Understanding NATO Enlargement

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Abstract

NATO as an institution always kept the interest on many theorist and researchers. NATO enlargement as a process has become subject of analysis, especially after the Cold War. This is because, the existence of the NATO Alliance before this period was only seen as a creation balancing the Soviet Threat. With the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the USSR, NATO transformed itself gradually. Since, the Soviet threat in not present any more, the researchers were and still are analyzing the NATO enlargement in terms what is the current threat that makes these countries willing to become part of NATO, and what is NATO interest in further enlarging. The concerns have been raised in some studies, but no one seems to have solved the puzzle. In this article I would make and analysis and try to explain this concerns. This would be done by analyzing and comparing the countries that had been admitted until know. Based on the indicators revealed by the analysis, alternative explanations based on the realism and neo- liberal institutionalism would be provided. I conclude that NATO is still a complex process that should be further analyzed in order the process to be clear. But as interesting points revealed in this study are that NATO enlargement is not based only on the criteria and requirements that the aspirant countries should fulfill. Aside from these requirements, the relations on the bilateral level, and the events and the relations on the international level seem to have a huge influence on the NATO enlargement.
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1. Introduction

1.1. The Subject of the Study

North Atlantic Treaty Organizations (NATO) was established in 1949 as a military organization. At first it was only a military organization, an alliance against the Soviet military threat. But after the Cold War and the dissolution of the Warsaw pact and the Soviet Union, NATO was restructured in an organization which fundamental role is to “safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means”\(^1\).

Having a mission as such, NATO became an organization toward which many countries shown aspiration, especially the ones that were part or under the big influence of the Soviet Union. The great interest shown in becoming part of the organization was mainly because the new NATO was seen as an organization that would lay rock-solid security by enabling democracy and market economy where the favorable security environment would allow many businesses safely to infest capital in these countries and provide them prosperity.

From its foundation, NATO has had several enlargements. The NATO founder countries are Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Iceland and Denmark. Today NATO is an organization of 26 member countries and 24 partner countries.

But, becoming a part of NATO is not only having a will and aspirations to participate in this organization. It is a long process that takes time and reforms. The Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty best describes how the process of admitting new countries is conducted. The Article states that - the Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty. Any state

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\(^1\) NATO Homepage, The Alliance’s strategic concept, url: http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm , viewed May 27, 2009
so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America\textsuperscript{2}.

1.2. The Purpose and the Problem of the Study

During the Cold war NATO has one and only purpose- military- which was to protect the Russian influence spreading to the West. But when Cold War ended, NATO changed its mission and continued to exist as an organization promoting democracy and security in Europe. This new mission also meant that NATO should enlarge itself and invite new members to participate in this organization. When NATO decided to enlarge, a set of requirements was given, that the countries should fulfill in order to become part of NATO. Until now, looking from the end of the Cold War, NATO made three enlargements. Many times there were statements that the country fulfill the criteria but for some other reasons were not admitted. This rise the question, are there any other factors that influence on the decision which country and when will be admitted?

The purpose of this study, based on the findings in the literature, is to analyze these three enlargements and compare them in order to see if there are other factors relevant for the enlargement, aside from the requirements set by NATO. If there are, which factors are those and on what basis are defined. This would hopefully provide better understanding on NATO enlargement. I want to emphasize that the NATO member states’ interests have strong impact on the decisions regarding the enlargement process. The latest NATO summit in Bucharest had a vague outcome about the enlargement process. This kept my attention and motivated me to analyze the NATO enlargement.

The main questions raised in this work are as follows:

- What are the factors that have influence on the NATO enlargement?
- How can we understand these factors?
  - Are they related with the events occurring on the international arena?

\textsuperscript{2} NATO Official Text, North Atlantic Treaty, Article 10, url: 
\url{http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/treaty.htm} , viewed May 27, 2009
- Are the relations between the aspirant country and members countries important and to what extent?
  - On what basis are these requirements (factors) defined?

1.3. The Plan of the Study

The study rests upon the above mentioned questions. In Chapter 2 I will discuss the theoretical aspects. The central theoretical aspects will be those addressing sates as the key actors in the international arena and that states are those shaping the relations in the international arena from states’ best view perspective. Chapter 3 would analyze the enlargement processes that NATO had to this date looking onward from the end of the Cold War. In this chapter some key concepts are defined and some indicators relevant for the study will be provided. The analysis would be based on scanning the aspirant countries outlining its characteristics; relations on the bilateral level and the events that happened on the international arena when the aspirant country was granted a membership.

Departing from the indicators provided in the previous chapter, Chapter 4 would analyze these indicators and see what kind of changes and outcomes these indicators reveal and on what they are based. Hopefully this Chapter would give a solid ground about the questions raised above in the paper and help explain how we can best understand NATO enlargement.

Chapter 5 finally summarizes the study.

1.4. Delimitations of the Study

It is, quite understandably, not possible to cover every process of enlargement that occurred in this organization. Such an analysis would require a far more extensive research. For this reason the analysis in this study has to be delimited. This delimitation has to be made on several aspects of the study.
First it is necessary to delimit the enlargement processes that would take place in this study. NATO existence could be “divided” as NATO from 1949 until the end of the Cold War, and post-Cold War NATO. My point of departure would be NATO after the Cold war and the enlargement processes that take place since than. If we take in consideration the missions that NATO had during Cold War period, and than the ones after the Cold War it is more than understandable why I decided my departure point to be from this period exactly.

Second, the level of analysis is also subject to delimitation. It is more than sure that this study would be much more accurate and authentic if every country that has been admitted since than could be analyzed separately. But because of the time and word limit of this study this research cannot be conducted. The emphasis is put on the every case of enlargement separately in order to give conclusions what these countries had in common in order to become part of NATO in that particular time. Also, the study would be focused only on the international relations that took place in international arena at the time when the countries were admitted without drawing an attention on the relations that occurred during the whole period from starting the negotiations until their admittance. The bilateral relations between aspirant country and member country, if there are such, would be also addressed.

1.5. Relevance to the Field of Political Science

International organizations marked the new way of governing and making decisions relevant for the whole international arena. Realists and institutionalist are in constant battle trying to give a better explanation how the international institutions should be seen and understand. They are arguing if the countries use this organization to shape the international relations in their interests and benefits or that the organizations interests come first and the organizations are better in providing international peace and security with prerequisites of becoming world government one day.

This paper would not try to settle the combat between the theorists, but by using the different approaches of the realism and neo liberal institutionalism would try to give a solid ground about how NATO organization is acting when enlargement process is in
question. Also would try to understand if the states interests are coming first when
deciding on this sensitive issue or is it that the whole organizations interests are more
relevant and considered when comes to enlargement.

1.6. Methodological Aspects

The material used in this study is various in its character and content. There have been
several authors that shown great interest regarding this issue and dealt with the
enlargement processes in international organizations.

This would be a qualitative study. The research would be based on existing
qualitative data relevant for the purpose of the study. This means that the research
material for this study will be consisted of primarily, secondary sources and internet
sources.

Primarily sources used in this study are: decisions by NATO organization and NATO
authorities, collection of historical material and statements by NATO representatives.
Secondary sources used in this study are: academic books, articles in academic
journals, articles in newspapers and discussion on this issue.

Bearing in mind that the purpose of this research is to find the factors that had/have
impact on the decisions made in NATO regarding enlargement issue (independent
variables) and see the outcomes of the decisions made on the enlargement process
(dependent variable), this research will be based on a comparative case study.
Chapter 2

2. The role of theory

In order to analyze the NATO enlargement and NATO member states’ behavior regarding the enlargement process I would turn to the most influential perspectives on the state behavior in the study of international relations -realism and neo-liberal institutionalism. When it comes to the explanations of the reasons why countries enter this organization, on one hand, and why member countries invite one particular country to become part of NATO, on the other, I will turn to the balance of power versus bandwagon theory and balance of power versus balance of threat theory.

Before I give explanation why I have chosen this particular theories to guide my study I would give a short presentation of the realism and neo-liberal institutionalism theory.

2.1. Realism

According to the realists, states are the only actors which really ‘count’. Transnational corporations, international organizations, and religious denominations, like all other ideologies, rise and fall but the state is the one permanent feature in the landscape of modern global politics. They state that states are self-interested entities who, “at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination”. This behavior rests on the assumption that the international system is anarchic- a realm where no state exercises legitimate power over another- and where each and every state has to provide for its own protection.

Since the international system is seen as an anarchic system, realists argue that the security in the arena where there is a lack of higher authority, to prevent and counter

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the use of force, can be only realized through self-help. But in the course of providing for one’s security, the state in question will automatically be fuelling the insecurity of other states⁵. Ironically, this self-help system does not necessarily result in a safer environment for the state: “states are caught in a situation known as the security dilemma. The efforts of states to seek security generate a permanent struggle of all against all, which always harbors the possibility of the use of force”.

But, the realists believe that this security dilemma can be mitigated, and the principle mechanism in doing this is through the operation of the balance power. Waltz argues that states “faced with unbalanced power, states try to increase their own strength or they ally with others to bring the international distribution of power into balance”⁶. This means that the coexistence is achieved through the maintenance of the balance power, and limited co-operation is possible in interactions where the realist state stands to gain more than other states.

To sum up all the above stated, realism in IR can be explained in the following way: “the international system is portrayed as a brutal arena where states look for opportunities to take advantage of each other, and therefore have little reason to trust each other”⁷. This doesn’t mean that the relations on the international arena can be portrayed as a constant state of war, but there is a constant security competition, with the possibility of war always in the background.

