membership but nevertheless a way to move the NACC towards ‘real-world’ military cooperation, thus accounting for the similarities between work already under way in the NACC and the first PFP Work Plan. However, there was a consensus view within the alliance that enlargement had at least to be ‘addressed’ at a summit intended to set an agenda for a ‘renewed’ alliance in the 1990s and beyond. The need to ‘project stability’ eastwards was the primary consideration, but at the same time NATO sought to ensure that the benefits of collective defence—the key reasons for joining NATO—would not be sacrificed. Also, the operational and financial aspects of enlargement had not yet been studied carefully: would foreign forces or nuclear weapons be stationed right up to the Russian border? Who would pay for integrating new members? How could central European security be promoted, Russia not provoked, and the alliance kept cohesive and purposeful, all at the same time?

There was also, to be sure, an element of self-interest. US Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney had stated on 11 December 1992: ‘It is essential that if NATO is to be the foundation upon which European security is built, that NATO be perceived and actually be involved in helping address those security concerns of Central and Eastern Europe.’ He advocated, speaking personally, ultimate membership of NATO ‘for at least some of those nations of central and eastern Europe that meet the basic fundamental tests that we have required of others who seek to be part of the Alliance in terms of their commitment to democracy and their willingness to join with us in providing for the collective defence’. That is, enlargement would be important for maintaining NATO’s relevance (and US influence in NATO and world-wide) as well as for anchoring the new democracies in the Western value system.

But there were also conflicting elements. Secretary of State James Baker had stated in Berlin on 12 December 1989 that NATO, having reconciled historical adversaries within its own camp, offered the nations of eastern Europe ‘an appealing model of international relations’. Did this mean that the former non-Soviet Warsaw Pact allies should create their own collective defence alliance? Secretary Baker also stated that ‘whatever security relationships the governments of eastern Europe choose, NATO will continue to provide Western governments the optimal instrument to coordinate their efforts at defense and arms control, and to build a durable European order of peace’, and that the maintenance of NATO would serve ‘the interests of Eastern Europe, and indeed the interests of the Soviet Union’. While all of that was true, did the Secretary imply a certain indifference to the way those countries went, or was the overriding need then to reassure the Soviet Union that the liberation of central Europe would not be

---

5 For elaboration see Bruce George MP, Continental drift, General Report of the Political Committee of the NAA, November 1994. For example, both the NACC and PFP work plans referred to peacekeeping exercises, democratic control of the military, and defence planning, and neither contained preconditions for joining.
exploited by the West? If the latter, was the implication not that the expansion of a defensive alliance would or could prove a threat to Russia?

Whichever was the case then, more than four years later, on 5 June 1993, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin stated: ‘We favor the growth of regional understandings and associations among neighbors. For example, the nations of Poland, Hungary and the Czech and Slovak republics could comprise such a group. Groupings that calm security concerns among neighbors enhance the wider security of all.’ These regional arrangements, Aspin stated, would be a component of a ‘new security system’ that would in addition include the strengthening and extension of existing institutions—NATO, NACC, CSCE—and bilateral relations. Was this suggesting a ‘NATO II’ for central and eastern Europe—an idea promoted by Polish President Lech Walesa but which, according to a former Polish diplomat, ‘certainly did not come from him’?

Only German Defence Minister Volker Ruehe had spoken out publicly on the benefits of drawing the Visegrad countries, identified explicitly by name, into NATO. As he informed the Defence and Security Committee of the North Atlantic Assembly in Berlin on 21 May 1993: ‘With their forthcoming association with the European Communities, the political foundations have been laid [for EU and WEU membership] and for the Visegrad states—Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. I therefore see no reason in principle for denying future members of the European Union membership of NATO.’ This epitomized the so-called ‘Royal Road’, whereby membership in the EU meant membership in the WEU and, because the WEU was the ‘European Pillar’ of NATO, membership in NATO. However, Ruehe was flexible as to which organization should be the first to enlarge: ‘Accession of new partners is not so much a question of “if” as one of “how” and “when”. It is a question of timing and preconditions.’