2.2. Neo-liberal Institutionalism

Neo-liberal institutionalism takes for granted the states as a legitimate representation of society and even though they emphasize the importance of the non-state actors they argue that non-state actors are subordinate to states. They accept the structural condition of anarchy in the international system, but crucially, anarchy does not mean cooperation between states is impossible. Neo-liberal institutionalists states that

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⁵ Baylis and Smith, (1997), p. 117
international institutions and states can mitigate anarchy by reducing verification costs, reinforcing reciprocity, and making defection from norms easier to punish.\(^8\)

Bearing in mind that the integration process is increasing at both, regional and global level, they stress that states will enter into co-operative relations even if another state will gain more from the interaction, in other words, ‘absolute gains’ are more important for liberal institutionalist than ‘relative gains’ (emphasized by neo-realisists)\(^9\).

When state elites do not foresee self- interested benefits from cooperation, we do not expect cooperation to occur, nor the institutions that facilitate cooperation to develop. When states can jointly benefit from cooperation, on the other hand, we expect governments to attempt to construct such institutions\(^10\).

Liberal institutionalists see institutions rooted in the realities of power and interest and what they argue is that institutions make a significant difference in conjunction with power realities. They are arguing that the institutions have an interactive affect that means their impact on outcomes varies, depending on the nature of power and interests\(^11\).

They are stating that the institutions and the norms on which they consist are still regarded as the voluntary act of the states and made in interests of the states. These norms, on which institutions are based, are ‘tools designed to increase the utility of actors with pre-given preferences\(^12\).

Institutions are based on set of rules (formal and informal) that “prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity and shape expectations”\(^13\).

\(^8\) Baylis and Smith, (1997), p. 159  
\(^9\) Baylis and Smith, (1997), p. 159  
\(^12\) Gheciu Alexandra (2005) NATO in the New Europe: the politics of international socialization after the Cold War (Stanford University Press) p.216  
2.3. Balance of Power *versus* Bandwagon

These two concepts by the majority of the literature on alliance formation are defined in this way: “balancing is joining with the weaker (in terms of military capability) of two alliance choices, and bandwagoning is joining with the stronger”\(^\text{14}\). Balancing is alignment against the threatening power to deter it from attacking or to defeat it if it does. Bandwagoning refers to alignment with the dominant power, either to appease it or to profit from its victory\(^\text{15}\).

**Balance of power** occurs when there is a formation of a countervailing coalition to contain the strongest state. In Waltz’s classic formulation, states can balance either by internal effort or by cooperating with others. In either case, the aim is to strengthen one’s ability to defend one’s interests in the uncertain world of anarchy. Both internal and external balancing can be directed against very specific threats (for example, as in a defensive alliance that commits the members to war if either is attacked by a particular enemy), but it can also consist of more general treaties of mutual support regardless of the precise identity of the threat\(^\text{16}\).

**Bandwagoning** occurs when a state chooses to align with the strongest or most threatening state it faces. It is essentially a form of appeasement: by bandwagoning, threatened states seek to convince the dominant power to leave them alone. According to some theorists bandwagoning behavior has been historically rare and has generally been confined to very weak and isolated states. In their opinion the main reason for this is simple: the decisions to bandwagon requires the weaker side to put its fate in the hands of more powerful state whom it suspects (usually with good reason) of harboring hostile intentions. By bandwagoning with the main source of danger, a threatened state accepts greater vulnerability in the hope that the dominant power’s appetites are sated or diverted\(^\text{17}\). But even though some theorists state that bandwagoning has been rare behavior, others argue that bandwagoning behavior has occurred very often in the history.

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\(^{17}\) Walt (2009), p. 108
2.4. Balance of power *versus* Balance of threat theory

In the Article- Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: The Case of Southwest Asia-Stephen M. Walt explains that “balance of threat” theory should be seen as a “refinement of balance of power theory. Where balance of power theory predicts that states ally in response to imbalances of power, balance of threat theory predicts that states seek allies when there is an imbalance of threat (that is, when one state or coalition is especially dangerous)\textsuperscript{18}.

He states that the imbalance of power occurs when the strongest state or coalition in the system possesses significantly greater power than the second strongest. Power is the product of many components, including population, economic and military capability, technological capacity, political cohesion, and so on.

When it comes to the imbalance of threat, he states, that this situation occur when the most threatening state or coalition is significantly more dangerous than the second most threatening state or coalition. The degree to which a state threatens others is the product of its aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive capability, and the aggressiveness of its intentions.

The main concept informing balance of power theory is the distribution of capabilities, which is based on population, economic capacity, military power, political cohesion, etc.

The central concept of balance of threat theory is the distribution of threats, which consists of capabilities, proximity, offensive power and intentions.

2.5. Justification of the selected theories

In this study it is not my aim to test the theory and see if it is applicable empirically. I am using the different approaches that these theories have in order to better understand the outcomes and to draw a generalization of the issue that it is subject of my study.

\textsuperscript{18} Walt (1988), pp. 281
The subject of my study is the process of enlargement in an organization created by the states. It is more than sure that the member states of this organization are the ones that decide if the organization should enlarge or not; if should, than which country are the country of interests and why exactly those; and in the end, who and how decide if this should happened. Hence more, it is my interest to see what are the main reasons that make countries to aspire toward NATO organization; and the reasons why NATO was/is interested in particular countries in a particular period of time.

Both, realists and neo-liberal institutionalists theorists, states that the countries operates through institutions, but both have different approaches in explaining why they are participating. For realists institutions are reflection of “state calculations of self-interest based primarily on the international distribution of power. The most powerful states in the system create and shape institutions so that they can maintain their share of world power, or even increase it. In this view, institutions are essentially “arenas for acting out power relationships”\(^\text{19}\).

For neo-liberal institutionalists, institutions make a significant difference in conjunction with power realities. Institutions are important “independently” only in the ordinary sense used in social science: controlling for the effects of power and interests, it matters whether they exist. They also have an interactive effect, meaning that their impact on outcomes varies, depending on the nature of power and interests\(^\text{20}\).

Both theories “see the state as the most important actor, and sees actor as utility maximizers”\(^\text{21}\), but as is stated above they see institutions in different ways. Since I am interested to see if NATO decisions are made in order the most powerful members to benefit from it, or are they represent the interest of the organization, the answer would be best provided by combination of realism and neo-liberal institutionalism.

\(^\text{19}\) Mearsheimer (1994-1995), page 10-11  
\(^\text{20}\) Keohane (1995), p. 5-6  
\(^\text{21}\) Baylis, and Smith (1997), p.171
Chapter 3

1. Processes of NATO enlargements after the Cold War

The processes of enlargement that took place in the NATO organization after the Cold war are:

1. The enlargement in 1999 with Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic
2. The enlargement in 2004 with the Baltic states (Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia), Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia
3. The enlargement in 2009 with Albania and Croatia

Before NATO decided to enlarge, “Study on NATO Enlargement” was made to examine “why” the alliance should enlarge and “how” should the further enlargement be done. The results from this study were shared with interested Partner countries in September 1995 and made public.

In explaining “why” on enlargement, it was concluded that the enlargement of the Alliance would contribute to an enhanced stability and security for all countries in the Euro-Atlantic area in numerous ways. It would encourage and support democratic reforms, including the establishment of civilian and democratic control over military forces; it will foster the patterns and habits of cooperation and will promote good-neighbourly relations in the whole Euro-Atlantic area. Furthermore, it will strengthen the Alliance’s ability to contribute to European and international security and support peacekeeping under the United Nations or OSCE; and it will strengthen and broaden the transatlantic partnership.

With regard to the “how” of enlargement, the Study confirmed that, as in the past, any future extension of the Alliance’s membership would be through accession of new member states to the North Atlantic Treaty in accordance with its Article 10. Once admitted, new members would enjoy all the rights and assume all obligations of membership under the Treaty. They would need to accept and conform with the
principles, policies and procedures adopted by all members of the Alliance at the time that they join\textsuperscript{22}.

This study also outlines the criteria or pre-conditions that one aspirant country should fulfill in order to become a NATO member. These requirements are the following:

\begin{itemize}
  \item A functioning democratic political system based on a market economy;
  \item The fair treatment of minority populations;
  \item A commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts;
  \item The ability and willingness to make a military contribution NATO operations; and
  \item A commitment to democratic civil- military relations and institutional structures\textsuperscript{23}.
\end{itemize}

The decisions on NATO enlargement are taking place in the NAC (North Atlantic Council) where all the countries have to make an unanimous consent (consensus) about the decision in order that decision to be conducted\textsuperscript{24}.

\section{3.1 NATO enlargement in 1999}

\subsection{3.1.1 General remarks}

At a summit held in Visegrád, Hungary, in February 1991, the leaders of Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia indicated their aspiration to achieve “total integration into the European political, economic, security and legislative order to harmonize their efforts to foster cooperation and close relations with European institutions and to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Study on NATO Enlargement, URL: \url{http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/enl-9507.htm}, viewed May 27, 2009
\item \textsuperscript{23} NATO Topics: NATO enlargement, URL: \url{http://www.nato.int/issues/enlargement/index.html}, Viewed May 27, 2009
\item \textsuperscript{24} NATO Homepage: What is NATO? URL: \url{http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/what_is_nato.htm}, viewed May 27, 2009
\end{itemize}
consult on questions concerning their security”\textsuperscript{25}. This meant that they expressed their aspiration not only towards NATO, but towards EU, too.

On 10 December 1996 NATO decided to invite Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic to apply for membership at the Madrid summit, scheduled for July 1997.