Obviously, Germany maintained an intense interest in seeing that its frontiers with the Czech Republic and Poland were stable and did not become gateways for refugees fleeing economic or political problems. Secure in NATO and with the prospect of EU membership, these countries could then enjoy greater foreign investment and domestic political stability. Militarily, Polish membership of NATO was seen as a strategic requirement for the defence of the former GDR. In contrast, countries such as the United Kingdom took a more cautious, ‘pragmatic’ approach. It was even suggested that should Russia return to a hegemonic policy, central European membership of Western organizations could make matters worse for the West as a whole.6

Within just a few weeks of the Polish–Russian declaration in Warsaw, however, in a letter of 15 September 1993 to the governments of France, Germany, the United States and Britain, President Yeltsin argued that ‘the spirit of [the] stipulations’ of the 1990 Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to

---

John Borawski

Germany, which prohibited the stationing of foreign forces in the eastern federal lander of the Federal Republic of Germany, ‘rules out any possibility of a NATO expansion eastwards’. Instead, the letter stated, Russia and NATO should ‘officially offer [the east European countries] security guarantees ... enshrined in a political declaration or a treaty on cooperation between the Russian Federation and NATO’—a proposal perhaps echoing the idea of associate membership of a unified Germany in both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, a proposal the Soviet Union temporarily put forward in 1989.

The effect of the Yeltsin letter was said to be to induce greater caution within the alliance in respect of enlargement. But it also alarmed the central and east Europeans, raising suspicions—expressed most outspokenly by Poland—that somehow a ‘Yalta II’ was in the pipeline. In the end, the PFP was greeted with relief, in the words of a NATO diplomat, ‘in that it got us out of the hole we were digging on enlargement’.

The reaction from many US Senators and members of Congress was sharply negative. Among the leading opponents was Republican Senator Richard Lugar, who the month before the summit shed considerable light on the debate in Washington leading to PFP:

The PFP proposal reflects the Administration’s lowest common denominator, even though the Allied defense and foreign ministers could probably have been persuaded to accept a bolder approach ... The American plan contrasts sharply with the associate NATO membership approach promoted by the Germans ... the starting point (and perhaps ending point as well) for this effort appears in the first instance to be Russian-oriented ... The problem with those who propose putting Russia first in Western policy calculations is that, for them, there is never a good time for the Alliance to address any of the tough issues it faces.

Senator Lugar argued instead for ‘a clear perspective for eventual membership’, including specified criteria and a timetable for new membership;7 and he would later caution that unless the administration rethought its approach, including adequate funding for PFP follow-up activity, PFP would ‘remain a “policy for postponement”’ rather than a ‘fast track for the Visegrad countries’ in their integration into the West.8

Likewise, although independent of NATO, the North Atlantic Assembly rejected the ‘wait and see’ approach. In Copenhagen in October 1993, the Assembly unanimously called for a timetable and entry criteria for new NATO members, beginning with associate membership. The following year, in November 1994, the Assembly called for entry of new members ‘within the

---


238
Partnership for Peace

next 2–5 years ... with memoranda of understanding elaborating the protocol of accession to the North Atlantic Treaty reached no later than the first meeting in 1995 of the North Atlantic Council in ministerial session’. A prominent member of the NAA, Peter Duetoft, Chairman of the Danish Parliament Foreign Affairs committee, compared PFP to the 1938 Munich capitulation,9 and the NAA Secretary-General, Peter Corterier, described PFP as risking, unless clearer criteria for membership were offered, establishing ‘a no-man’s land of permanent instability and insecurity ... among nations who cannot by themselves provide for their own security’.10 In addition, the Vice-Chairman of the British House of Commons Select Committee on Defence, Bruce George MP, argued the month before the summit that PFP, in the eyes of the central Europeans ‘amounts to direct acceptance by the US and its allies of a Russian veto on new NATO members ... the appearance, at least, is that the West has freely given Moscow the droit de regard over NATO that evaded the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War.’11

This tempestuous debate continues to this day.