NOTE! Czech Republic is not part of this analysis, because it has the same characteristics as Hungary. The choice of Hungary over Czech Republic is because of the following reason. Hungary with its locations was regarded as an island in the NATO alliance, because it was not bordering any NATO member country.

3.1.2. Admitting Poland in NATO

Poland is a central European country with total area of 312,679 sq km and a population of 38,482,919. Poland’s bordering countries are Belarus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Russia (Kalinigrad Oblast), Slovakia and Ukraine. During the World War II and afterwards it was a Soviet satellite state until 1990s when the independent trade union "Solidarity" became a political force that had swept parliamentary elections and the presidency\textsuperscript{26}.

**Polish interest in joining NATO**

Historically, beginning with the disappearance of the multinational Commonwealth of Poland- Lithuania in the eighteen century, the dilemma of Polish geopolitics was that of a medium- size, relatively weak country caught in the ‘gray zone” between the competing interests of Russia and Germany.

Finding itself in a situation where Russian threat was still possible, on the one hand, and in hostile relations with Germany, on the other, Poland saw NATO as a best option for its security. Though Poles did not see Russia as a serious threat, they


\textsuperscript{26} CIA- The World Factbook, search: Poland, URL: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/ , viewed May 27, 2009
insisted on entering NATO in part because of the residual fear that a resurgent Russia might pose a renewed threat to Polish sovereignty and security.

After announcing its willingness to become a NATO member, Poland started to work on its relations with Germany, since Germany was already a NATO member, thinking that the possible reconciliation would ease its way to the Alliance. The improvement in Polish-German relations led to a dramatic increase in Polish-German military cooperation, which by 1998 was second only to that between Poland and USA. After 1991, Germany took the lead in Europe in lobbying for the Poland’s inclusion into NATO stating that “Poland might serve as a ‘bridge’ across central Europe”\textsuperscript{27}.

**NATO interests in Poland**

Less than a decade after the collapse of communism, Poland was arguably the most successful new democracy in Central Europe. With established effective presidential-parliamentary system, new constitution and two presidential elections, Poland by 1998 had become Europe’s fastest-growing economy, with a stable currency and a sustained growth rate in gross domestic product (GDP) of app. 5% per year. Because of its size and its geostrategic location, at the heart of Central Europe, Poland was the most important of the three new entrants into NATO\textsuperscript{28}.

According to the book “America’s new allies: Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic” the following three areas are ‘responsible’ for Poland’s successful incorporation into NATO. They are: (1) the record of Poland’s response to the changed geopolitical environment following the unification of Germany and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, with a focus on Polish-German relations; Poland’s attitude towards Eastern policy at that time, especially its improvements in relations with Russia; and the state of Polish military reform, at that time, in preparation for NATO membership, including organizational changes, equipment modernization and the defense budget (in 1997 was 2.26 percent of the Poland’s GDP)\textsuperscript{29}.

\textsuperscript{27} Michta Andrew A. (ed.) (1999) *America’s new allies: Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic in NATO* (University of Washington Press) p.45

\textsuperscript{28} Michta (1999), Poland 40-73

Russian opinion on Poland’s admission into NATO

Russian views toward NATO enlargement at first place were that “Russia still seemed to regard NATO as an alien Cold War institution, not an organic part of the Western community with whom Russia desire any intimate ties”30.

According to Kugler, when NATO enlargement became a plausible policy, Russia concerns were two regions: Eurasia and East Central Europe. Russia’s interest in Eurasia was pursuing the reintegration of the Commonwealth of Independent States, including Belarus and Ukraine. While its interests in Eurasia were to have this region under its influence, Russian interest in East Central Europe was for this region to remain a neutral zone not belonging to the West31.

But then, in 1998, the Russian attitude toward Poland’s integration in NATO began to show signs of change. NATO’s decision to invite Poland into the alliance, and the offer to Moscow of a special NATO- Russian relationship, ended the enlargement debate and laid the ground work for a Warsaw- Moscow rapprochement. NATO- Russian Founding Act was set out in 1997 as a bilateral cooperation between these two subjects. This Act was a “mechanism of consultation, cooperation, joint decision-making and joint action that will constitute the core of the mutual relations between NATO and Russia”32.

The Act ‘softened’ Russian opposition toward NATO enlargement and finally the enlargement was made possible in 1999 when Russia was no longer seen as a possible threat.

Conclusion

The factors that made Poland’s admission in NATO possible were the following:

1. The country’s characteristics:
   - country democratization and establishment of an open market economy;

32 NATO Homepage: Founding Act between NATO and Russia URL: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm, viewed May 27, 2009
- the commitment to fulfill the requirements;
- its commitment to invest more in military modernization; and
- significant geopolitical location

2. **On the bilateral level:**
- its commitment to reconcile with its neighbors especially Germany;
- the German support for Poland’s inclusion; and
- the reconciliation with Russia.

3. **On the international level:**
- the improvements in Russian-NATO relations.

### Admitting Hungary in NATO

Hungary is a country located in the Central Europe with a total area of 93,039 sq km and total population of 9,905,596. Hungary’s bordering countries are Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. During the World War II, Hungary fell under the Communist rule. In 1956, Hungary tried with a revolt to withdraw from the Warsaw pact, but after massive military intervention made by Moscow, this was not possible. Hungary held its first multiparty election in 1990 when initiating a free market economy\(^3^3\).

### Hungary’s interest in NATO

After the Soviet collapse and end of the Cold War, Hungary was about to enter an era marked by new security challenges and potential instability. With the withdrawal of the 78 thousand Soviet occupation troops\(^3^4\), Hungary was left without fundamental defense capabilities for protection of its air space. Also, the defensive potential that this country inherited as a legacy from the Soviet regime was unsuitable for this new democratic state and for the security scenario that was taking place in the region.

At the beginning, there was a common thinking that Hungary has no specific enemy and is under no direct threat. What’s more, the Hungarian population has been

\(^3^3\) CIA- The World Factbook, search: Hungary  
\(^3^4\) Michta (1999), p.75
skeptical about the benefits of NATO membership and was thinking that joining would pose a financial burden over the country that would be significant. Another reason was that since the 1562, Hungarian territory has always been a “territory where foreign troops were stationed”\textsuperscript{35}. The independence, in Hungarians people’s mind was seen as a freedom from the presence of these foreign troops. Bearing in mind that the tragic events of the twentieth century were a consequence of the harmful alliance, they were seeking for neutrality and absence of any alliance.

Although the Hungary’s officials agreed that the country had no specific enemy, their concern was the unfavorable geostrategic position of the country. Bordering with Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, the country had no natural borders with any of the NATO countries. Taking in consideration also the fact that out of its seven bordering countries, only Slovakia and Austria could be considered as stable democracies, it was relatively easy this country to be overrun since its military establishment has weakened considerably since 1989. The instability in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus and the wars of the Yugoslav succession were also the issue\textsuperscript{36}.

Concerned with the unfavorable geostrategic position of the country and the possible threats coming from the neighboring countries, they (the Hungary’s officials) saw integration in NATO as the best option for the country’s security. Facing with the popular disagreement toward NATO enlargement, they started a campaign for convincing the population and getting their consent on their policy by giving them the positive outcomes of the possible NATO membership. Aside of the inner campaign, Hungary has also organized hundreds of meetings, conferences and visits between Hungarian politicians and NATO officials in order to convince them that Budapest was worthy of a membership. They announced that Hungary is willing to send troops to wherever NATO might need them. Hungarian President Göncz noted that their need for the NATO membership was motivated by “values shared with the West, by the desire to belong to a favorable security environment, and that with NATO membership there will be a more cost-effective defense establishment”\textsuperscript{37}.

\textsuperscript{35} Michta (1999), p.87
\textsuperscript{36} Michta (1999), p. 74-111
\textsuperscript{37} Michta (1999), p.88
NATO’s interest in Hungary

Having a geographical location as such, Hungary constituted an island sharing no borders with another NATO state. It was a country with no military strength nor good defense policy. With this kind of prerequisites Hungary didn’t have much to offer to the Alliance. After the ending of the Cold War, country’s priorities were mostly in politics and economy. The military budget has decreased considerably along with its personnel that for the size of this country and its population, the Hungarian Defensive Forces (HDF) in 1999 were one of the weakest national military establishments in Europe. Also, the prestige of the military profession was among the lowest in the region38.

But NATO still decided to invite this country in the first wave of post- Cold War enlargement. What was NATO gaining with Hungary in? The only reasonable reason for this situation would be that NATO will have a new member that has been “one of the leaders of post communist democratization and economic transition in Central Europe”39. When enlargement discussion was taking place between NATO members they have concluded beside the other things, that this NATO enlargement should “erase the legacy of the Soviet communist domination in Europe”40. Thereby, the admitting of Hungary into the Alliance was accomplishing the political goal of the post–Cold War NATO.

Russia

Russia didn’t have any particular oppositions towards Hungary and its willingness to become a NATO’s member country. Russia was opposing the NATO enlargement in general because it threatened its interests in Europe. Yeltsin’s foreign policy goals were not possible to be achieved with former members of the Warsaw Pact inside NATO Alliance.

Conclusion

To sum up, the factors that made possible for Hungary to enter the Alliance would be:

38 Michta (1999), p. 74-111
39 Michta (1999), p.106
40 Michta (1999), p. 144
1. The country’s characteristics:
   - Country’s democratization and establishment of open market economy;
   - Hungary’s willingness to join NATO and its commitment toward that policy;
   - the support that Hungary gave to NATO in its mission;
   - insignificant geopolitical location having in mind that Hungary was not bordering any NATO member country.

1. On the bilateral level:
   - Commitment to promote good relations with its neighbors;
   - No particular support coming from any NATO member.

2. On the international level:
   - the improvements in Russian-NATO relations; and
   - NATO reaching its political goal in erasing the legacy of the former Soviet communist domination in Europe.

3.2. NATO enlargement in 2004

3.2.1. General Remarks

In 2002 NATO held a summit in Prague where seven countries were invited to join the Alliance. Most of them were countries that aspired for their membership in the first post-cold war enlargement round, but were rejected. The new members of the NATO alliance were: Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), Slovakia, Romania, Slovenia and Bulgaria.

NOTE! Slovakia and Bulgaria would not be part of this analyze because of the following reasons. Slovakia was to be granted with NATO membership in the first round of the NATO enlargement, but it was rejected only because of the return of the demagogic leader Vladimir Mečiar who supposedly had ties with Russia and was ruling the country under the communist influence coming from Russia.

When it comes to Bulgaria, it is a similar case study as Romania, so it can be noted that this country had the same prerequisites as Romania, and mostly because of the same reasons it was admitted in the NATO Alliance in 2004.
3.2.2. Admitting the Baltic in NATO

The Baltic countries as a term refer to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. During the Cold War they were brutally incorporated into the Soviet Union and until their independence they were unwillingly subjects under the Soviet influence. After their independence, their bordering countries became Russia, Belarus and Poland. These countries were literally bordering with the former NATO adviser- USSR and because of that it was impossible for them to be admitted into the first post- cold war enlargement, even they clearly declared their membership in NATO as the highest governments’ objective which should be reached as soon as possible.

Baltic’s interest in NATO

Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia have been democratic independent country during the first and the second world wars. With the beginning of the Cold War they were brutally incorporated into the USSR, right after signing the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact\textsuperscript{41} in 1939. Even though they had always oppressed the USSR influence and resisted the Soviet policy, they gained their independence only after 50 years, in 1990, with the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War\textsuperscript{42}.

From their independence onward, they started all the reforms in the countries in order to meet the Western community criteria. Establishing the legal framework, military reforms, introducing the western style and promoting open market economy, were some of the reforms which were undertaken in order to present their case to the NATO and convince NATO that they belong there.

They even supported NATO missions that took place in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq and claimed that they will support all future NATO missions all over the world, too.

\textsuperscript{41} Non-aggression treaty signed by Germany and the USSR on 23 August 1939. Under the terms of the treaty both countries agreed to remain neutral and to refrain from acts of aggression against each other if either went to war. Secret clauses allowed for the partition of Poland – Hitler was to acquire western Poland, Stalin the eastern part. On 1 September 1939 Hitler invaded Poland. The pact ended when Hitler invaded Russia on 22 June 1941 during World War II.

\textsuperscript{42} See: CIA World Fact Book: Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia
With the declaration of the independence, after a half century under the brutal and unwanted Soviet influence, they were determined to do whatever it took to integrate themselves into the Western community. Being intimidated by the threat of the Russia, thinking that they would be the first target in the new-imperial Russian government, the Baltic States wanted full membership in NATO as soon as possible\(^{43}\).

Beside the threat that was coming from Russia, since these countries were former states of the USSR, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia didn’t have any particular disputes with other countries. The only issue was that, the Nordic countries frightened for their security and mainly supported and pressured by Germany, were also addressing this issue and were openly declaring that the Baltic countries should not be rewarded with NATO membership (this was the case in the first post cold-war enlargement, when NATO was weighing if this countries should be admitted or not)\(^{44}\).

**NATO’s interest in the Baltic**

Given the fact that the Baltic countries were a subject of discussion during the first round of post-cold war enlargement, it is clear what the real reasons for NATO’s interest in this region were. It was further erasing of the communist legacy and getting close to the Russia. But by revealing the reasons, why these countries were rejected in the first round, would help to conclude the indicators or even more the most significant factors that were discussed for the possible admission of the Baltic States.

In the discussions whether the Baltic countries should be admitted or not, many from the Western member countries were mostly worried about the strong Russian opposition towards the Baltic admission into the Alliance. They were questioning their possibility and readiness to defend this region bearing in mind their exposed situation. Also at that moment this region was not seen as “a vital element for the security in western Europe”\(^{45}\). Another fact that was also a question of debate was that the invitation of the Baltic countries could have “negative consequences for the


\(^{45}\) Urbelis (2003), p.14
democracy in Russia and would bring Russia back to authoritarianism or even confrontation between the former Cold War adversaries.\textsuperscript{46}

However, in 2004, the Baltic countries became part of the NATO Alliance. Baltic countries were admitted because of their willingness and commitment to do whatever it takes to be granted membership and the emerging strategic partnership between Russia and the USA, too\textsuperscript{47}. The consulted literature is pointing the September 11\textsuperscript{th} terrorist attacks on America as one of the reason that had great influence for the second post-cold enlargement to occur. The shift of the Russian priorities had a major impact, too, bearing in mind that the countries were not included in the first enlargement mostly to Russia’s opposition.

**Russian influence**

After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR, Russian opposing towards NATO enlargement were constant because Russia was afraid that its geopolitical interests in Europe would be jeopardized. But than, when the Baltic countries declared their aspiration toward NATO membership, Russia felt threatened not only for its interests in Europe but more for its own country’s security.

Right after the Baltic countries made announcement for their willingness to become NATO members, Russia started with a threatening policy clearly and openly opposing for this enlargement. A number of Russian presses were reporting that if Baltic region became part of the NATO Alliance, Russia “would turn to military steps”\textsuperscript{48}. There were two analyses made by two Russian analysts- The Suriko report and the Karaganov Report. These reports were stating that in the case of granting Baltic countries with NATO membership, Russia would preemptively intervene in the Baltic States. In one of the reports was even stated that Estonian accession would bring immediate military action taken by Moscow, and would nudge nuclear weapons as close to NATO borders as possible creating “new political military nuclear curtain”\textsuperscript{49}.

\textsuperscript{46} Urbelis (2003), p.14
\textsuperscript{47} Urbelis (2003)
\textsuperscript{48} Asmus (2002), p.161
\textsuperscript{49} Asmus (2002), p.161
In 1999, there were presidential elections taking place in Russia and Vladimir Putin was elected President. At the beginning he continued with the strong opposition about Baltic membership in NATO, but than with the improvement in the USA-Russian relation, the opposition started to weaken too. On September 3, before the September 11 events, Putin stated that “it was up to the Baltic countries to decide whether to join (NATO) or not although he saw no particular reasons for that”.

This new improvement in NATO-Russian’s relations was ‘rewarded’ with the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council50, mostly as a response to the latest terrorist act in USA. These attacks reinforced the need for coordinated action to respond to common threats and ‘persuade’ NATO member states and Russia to work closely in building a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic Area

Conclusion

The factors that paved the Baltic countries’ way in joining NATO were the following:

1. the country’s characteristics:
   - creation of democratic society and market economy;
   - modernization of the Armed Forces and participation in NATO operations in the crisis regions;
   - willingness, commitment and lobbying to become NATO members;
   - important geopolitical location: these countries were sharing border with Russia, the greatest threat during the Cold War

2. relations on the bilateral level:
   - improved relations with Russia; and
   - good relations with its neighbors.

3. on the international level:
   - transformation of the NATO objective (the combat against communism was substituted with combat against terrorism)
   - improvements in NATO-Russia relations;
   - September 11th terrorist attack.

50 NATO Topics, NATO-Russian relations url: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51105.htm, viewed May 10, 2009
3.2.3. Admitting Romania in NATO

Romania is a country in Southeastern Europe with total area of 237, 500 square kilometers and total population of 22, 215,421. Its bordering countries are Bulgaria, Hungary, Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine. Romania gained recognition of its independence in 1878. In the period during the Cold War it was overrun by the Soviets. Until 1996, Romania was run by the communist parties, when the Communist party was swept from power51.

**Romanian interest in NATO**

As all the previously mentioned and analyzed countries, Romania saw NATO’s membership as the best and only hope for peace and stability in a region where historically many wars and disputes took place. Further, also like all the Central Europe’s NATO members, Romania was not in position to secure its own country if was threatened by a major power.

Being overrun by the Soviet troops during the Cold War and under the communist influence, its membership in NATO was the only way to escape the legacy of the USSR and develop itself in a country promoting Western European criteria. Actually, the Soviet troops “were stationed on the Romanian territory from 1944 until 1958”52. With the withdrawal of the Soviet troops Romania proclaimed its independent path from the Soviet Union in terms of foreign and economic policy. But, even though willing not to belong to the Warsaw Pact and to be away from the Soviet influence, the economical dependence from this superpower, made its wish next to impossible53.

However, after the overthrow and the execution of the dictator Ceausescu, some reforms took place in Romania, but still not enough to lead this country to the first round of enlargement. Even though the country was comparable in military performance with the Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic (the three countries

51 CIA World Fact book, Romania
52 Pascu, Ioan M (2004), ”Perspectives of a Prospective NATO Member” Mediterranean Quarterly, Vol. 15, No.1: 8-16, p.9
admitted in the first round of the NATO enlargement), economic reforms\textsuperscript{54} and the poor general performance and commitment to meet the NATO criteria were the reason for being rejected in the first round.

On the bilateral level, Romania was promoting good relations with its neighbors. But due to the recent history, there were unsolved issues with Germany and Hungary. At the beginning, when Romania’s admission was considered, Germany was firmly opposing this inclusion. The opposing was mostly for the Romania’s treatment of the ethnic Germans under the communist government in Romania. But in 1996, after the elections in Romania, when the new Romanian government publicly apologized for his treatment, Germany changed its attitude towards Romania’s membership in NATO.\textsuperscript{55}

As important factor in the Romania’s inclusion, was that it was gaining a strong support from France and Italy, Greece and Turkey. The first mentioned was supporting Romania mainly because it was “part of the Francophone group of countries”\textsuperscript{56} and the later ones were seeing Romania (and Bulgaria, too) as “a country that could contribute to stability in the Balkans”\textsuperscript{57}.