From no new lines to no veil of indifference

In fairness, a pathway into NATO membership would probably have looked very much like the Partnership for Peace menu—depending, of course, on how the issue of information on interoperability and standardization, as well as that of assistance in areas such as technology transfer and even weapons systems and financial aid, unfolded. For example, the first Individual Partnership Program (IPP) concluded with NATO, by Poland on 5 July 1994, emphasized modernization of air defence and interoperability of command and control systems, and Poland sought to have liaison offices established not just at NATO and SHAPE but in the major subordinate commands, as well as some kind of security guarantee pending full membership (although the latter was not formally proposed to NATO). By early December 1994, 23 countries had become PFP partners, and nine—Poland, Finland, Sweden, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Lithuania—had concluded their IPPs.

It was, rather, the logic behind the PFP that tended to infuriate its critics. The PFP ‘invitation’ issued at Brussels was silent on how and when NATO would enlarge, apart from suggesting that ‘active’ partners would be given preference. The Clinton administration advocated what some allies interpreted as a ‘threat-driven approach’: if Russia moved away from reform security guarantees would be extended to the central Europeans; in the absence of such a development, and to encourage reform in Russia, ‘why draw new lines?’ For example, on

11 Bruce George, ‘NATO should offer the east more than partnership’, Wall Street Journal Europe, 15 December 1993.
12 January 1994 in Prague, President Clinton insisted that PFP was not a 'permanent holding room' for new NATO members. PFP, he said, borrowing a line from Volker Ruhe, changed the entire NATO dialogue, so that 'now the question is no longer whether NATO will take on new members, but when and how. It leaves the door open to the best possible future outcome for our region, democracy, markets and security all across a broader Europe, while providing time and preparation to deal with a lesser outcome.' This line of reasoning prompted Henry Kissinger, among others—despite his having taken the view in 1990 that 'the most realistic security system' for Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary was one of neutrality—to claim that the Clinton administration 'has embraced the proposition, rejected by all of its predecessors for 40 years, that NATO is a potential threat to Russia'. Moreover, why would it be more conducive to stability to enlarge NATO only when Russia once more constituted a threat? Would not enlargement at that point be an invitation to apocalypse, or at least a severe crisis as decisions were made about the composition of East—West relationships? Would it not, indeed, as Zbigniew Brzezinski suggested, be objectively antagonistic and 'guarantee' Russian hostility?

The conclusion could be drawn, therefore, that the questions 'What is NATO?' and 'Should NATO expand?' remained unanswered. The 'best possible future' and admission of a limited number of states seemed to be presented, even if inadvertently, as contrasting results. And if Russia joined NATO, would not NATO become in effect a duplicate CSCE as an all-European collective security organization? Yet President Clinton clearly stated that NATO membership was on offer to other non-NATO countries in Europe, something which went beyond even the declared Russian aim of enhancing the role of the CSCE to coordinate a 'division of labour' between the CIS, NACC, European Union, Council of Europe, NATO and WEU—which could be interpreted as meaning that NATO and the CIS should be seen as equals, each with the right to exist alongside the other. Be that as it may, Russian presidential adviser Sergei Karaganov did not help to put the best possible face on the PFP when he wrote shortly after the NATO summit: 'In September—October of last year [1993], it seemed that it would not prove possible to halt the mechanism of the admittance of four central and East European countries to NATO. But in the end, Russia's cooperation with forces in NATO countries which do not want the Alliance to be expanded seems to have averted the inevitable.'

NATO foreign ministers, meeting in Istanbul on 9 June 1994, declared that they were 'interested in a broad dialogue with Russia in pursuit of common goals in areas where Russia has a unique or particularly important contribution to make'. They also stated that NATO retained its 'right to take its own decisions

---

14 'We must be the first at NATO's doors', Izvestia, 24 February 1994, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Central Eurasia, 1 March 1994.
on its own responsibility by consensus of its members, including decisions on
the enlargement of the Alliance’. Nevertheless, Russia came up in every
conversation regarding enlargement, despite claims that Moscow was not the
‘17th silent member’ of NATO.