After the rejection in the first round and the elections results in 1996, when finally the communist party didn’t won the elections, the situation has significantly changed in Romania. Romania started with the commitments to fulfill NATO criteria, and operate in various peace-support and peace operations that NATO took abroad, like in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc. Reforms were taking place, democracy and open market economy was promoted and finally in 2004 the country became part of NATO.

**NATO’s interest in Romania**

Rejected in the first round of enlargement by the reasons stated above, NATO found Romania as a country of interest in the second round enlargement wave.

\textsuperscript{54} Moses (1998)
\textsuperscript{55} Moses (1998) p. 140
\textsuperscript{56} Moses (1998), p.139
What contributed most to this change, were the 11 September terrorist attacks in America, and Romania’s reaction to this tragic events. Romania ‘used’ this situation in sentimental and political terms. Not only that, Romania showed its sympathy to the Bush administration and the American people, the “country quickly adapted to the new pattern of international security behavior”58. Placing its air, maritime, territorial space and its infrastructure at the disposal of USA and NATO, Romania presented itself as an active member of the international antiterrorist coalition.

Its relations with Russia and its neighbor countries, primarily Hungary, also contributed in paving the Romanian path to NATO membership. The signing of bilateral treaties not only with Moscow, but with its neighbors too, helped the overall bilateral relations in a positive way. The most significant of all, was the treaty between Romania and Hungary, which was compared as much relevant as the German- French reconciliation. With the treaty, both sides committed to respect their territorial integrity and the rights of the ethnic minorities59.

The Kosovo crisis, the Balkans turbulence, the Afghanistan and Iraq crisis shifted the geopolitical importance of Romania and made the country of interest for the NATO’s members. Romania’s location was now seen as a country situated at the margins of the European continent between the ‘problem area’ of the Balkans and the Black Sea region, and at the same time was representing a direct line to the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and Central Asia where now the NATO missions were taking place60.

In 2002, at the Prague Summit, all the members of NATO alliance reached a consensus and granted this country with full membership in NATO.

**Russian interest**

The Russian influence on the decisions for Romania to be admitted or not, was vague and mostly irrelevant. There were not any signs coming from Russia regarding the membership of this country.

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59 Moses (1998)
60 Pascu (2004)
Conclusion
The factors that made Romania a full member of NATO are the following:

1. the country’s characteristics:
   - the democratization of the country and promotion of the open market economy;
   - modernization of the Armed Forces and participation in NATO operations in the crisis regions;
   - commitment toward the reforms required by the NATO;
   - the shift in the geopolitical relevance of the country.

2. On the bilateral level:
   - reconciliation with Hungary;
   - promoting friendly relations with its other neighbors; and
   - the support coming from France, Greece, Turkey and Italy.

3. On the international level:
   - transformation of the NATO objective (the combat against communism was substituted with combat against terrorism);
     - the Kosovo crisis; and
     - the September 11th terror attack.

3.2.4. Admitting Slovenia in NATO

Slovenia is a country in the Central Europe with total area of 20,237 sq km with total population of 2,005,692. Slovenia’s border countries are Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Italy. Historically, its lands were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the end of the World War I, and than, after the dissolution of the Empire, Slovenia become part of Yugoslavia, distancing itself from the Moscow’s rule and the influence of the Warsaw Pact. Being dissatisfied with the exercise of power by the majority Serbs (in the federation of Yugoslavia), Slovenia established its independence in 1991. From its independence onward, Slovenia rapidly transformed itself into a democratic modern state61.

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61 CIA Factbook: Slovenia
Slovenia’s interest in NATO
Slovenia is an ex-Yugoslav country. Being part of the Federation Yugoslavia made it a country not belonging to any of the two blocs during the Cold War, because Yugoslavia was promoting a policy of non-alignment with any of the two existing blocs at that time. After gaining its independence, Slovenia immediately started with reforms rapidly transforming itself into a democracy. Economically, Slovenia has the highest per capita GDP in Central and Eastern Europe and was consistently working toward establishing a free-market economy through its numerous privatization efforts62. Regarding its defense policy, right after declaring independence, Slovenia has abandoned the stance of active non-alignment, once established by the Federation, meaning that the country was not opt for a neutralism. When it comes to its neighbor countries, Slovenia didn’t have any reasons to feel threatened by any of them, even though there were some bilateral issues that had to be settled, like the maritime border with Croatia63.

Being in a positive situation like this, Slovenia had no any reasons to feel threaten. However, “a full-fledged membership in EU, WEU and NATO has been declared as Slovenia’s international objective almost since the proclamation of its independence”64. The government’s keen interest in joining NATO has been seen as an important aspect of the country’s general political integration into the Western community that in the same time would produce indirect positive security and economy effects. On the other hand, looking from the security perspective, Slovenia was sure that it was impossible to persist with a strategy of self-sufficiency. Given the size, the limited human, material and financial resources of the country, Slovenia could never be able to establish an adequate defense system that could face any type or intensity of military threat65.

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64 Bebler (2001), p.1
In this policy, Slovenia was highly supported by Hungary. Hungary was urging this inclusion in order to provide herself a bridge to Italy, what would be an advantage “given neutral Austria’s refusal during the Kosovo war to permit NATO over flights to Hungary”66.

**NATO’s views regarding Slovenian membership**

As is stated above, the country rapidly succeeded to transform itself in a functioning democracy and had the highest GDP per capita in Central and Eastern Europe. Other than that, with its smallness and modest military potential, the country didn’t have much to offer. These were one of the reasons why the country was not admitted in the first post-cold was enlargement process. Even though it was stated that Slovenia has fulfilled the conditions required for the potential candidates in the discussions for the first post cold-war enlargement, NATO wasn’t excited about Slovenia’s membership. Slovenia was the first country to permit free flights over its country and land transit for the NATO needs. Having a favorable situation like this, Professor Marjan Malešič argues, “NATO has no need to be interested in Slovenian membership”67.

According to the consulted literature, the main reason for the rejection was that bringing Slovenia into NATO in the first wave would “not make any appreciable gain in geopolitical and military terms”68 and it would only bring cost to the Alliance. The *geostrategic importance* of Slovenia has been devaluated since the breakdown of the Eastern block. But the positive reflection was that its geographical proximity could serve for projecting security and possibly serving NATO’s peace-making or peace-keeping activities in the Balkans. Also, Slovenian professional police and military personnel could be proved valuable to the policy in the Balkans due to the language skills, proximity and knowledge of the region69.

Looking in terms of fulfilling NATO’s *military criteria*, Slovenia’s lack of commitment in the resolution of the crisis in the Balkans, and the failure to accept certain required defense obligations, inadequate civilian supervision of the armed

66 Gallis (2003), p.4  
68 Bebler (2001), p.3  
69 Bebler (2001), p.4
forces and the defense budget was seen as poor readiness of the Slovenian Army to join the Alliance. Slovenia’s low commitment in resolving the Slovenian-Croatia border dispute was also underlined as a reason or criteria for the rejection\(^70\).

The optimists, regarding the Slovenian rejection, speculated that NATO wanted to leave in the waiting line a widely acceptable candidate in order to make its pledge of openness more credible\(^71\).

**Russia’s interest in Slovenia**

The lack of visible Russian threat and objections towards Slovenia’s admission was also stated as a reason for not admitting this country in the first post-cold war enlargement\(^72\).

**Conclusion**

From the above scanned situation it could be concluded that, factors indicating the reasons for Slovenia’s membership are:

1. **The country’s characteristics**:  
   - country democratization and establishment of open market economy;  
   - the commitment to fulfill the requirements; and  
   - modernization of the Army and the support that Slovenia made in all NATO operations all over the world,  
   - geopolitical location: irrelevant but it is a first country admitted in NATO that never was part or under influence of the Warsaw Pact.

2. **On the bilateral level**:  
   - promoting good relations with all its neighbors;  
   - the support from Hungary; and  
   - signing an accord for peaceful resolution of the border issue with Croatia.

3. **On the international level**:  
   - transformation of the NATO objective (the combat against communism was substituted with combat against terrorism);

\(^{70}\) Malešič (2001), p.2  
\(^{71}\) Bebler (2001), p.3  
\(^{72}\) Bebler (2001), p.3
- September 11\textsuperscript{th} terror attack,
- Kosovo crisis.

3.3. NATO Enlargement in 2009

3.3.1. General Remarks

In 2002, at the Prague Summit, only seven members of this group were rewarded with NATO membership, and Croatia, Albania and Macedonia were not invited, but were assured that the NATO doors would be opened for them in future. In order to make this promise more credible, the USA President Bush began an US-Adriatic partnership that focused on NATO membership and within six months this partnership led to a process that created a US- Adriatic Charter.

In 2008, at the Bucharest NATO Summit, the two members of the Adriatic Charter (except Macedonia) were invited to join the NATO and were granted full membership. According to the Summit Declaration, Macedonia was not rewarded with membership due to the Macedonian-Greece dispute over the name.

3.3.2. Admitting Croatia and Albania in NATO

\textit{Croatia:}

Croatia is a country in the Southeastern Europe with total area of 56,542 sq km and total population of 4,489,409. Its bordering countries or neighbors are Hungary, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. During In 1918, Croatia declared its independence from Austro-Hungarian Empire and right away together with the Serbs and Slovenes formed a kingdom known as Yugoslavia. Croatia declared its independence in 1991, after the dissolution of the Federation of Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{73} CIA World Factbook: Croatia
Albania:
Albania is a country in Southeastern Europe with total area of 28,748 sq km and population of 3,639,453. Albania’s bordering countries are Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo. Historically, Albania was under the Ottoman Empire until 1912 when it declared independence. But after 27 years independence, in 1994, Communist partisans took over the country and allied the country with the USSR until 1960 and then with China until 1978. After 46 years of xenophobic communist rule, in the 1990s Albania managed to establish a multiparty democracy⁷⁴.

Croatian and Albanian interest in NATO
From the above short presentation of the history of these countries, it is more than sure that they have faced a difficult history. Due to the fact that the both countries were ruled by communist leaders for many years, after declaring independence they had to fight the ‘bad’ legacy left from the past. Faced with poverty, corruption, unemployment and not enough resources to transit the country from the communist legacy into democracy, these countries found the membership in the Euro-Atlantic organizations as the best and only way for solving their problems.

The membership in this organization was seen as the only chance to exit the given poor political, economical, military and geopolitical situation that they were in. Theirs believes were that this membership would make them to be perceived as secure countries, would better the image of the country in general, and would help them gain indirect benefits in the economy. This would contribute the countries to lower the poverty and unemployment rate and to reach the Western European standards and would help to better promote in the future.

What’s more, these countries’ perspectives were primarily seen best to be reached by membership in the European Union, and aspiration in NATO came along the way. This was made only because of the opinion based on the pervious examples, that the countries are easily admitted in European Union if they are already members in the

⁷⁴ CIA World Factbook: Albania
NATO Alliance. So the aspiration for NATO membership was mostly seen as a stepping stone to the accession into the EU\textsuperscript{75}.

**NATO interest in Albania and Croatia**

According to the facts that these countries were not admitted into the first post cold war round of enlargement nor in the second, clearly speaks that NATO didn’t have any particularly reasons to make these countries members in the Alliance.

USA and NATO decision makers were aware of the situation of these countries. Even though they were independent and shown their willingness to become NATO members, they were faced with many problems that were to be solved first by the country itself. Unlike the pervious NATO aspirants, where NATO interfered mostly into the military reforms, the reforms in these countries were needed on every domain\textsuperscript{76}. This was probably one of the reasons why NATO decision makers didn’t include these countries into the first or second post cold war enlargement rounds. They needed proves that these countries were fulfilling the criteria and were ready for membership.

In 2008, they were granted with NATO membership. Since there was not literature found about the inclusion of these countries, it is my opinion that this inclusion was mostly due to the NATO declaration that every democratic country that aspires towards this organization and meet the NATO criteria would be granted with NATO membership. The commitment and support that they offered to USA and NATO missions all over the world can be also regarded as justification for their membership.

**Russia**

Russia didn’t express any opposing comments toward the accession of Croatia and Albania and the rejection of Macedonia. Actually, after the September 11\textsuperscript{th} terrorist attacks when there was the sift in the Russian priorities in its foreign policy, and

\textsuperscript{75} Brey, Thomas (2009), “Analysis: Albania, Croatia eager for their entry into NATO”, *Europe News*, March 30, 2009

transforming the NATO objectives, too, Russia was not seen as an adviser in the NATO enlargement processes.

**Conclusion**

Below, are pointed out the factors indicating why Albania and Croatia were admitted in NATO:

1. *the country’s characteristics:*
   - Promoting democracy and open market economy in the both countries;
   - the commitment to fulfill the requirements; and
   - modernization of the Army in both countries and the support that Albania and Croatia made in all NATO operations all over the world,
   - geopolitical location: irrelevant

2. *On the bilateral level:*
   - promoting good relations with all its neighbors;
   - Croatia signing an accord for peaceful resolution of the border issue with Slovenia;
   - they didn’t have any support coming from any NATO member.

3. *On the international level:*
   - crisis in Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries in the Middle East.

**3.3.3. Macedonian case**

Macedonia was invited at the Bucharest Summit together with Albania and Croatia, hoping that would be granted membership. But at the summit it was stated that, even though Macedonia was fulfilling the NATO criteria, due to the Greek opposition it will not be included in the Alliance\(^7\)\(^7\).

It is hard to state what the reasons were for NATO rejecting this country. Given only the fact that the name dispute with Greece was the only reason, in my opinion, it is not a reason enough for the country to be rejected. Granting with membership both,

\(^7\)\(^7\) NATO homepage: NATO enlargement, URL: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49212.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49212.htm), viewed May 27, 2009
Slovenia and than Croatia, even though they had an ongoing maritime border issue, pop up the question why that was not the case with these two countries, too. What was more different in the Slovenia-Croatian case from the Greece- Macedonian one? Well, the answer of this question is hard to be given, especially because the latest case happened only a year before.

In my opinion, probably the reason beside the Greece’s objection would be that NATO wouldn’t benefit much from the inclusion of this country, given the smallness and the economic position of the country. Hopefully, the next analysis that would be made on NATO enlargement would give concission and more relevant response to this case.

3.4. Conclusion

From the analysis made in this chapter it is more than sure that the NATO criteria mentioned in the “1995 Study on Enlargement” were not enough for an aspirant country to become member of the Alliance. The analysis made above clearly indicates some other ‘additional’ factors that were as much or even more important and relevant for these countries to become member states in the Alliance. These factors were presented in three deferent levels. The first level was the characteristics of the countries; the second was the relations on the bilateral level and the third one were addressing the relations on the international level.

First level- The characteristics of the countries: Most of the NATO criteria stated in the “1995 Study on Enlargement” are incorporated in this level. This clearly points out that in order for one aspirant country to become a member, fulfillment of NATO criteria is an important factor. Beside these criteria, one factor plus is the geographic location of the country. But what’s interesting about this factor is that it is not present in every country that is admitted in the Alliance. It is a helpful one, but it is not determinative.
Second level – The relations on bilateral level: This level reveals two interesting relations. The relations between a aspirant country and its neighbors are as important as the relations between aspirant country and a member country. Promoting good relations with its neighbors seems like an important factor. This is also stated in the NATO criteria. But, what seems to meter much more is also the support that aspirant country receive from NATO members. If an aspirant country is supported by NATO members it is most likely that country to be included into the Alliance.

Third level- The events on the international level: It was questionable if these events have any particular influence on the NATO enlargement. From the analysis made above, it seems like this events were determining when the enlargement will take place. If we take that when NATO enlargement is discussed the questions -‘which countries’ and ‘when’ they should be incorporated- are always subject of discussion, then, the factors presented in the first and second level gives answer to the question ‘which countries’, and the events on the international level are important for the question ‘when’.

Are there any changes among these three enlargements? Any perceptible changes are not noted during the analysis. As notable changes are mostly the ones on the international level. Bearing in mind that almost all of the countries presented in this chapter were seeking NATO membership in the first round, seems like the relations and the events on the international level had much to do regarding this issue. This means that the changes on the international level have big influence on the NATO members’ interests. The shift in the relations on this level, also shift the interest of the member countries. For instance, if we take the Russian oppression towards the enlargement, it is clear that it was high during the first enlargement, softening during the second, but not present in the third.

One other thing that is worth to be mentioned is the NATO missions. If the first enlargement was still dealing with the legacy of the USSR, in the second enlargement following the USA terror attacks, there was the shift in the NATO missions - the war against communism, became a war against terrorism.
The following chapter will address these ‘additional’ factors and how can they be understood. Hopefully, these would give a clearer picture of how can be NATO enlargement be better understood in general. This would be done by addressing NATO as a process, where many relations are taking place and are important. Since NATO is a process, it is understandable that this process incorporate different phases. Following the phases (which would be explained in the following Chapter), the relations that would be analyzed are: (a) what was the aspiring countries’ interest to become NATO members even though the Cold war was over; (b) the relations on the bilateral level, with an accent on the relations between the aspirant country and the NATO members, and why they have this much influence on the NATO enlargement; (c) the relations on the international level, with an accent on the ones between NATO and Russia, and understanding how they’ve changed; (d) and at the end understanding why these particular countries were admitted in this particular time, reminding again what were the most influential factors and concluding why.

This analysis would hopefully explain these relations and would solve the puzzle, or at least would give a better explanation on the factors that are at this moment still unclear and obscure.
4. “Behind the curtains”

The purpose of this chapter is to see the reasons of NATO enlargement that are placed ‘behind the curtains’. When NATO enlargement is mentioned, the first thing that indicated this process is the requirements that NATO posed in order the aspirant country to gain a full membership. But the study made in the previous chapter reveals other indicators that are as much important for the NATO enlargement as the requirements stated in the “1995 Study on Enlargement”.

As it was stated in the previously chapter, this chapter would be more focused on these ‘additional’ factors and how can we understand them in order to provide a more concise picture on NATO enlargement in general.