It was because of all the mounting unknowns—what did the Clinton
administration really want, had Germany concluded some understanding with
the then Soviet Union that East Germany would be the last new NATO
member, were some NATO countries putting the Russians up to demanding a
‘special relationship’—that Poland lobbied intensively for a clear statement that
the US administration supported Polish membership of NATO. Recognizing
that either a country is in NATO or it is not, Poland sought a clear expression
of the Clinton administration’s objective of expanding the alliance. If the
Council of Europe, the EU and the WEU could differentiate between Russia
and other east European countries why was NATO so uncomfortable with the
issue? A ‘line’ would always exist and should serve some rational purpose—or
was NATO not well pleased that the Warsaw Pact had dissolved?

By the time of President Clinton’s visit to Warsaw on 6 and 7 July 1994, the line
of US reasoning seemed to have changed. In remarks before the Sejm on the
second day of his visit, the President stated that ‘expansion will not depend on the
appearance of a new threat in Europe’. The United States believed, he said, ‘that
when NATO does expand, as it will, a democratic Poland will have placed itself
among those ready and able to join. The Partnership for Peace, and planning for
NATO’s future, mean that we will not let the Iron Curtain be replaced with a veil
of indifference.’ The President also announced his intention to request $25 million
from Congress to assist Poland in its PFP implementation. President Clinton also
announced, just over six months after the Brussels summit, that the task now
would be to have the allies discuss ‘what the next steps should be’, suggesting that
both a timetable and entry criteria should be settled by the allies in 1995.

Further impetus was provided by the 1994 NATO Participation Act, sponsored
by Congressmen Benjamin Gilman and Gerald Solomon and Senators Hank
Brown and Paul Simon. The Act authorized the President to transfer surplus
weapons equipment to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic and to
include those countries ‘in all activities ... related to the increased standardization
and enhanced interoperability of equipment and weapons systems’ undertaken by
NATO members. Although adopted by the Senate on 15 July by 74 votes to 22,
it was defeated in conference with the House, having reportedly drawn a
response from the State Department suggesting that the legislation be either
withdrawn or widened to include Russia and other countries of the former
Warsaw Pact—a—an example of NATO’s reluctance to differentiate between the
potential new partners. However, the Act passed through both chambers in
October and became law in November 1994. It will, no doubt, serve as a

15 Tomasz Wroblewski, ‘Poland–United States, with Russia in the background’, Zycie Warszawy, 7 July 1994,
in FBIS East Europe, 7 July 1994.
reference point for the new Republican majority in both houses, the ‘Contract with America’ offered by Republican candidates having included an expanded NATO.

**Precepts**

Further evidence of a move in the US administration away from the ‘threat-driven approach’ was given by the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, and former US Deputy Permanent Representative to NATO, Alexander Vershbow, on 21 June 1994 at an US Atlantic Council–WEU defence ministers meeting at the US State Department. Vershbow stated: ‘Some people think NATO expansion more likely only if Russia moves away from reform. But there are other scenarios.’

Then, towards the end of October 1994, an article appeared in the *New York Times* citing a ‘senior administration official’ as conceding what a number of critics of PFP had felt from the beginning: ‘Much of the rhetoric that was used in the past was empty of substance. Partnership for Peace is like getting guest privileges at the club—you can play gold once in a while. Now we want to send the bylaws and ask: “Do you want to pay the dues?”’

The publication of this was not coincidental but signalled a new approach being promoted by individuals said to include the new Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, Richard Holbrooke, who chaired a Working Group on European Security established that month to review the ‘how’, albeit not the ‘when’, of enlargement. This new approach was described in the following terms by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Kruzel on 15 November 1994:

> We cannot give you a checklist that you can tick off, and when you have completed your last requirement you are admitted. It is much more of a political process than that. But there are two things that I would insist on of any prospective member of the Alliance. The first is to show us you are worth defending. Show us that you share our values ... Second, show us that you bring something to the table, that you can make a contribution to collective defence ... Otherwise, Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty [the commitment to come to the defence of an ally coming under armed attack], in the context of declining defence budgets but expanding commitments, could be made hollow.

Kruzel also cautioned:

> We in NATO have a lot of work to do before we are ready for expansion. We need to think about how to bring these countries into the military command structure. We need to think about forward defence—will we need to station forces in the territory of these new members, will we need to put nuclear weapons there, pre-position equipment there? How will we take on this challenge of defending a considerably increased strategic space with a considerably reduced defence posture?°


°° Kruzel, presentation to NAA Political Committee.
These questions, or an elaboration of ‘precepts’, were not new and presumably should have already been addressed within NATO when the heads of state and government signalled their willingness for the alliance to expand. In an era when there was no ‘threat’ to NATO, were calculations such as force-to-space ratios and other traditional military requirements all that relevant, at least for the near-term future? Even if not, would not the Visegrad countries add a substantial military contribution to alliance forces—did no one have any use for ten Polish divisions? Moreover, the US Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, seemed quite relaxed in speaking on these issues on 25 October 1994: she asked whether Poland was democratic, whether it respected human rights, whether it was willing to undertake security commitments and whether it acted responsibly towards its neighbours. Her answer was ‘yes’ to all four questions.

Proponents of NATO enlargement naturally suspected a stalling tactic, with prospective member countries viewing explanations to them of how much it would cost to join NATO (in contributions to civilian, defence and infrastructure budgets) as an attempt ‘to scare us away from the alliance’. Zbigniew Brzezinski urged that the criteria for membership be primarily geopolitical—commitment to democracy and shared values—and not technical; the latter aspects could be solved after membership:

I suspect that the inclination of some people, including within the United States, to emphasize primarily operational, technical criteria is a reflection of a hidden but capricious intention to delay the expansion of the Alliance ... there is a deliberate effort by those who have lost the struggle on the principle itself to refight the struggle on the level of qualifications, by raising these qualifications to degrees which cannot be met in the near future.\(^8\)

Even assuming the Clinton administration had a firm position on NATO enlargement, there were fifteen other allies to consider. Both Kruzel and the Director of Strategic Plans and Policy in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Lt-Gen. Wesley Clark, had stated on 15 November 1994 in a presentation to the Political Committee of the North Atlantic Assembly that they sought a more active PFP programme, moving towards real military training and beyond peacekeeping. But if the European allies were not entirely enthusiastic about very active cooperation activities as had been the case with NACC over the years (for example, the United States had been pressing for two years to have NACC peacekeeping exercises held), why would they be any more enthusiastic about the admission of new members? NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes indicated a somewhat mixed assessment in his address to the North Atlantic Assembly on 18 November 1994:

PFP was not designed primarily as the vehicle for NATO’s enlargement. It serves a wide purpose. But it is also the best preparation for any country wishing to join the Alliance. Instead of going through the complex process of integration after they join

\(^8\) Brzezinski, Ibid.
the alliance, partner countries will do it beforehand—in the knowledge that if things went seriously wrong in Europe tomorrow, something I do not expect, they could be taken into NATO quickly.

Enlargement is a complex issue, but we are determined to find answers to the many questions it poses. Thus we have begun this week our first informal discussions in the Alliance, not on the whether, but on the how and the process of enlargement... Let me underscore... that enlargement is not a cost-free operation. It will mean being willing or able to defend a much larger expanse of territory. We must expect new members to contribute their fair share but it would be wholly unrealistic to think that it will be without consequences for our own defence budgets and force structures.

At the same time, however, the Secretary-General described the alternative to enlargement as 'a dangerous lack of stability in Central and Eastern Europe which could entail much higher costs in the long term'. If this were true, partners said, then they had every right to know the 'who', 'when', and 'how' of enlargement. Yet, according to French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur on 21 November 1994: 'The aim is not to speed up the enlargement of security bodies such as NATO or the WEU. Everyone is well aware that the sudden inclusion of new countries in these alliances could cause more instability than stability on our continent'; and UK officials were reported as displeased with the US effort to quicken the pace of enlargement.19 Whether US and German leadership on this score will prove successful remains to be seen, but it can be expected that the Republican majority in the US Congress will assume a proactive role. (To what extent this will include financial assistance is another issue.20)

At the time of writing, the latest developments concern the meeting of the NATO foreign ministers in Brussels on 1 December 1994. US Secretary of State Warren Christopher informed the meeting that 'The United States considers the Partnership an integral and lasting part of the new Europe security architecture', and that exercise programmes for 1995 and beyond should be put on a five-year planning cycle, building towards more complex training scenarios, with a partnership defence planning process established by early 1995.