Hopefully this analysis would provide answers on the two other questions raised in this study. Those questions were: *How can we understand these factors?* and *On what basis they are defined?*

**Understanding NATO enlargement**

The NATO enlargement is a process. Here I will take the basic phases in one enlargement process. That phases would be the following: the country expresses its willingness to become part of it; the NATO members are reviewing the position of the country; then it is discussed and at the end they are deciding if the country would be admitted or not. But there are others relations along the process. As it was discussed in the previous Chapter, not every member country is ‘thrilled’ with the inclusion of the all aspirant countries. This seeks for profound debate between the NATO members and stretching the interests between them. Another thing, that was also important during the discussions made about the enlargement, were the relations and events on the international arena.
1. The country request membership

2. NATO members discuss the request

3. NATO calculate the benefits and costs

4. NATO members are accepting/rejecting the request

Following these phases the analysis is structured in four levels. According to the process and its phases explained above, the first part would give and explanations why the states want to become part of NATO. The second part would address the relations between the aspirant countries and the member countries and how they impact the decisions; the third would address the relations on the international arena with an accent on the relations between NATO and Russia. This is because Russia seemed to be a very important country in the decisions made on NATO enlargement since the post cold onward. Bearing in mind that USSR, which mostly was represented by Russia, was the threat against which NATO was formed at the first place, it is understandable why this was the case.
And at the end, more as a summary of these three phases, the phase four will give an explanations on enlargement processes in general (why these particular countries in that particular time).

4.1 **Phase 1: Why the European countries wanted to become NATO members?**

*The First post-cold enlargement:* In this enlargement, that take place in 1999, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic were admitted. The main reason for these countries to aspire toward NATO membership, as it was stated in the pervious chapter, was seeking for better security.

Even though, the cold war was over, these countries were placed in the ‘grey zone’ between the West and the Russia. Being in this position, between the competing interests mostly between Germany and Russia, they felt concerned for their security and saw NATO as the only way to secure themselves.

*The Second post-cold war enlargement:* This enlargement took place in 2004 when seven countries were admitted into the NATO alliance. These countries were: the Baltic countries, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Unlike the first enlargement, it is hard to state that the second enlargement was made only because of security reasons. The political and economic benefits from the inclusion were also reason some of the countries to seek membership in the Alliance.

According to the analysis made in the previous chapter, Baltic states and Slovakia were seeking membership because of security reasons, and the others were aspiring membership in order to secure themselves, but also to benefit from this membership in both, political and economic way.

*Third post cold war enlargement:* This enlargement was made a few months ago. On April 1, 2009 NATO expanded with two more countries, Albania and Croatia.

According the analysis made in the Chapter 3, the aspiration seemed to be made more from political and economic interests, then the security one. These countries were never part of any pact during the cold war, or had any particular threat. Given their
smallness, economic and military poverty, they wanted to belong to the West, thinking that the membership in Euro-Atlantic organizations would help them not only in the security domain, but in the political and economic, too.

Comparing these three enlargements, we can see that the countries were seeking NATO membership in order to protect themselves from potential violent conflict or to make themselves part of the strongest party and benefit from it. This correlates with the realists’ perception of the world, where states exist in an anarchical world in which there is no authority that would make order or would prevent conflicts. Fearing from the possible conflicts, the states are making alliances and constantly calculating their power and the power of their adversaries.

During the cold war there was the NATO pact and the Warsaw pact, there was a balance of power. The west European countries allied together with USA on the one hand, and the Central and East European countries allied with Russia, on the other. The time when the Warsaw pact stopped to exists, with the dissolution of the USSR, the state of balance was changed to the state of imbalance. “Faced with unbalanced power, states try to increase their own strength or they ally with others to bring the international distribution of power into balance”\(^{78}\). Seeking to secure themselves they were balancing the threat or were bandwagoning.

The countries that were not willingly placed under the Russian influence during the cold war, afraid that this can continue after the war, too, wanted to ally with the strongest alliance in order to secure themselves. This situation is better known as a ‘balance of threat’. Imbalance of threat is a situation that occurs when the most threatening state or coalition is significantly more dangerous than the second most threatening state or coalition. The degree to which a state threatens others is the product of its aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive capability, and the aggressiveness of its intentions.

But the ones that didn’t felt threaten, were seeking NATO alliance in order to make themselves part of the strongest alliance. Membership in the strongest alliance can

\(^{78}\) Waltz (1997), p.915
benefit not only in security area, but in others too. This is better known as bandwagoning.

By dividing the countries according the reasons why they were aspiring membership, we are given the following results:

(a) The countries that were aspiring towards membership because of the imbalance of threat were: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the Baltic countries. The first four countries are situated into the Central Europe, and at the time when were included in the Alliance, were placed in the ‘grey zone’ between the conflicted interests of the West (especially Germany) and Russia. The Baltic countries were placed next to Russia. During the history they were brutally incorporated into the USSR. Their aspiration towards NATO was because they were afraid that Russia could repeat the history, because of their geographic proximity.

(b) The other countries that were also granted with NATO membership made this possible by bandwagoning. Bandwagoning involves unequal exchange; the vulnerable state makes asymmetrical concessions to the dominant power and accepts a subordinate role. Given their smallness, the poverty and insignificant geographical location, they were aware and complacent with the subordinate role as long they are part of the Alliance. Most important of all, bandwagoning suggests a willingness to support or tolerate illegitimate actions by the dominant ally. According to analysis, these countries were supporting every NATO mission without questioning if it is justified or unjustified (for instance the NATO mission in Iraq).

4.2. Phase 2: The relations on bilateral level

The relations on bilateral level have always been important for NATO in order one country to become a member. This is also stated in the NATO requirements lined out in the “1995 Study on Enlargement” where is stated that the countries should commit “to peaceful resolution of conflicts”. But except for these relations, as mentioned in the pervious chapter, as even more relevant relations were proved to be the relations on bilateral level between the aspirant countries and the countries that are already

79 NATO Homepage: NATO Enlargement
members of NATO. The aspirant country should have an ally, a country inside the members (especially an influential one) that would support its accession when it comes for the decisions to be made.

In the first enlargement it was mostly Germany that made the enlargement possible. In the book “America’s new allies” the author states that NATO enlargement was a European idea, or more precisely a German one. With the NATO enlargement, Germany wanted to stabilize countries in the east and “ensure that any future front lines in Europe emerged far to its east”\textsuperscript{80}. Even though at the beginning NATO officials were not exited with the idea, in 1995 a study on enlargement was made, and they agreed that NATO enlargement should occur. Germany was mostly supporting Poland’s accession due its geographic location, largeness and populations that was almost twice of the Hungary and Czech Republic together. But the inclusion of these two countries was also part of its policy to move the front line further to the east.

Regarding the second enlargement in the CRS Report, that was made for the USA Congress, it was stated that Hungary was urging the Slovenia’s admission, while as Italy, Greece and Turkey were strong supporters of the Bulgaria’s and Romania’s inclusion. In the both cases, whether we take the Slovenian case or the Bulgarian and Romanian case, the NATO members were supporting them because of strategic reasons. In the first one, Hungary wanted Slovenia to be admitted, so it can secure itself a neighbor that belong to the Alliance, and also this would provide a Hungary with a land bridge to Italy.

When it comes to Romania’s and Bulgaria’s case, Greece, Italy and Turkey were supporting these countries stating that they would contribute to the stability in their neighborhood- the Balkans. Romania was not only supported by these countries, but also had the support of France, mostly due to the fact that Romania is a member of the Francophone group of countries\textsuperscript{81}.

In the case of the Baltic countries, the main support that they had for their admission was coming from the USA. They didn’t have any European member in NATO that was supporting their membership in the Alliance. In the book “Endgame in NATO’s enlargement” the author is arguing that Baltic states were not admitted in the first post

\textsuperscript{80} Michta (1999)  
\textsuperscript{81} Moses (1998), p.2
cold NATO enlargement mostly because of the Russian opposition, but partly because they didn’t “acquired a diplomatic patronage of Germany”\textsuperscript{82}. The columnist in the New York Times- William Safire wrote that “as Germany sponsors Poland, France sponsors Romania, Italy sponsors Slovenia, we (the USA) can sponsor the Baltic three- with ultimate membership determined by democratic stability, not by Russian threats”\textsuperscript{83}.

Regarding third enlargement there were no statements about NATO members supporting the inclusion of these countries. Maybe that can be the only reasonable reason that can explain why Macedonia was rejected only because of the Greece’s objection. The admission of Croatia and Albania, then, can be seen as a case that was probably supported by USA and its needs in the Middle East missions. But I want to stress out that this might not be the case. Maybe the studies that would be made on this enlargement in the future would reveal other facts. At the moment, due to lack of literature on this enlargement, in my opinion, this seems like the only explanation.

From the above presented we can see that the aspirants countries were mostly supported by their neighbors, members in the Alliance. This once again indicates the necessity for one country to protect itself and secure its security. It is a realist perspective, a \textit{state of mistrust}. Members were afraid from the consequences if in their neighbor countries a crisis occurs, so they were supporting their inclusion in the alliance in order to secure themselves. But also it is the \textit{state of self-interest}. As Mearheimer indicates, \textit{when state elites do not foresee self- interested benefits from cooperation, we do not expect cooperation to occur, or the institutions that facilitate cooperation to develop}\textsuperscript{84}. If the inclusion of an aspirant country is not in interest of the most influential countries in the Alliance, than the aspirant country would most likely not be admitted. This in a way explains why some of the countries were once rejected and not included the first time they wanted a membership.

\textsuperscript{83} Bilinsky (1999), p.15
\textsuperscript{84} Keohane (1995), p. 709-710,
4.3. **Phase 3**: The relations between NATO and Russia

Relations between NATO and Russia were and still are very important in order the enlargement process to be possible. At the beginning, when the idea of enlarging NATO was mentioned, Russia was strongly opposing, and NATO officials were not quite sure what would be the benefits of such policy. With the dissolution of the USSR, and the end of the Cold war, the tension between NATO and Russia hadn’t stopped. For Russia, NATO was still an entity that was seeing Russia as a threat and an adversary, and every step made by NATO was seen as a step against Russia’s interests.