With respect to NATO enlargement, the Secretary of State used a new formula: ‘An exclusionary policy would risk maintaining old lines of division across Europe—or creating arbitrary new ones.’ The United States, therefore, ‘believes it is time ... to begin deliberate consideration of the practical requirements for adding new members to the Alliance’. Views would be presented to interested partners during 1995; these presentations would explain the 'practical implications

20 'The possibility that the collective defence capability will be whittled away by default (rather than by design) in order to support the new role of Peacekeeping Operations and the cooperation in that role with the partners is very real.' Air Vice-Marshal John Cheshire, 'European defence and security—keeping pace with change', RUSI Journal, 139: 5, October 1994. At the same time, NATO cooperation authorities expressed concern that there simply would not be sufficient staff to deal with all the various PFP programmes in addition to the NACC: 'there is complete saturation', according to a not uncommon view at the time of writing.
Partnership for Peace

and obligations of NATO membership’ but are ‘not intended to be the beginning
of accession negotiations. Neither will they indicate that any partner is necessarily
a candidate for admission.’ New NATO members ‘must be market democracies
committed to responsible security policies and able to make a contribution to the
Alliance’. Christopher also stated that ‘expanding Western institutions to Central
Europe will benefit Russia’. It was announced that a NATO study group would
be established to report to the ministers in twelve months.

Light at the end of the tunnel? A Polish diplomat concluded that the central
European countries had, despite the appearance of a new phase of NATO
deliberation, ‘been pushed to the dustbin. We are being cheated—this is very
distressing.’ It was reported that the United States sought completion of the review
by spring 1995, but this was rejected as too ambitious by other allies, whereas it
was reported that Russia had threatened not to conclude its IPP with NATO on
1 December 1994 if a timetable for expansion were issued by the ministers.22
Nevertheless, although the foreign ministers agreed that ‘it is premature to discuss
the timeframe for enlargement or which particular countries would be invited to
join the Alliance’, they also stated that ‘when it occurs, enlargement will be
decided on a case-by-case basis and that some nations may attain membership
before others’. The only reference to criteria was the following:

Enlargement should strengthen the effectiveness of the alliance, contribute to the
stability and security of the entire Euro-Atlantic area, and support our objective of
maintaining an undivided Europe.

Enlargement should be carried out in a way that preserves the alliance’s ability to
perform its core functions of common defence as well as to undertake peacekeeping
and other new missions and that upholds the principles and objectives of the Washington
Treaty [reference was then made to the Preamble].

All new members of NATO will be full members of the alliance [suggesting that full
integration with the military structures was expected].

In response, the Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev refused to sign either the
IPP or a bilateral document on Russia–NATO cooperation, claiming he had
been ‘surprised’ by the decision to study NATO enlargement.

The way ahead

Admittedly, the NATO enlargement issue defies any consensus view on the part
of the allies. The timing of the issue’s emergence, coinciding as it does with
NATO’s difficult experiences in Bosnia, is not particularly auspicious. Indeed,
on 15 November 1994 UK Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind cautioned that
although it is not surprising that the new democracies want to participate in the
Western family of nations, what is also required is an ‘Atlantic Community’
going beyond defence and security to give expression to the whole range of

common interests and to ward off an inward-looking European Union and United States. Looking eastward, US Secretary of Defense, William Perry, on 5 February 1995, proposed a standing consultative commission between NATO and Russia, and a charter outlining areas for permanent cooperation—counter-proliferation, military technology, defence policy transparency, crisis management and peacekeeping.

It is too early to make reasonable judgements about the costs involved, and about timetables and criteria for enlargement. The decision will not be made by committees on the basis of technical guidelines, but in capitals on political grounds. All we know is that the US President has declared the enlargement issue to be a question not of whether but of when and how. The task ahead is to determine whether all sixteen allies share that view sufficiently to take decisions on at least the ‘how’, which presumably suggests a differentiated approach towards the likely ‘who’.