When the NATO enlargement became a discussion between the USA and the NATO officials, one thing was sure among the opponents and proponents; that was - addressing the Russian issue. In order for NATO enlargement to become plausible, there was a need of transforming it in a way that would not represent an institution working against Russia.

NATO transformation started with the London Declaration of the 1990, which stated that the alliance did not consider the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact adversaries. In this period, the enlargement was still only a discussion, it was yet not decided if it is going to occur or not. The main debate was if NATO should enlarge by taking new democracies that qualify, or should be first Russia incorporated in a cooperative European security. Henry Kissinger stated that ‘the fear of alienating Russia against the danger of creating vacuum in Central Europe between Germany and Russia’ can be best overcame by emerging a security treaty between Russia and NATO.

NATO relations with Russia began in 1991, when Russia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (today Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council), the improvements regarding this relations began in 1997 with the signing of the NATO-Russian Founding Act. This act led to development of a bilateral program of consultation and cooperation under the Permanent Joint Council. During the Kosovo crisis the relation

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between these two instances were not as good as supposed to be because of the differences over the Kosovo air campaign, but from 1999 the relations began to improve significantly. This new improvement was ‘rewarded’ with the establishment of the NATO- Russia Council, mostly as a response to the latest terrorist act in USA. These attacks reinforced the need for coordinated action to respond to common threats and ‘persuade’ NATO member states and Russia to work closely in building a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro- Atlantic Area\textsuperscript{87}.

This new policy of Russia toward the NATO enlargement, “to a considerable extent, is due to domestic political changes in Russia and the possibility of a ‘new start’ for Russia’s new leadership”\textsuperscript{88}. Putin was stating that if NATO transforms itself from a military organization to a more political one, than Russia might reconsider its opposition to enlargement. The policy towards the enlargement was showing a sudden shift after the terrorist attack in USA. Russia’s policy was changing and the desire to become part of the western anti- terrorism coalition can be seen as “seek of modus vivendi”\textsuperscript{89} on controversial issues like enlargement. Like all wars, cold or not, the war on terrorism has the potential to bring former adversaries together\textsuperscript{90}.

Today, the Russian opposition towards NATO enlargement seems like history, but still the relations between them are important especially because of the Ukraine’s willingness to become NATO member and Georgia’s too. These countries are zones of a huge interest to Russia, and despite the improvement in the relations between NATO and Russia, it is still a mystery how will Russia act regarding the inclusion of these countries into NATO.

Understanding the NATO- Relations and their changes can be best provided by the liberal institutionalism. This best explains the relations between NATO and Russia. Both, NATO and Russia, still look on each other with mistrust, which is a characteristic of the realist theory. But by balancing with each other, and working

\textsuperscript{87} NATO Topics, NATO- Russian relations
\textsuperscript{89} Modus vivendi is defined as a working arrangement between conflicting interest, which implies an accommodation between disputing parties to allow life to go on.
\textsuperscript{90} Gordon, Philip H., Steinberg James B. (2001), “NATO Enlargement: Mowing Forward” The Brookings Institution, p. 6
together, the members of the NATO alliance and Russia are using NATO as a creation from which they both benefit because “institutions can provide information (...)” (according to the neo-liberal institutionalism) that can help them know more about the interests of each others. This helps them solve the security dilemma which is a characteristic of realists.

4.4. **Phase 4: Why these countries in that particular time?**

According to the realist theory the contribution of the small states to the alliances are useful, but they are not indispensable. Because they are not, the policies and strategies of alliance leaders are ultimately made according to their own calculation and interests.92

When the NATO enlargement became plausible, many countries declared their willingness to become part of the alliance. But, the NATO alliance was gradually enlarging. The first time, after the end of the cold war, NATO expanded with three countries, the second time with seven and the last time with two more countries.

**First enlargement:** The post-cold war NATO enlargement was a long discussion between the USA officials and NATO officials. The discussion was mostly concerned with what were the reasons for further enlargement and what is the new mission of NATO now that the Soviet threat is not present. Proponents of NATO enlargement were stating that the presence of several thousands ethnic entities in the world that may seek self-determination could be reason for possible conflicts in the world93. When in 1990s the Balkan wars occurred, it answered the question and stressed that the presence of NATO is still important in order stability and security on the Europe continent to be secured.

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91 Keohane (1995), p. 6
92 Gheciu (2005), p. 213
In 1999, NATO invited only three countries of the many that applied for the membership. The Alliance expanded with Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The reason why NATO embraced only these three countries was mostly because of the Russian oppositions towards this NATO policy. Even though NATO started to ‘work’ on its relation with Russia, it was still afraid of the consequences that might occur if NATO enlargement didn’t pay attention to the Russia’s interests. Also, one other reason was the NATO readiness to take more countries. NATO was still not sure if it had the resources to cover the costs that were coming with the admission of the new countries.

*Why Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic?* The inclusion of these three countries was due to the fact of their progress in democratizing and creating market economies, it was not related to their military capabilities. But what in large part answers this question is because of in that time none of these three countries bordered Russia, nor were part of the Soviet Union. This minimized to large extent the degree of angering Russia. Also it was the pressure of Germany and its desire to no longer serve as a NATO ‘border state’.

*Second Enlargement: Why these particular countries:* When NATO was debating when the second enlargement should take place and which of the aspirant countries should be included, the following scenarios were discussed:

- that NATO should make a pause;
- to make a limited enlargement;
- the ‘big bang’ enlargement; and
- the ‘regatta’.

What has happened in 2004 was the ‘big bang’ scenario. When they were discussed why this scenario should be undertaken, the following reasons were given: (1) it would avoid the ‘beauty contest’ among the candidates; (2) it would also avoid a

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95 Gordon and Steinberg (2001), p. 3
prolonged, acrimonious battle with Russia over enlargement. With the inclusion of nine countries at once, NATO would be able to move on with its relations with Russia rather than fighting the same battle over again in several years; (3) it would avoid having to engage in the time-consuming effort to obtain Senate and parliamentary ratification every few years and (4) it would help defuse the Baltic issue and make it more difficult for Russia to oppose inclusion of the Baltic states\textsuperscript{96}.

What its worth to mention here is that the Big Bang expansion was supposed to include nine countries, the seven that were already included and plus Macedonia and Albania. At the Prague Summit, Macedonia and Albania were not included. In the study made about the problems that NATO would have suffered if decided to expand with the ‘big bang’ strategy and include all nine countries, it was mentioned that, “a candidate that might seem stable and cooperative now, might pose problems later if political and economic reform suffer a major setback”\textsuperscript{97}. As such countries, among the others, were mentioned Macedonia and Albania, which gives the reasons why these countries were left out for the next enlargement.

\textit{Why in these particular time:} The second NATO enlargement was a subject of debate right after the first enlargement was made. The discussion this time was also based on the Russian factor, the cost and benefits of the enlargement and the countries readiness to become members. After the Kosovo’s war, during which the relations between NATO and Russia was worsening, the relations started to improve once again. Along with the pressure coming from the aspirant countries, the NATO second post-cold enlargement was gradually becoming reality. What accelerated this enlargement were the September 11 terrorist attacks in USA. The need of new allies in the war against terrorism was not only the reason to enlarge NATO, but it was crucial factor in bringing the Russia and NATO more close to each other and establishing a NATO- Russia Council.

\textbf{Third enlargement:} The third enlargement was made with the inclusion of only two countries, Croatia and Albania. These countries together with Macedonia were to be admitted in the second round. Because of the above mentioned reasons, they were not

\textsuperscript{96} Ries, Brankowski, Larrabee (2001), p.27
\textsuperscript{97} Gordon and Steinberg (2001), p.5
included. But after the Summit, what was promised to them was that the NATO doors are still opened and that they would be admitted in the next NATO enlargement. The USA and these three countries signed the Adriatic Charter as a guarantee that the countries would be admitted.

*Why this particular time:* The timing of this enlargement is conjuncture of the countries readiness and fulfillment of the NATO criteria, their support in all NATO missions, lack of Russian opposing and the crisis that occur in Afghanistan and Iraq. Their support shown during these missions were rewarded with their inclusion in the NATO alliance.

*Why these countries in that particular time?* The timing as is said before has much to do with the events on the international arena, the NATO readiness to absorb new countries, and the fulfillment of the criteria. But what is also stated above, are the relations and interests among the NATO members. The decisions made in NATO are based on consensus. Having in mind that some of the countries were first not admitted, gives a lead to a conclusion, that the interests among the members must to be ironed in order the inclusion of one country to be conducted. This ironing, according to the neo- liberal institutionalism represents solving the misunderstanding among the NATO members. According this theory, NATO is not only dealing with “*the external threats, but also with the mistrust and misunderstanding among its member countries*”\(^98\).

### 4.5. Conclusion

It is hard to explain the dynamic of NATO expansion. From the analysis made above NATO enlargement can be best understood as a set of the following reasons: the aspirant country readiness, the relations on the international arena, the support that they have from the NATO members and the calculations and interest that Alliance leaders have in the aspirant countries and NATO enlargement in general.

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\(^{98}\) Gheciu (2005)
Given the structure in this analysis, four phases were analyzed. The first one provides understanding on the ‘why’ regarding the aspirant countries willingness to become NATO members. The second one provides understanding on ‘why’ the relations between members and aspirant countries are relevant. The third is addressing the relations on the international arena and the fourth was giving understanding on the enlargement processes in general. In all of them one factor is common. It is the interest, which gives the answer on the last question posed as a research question (On what basis are these factors defined). The first phase is referring on the aspirant countries’ interest in becoming NATO members. Seeing from the analysis these interests are not that much of importance. On the other hand, the interests explained in the second phase are crucial- if there is no interest coming from NATO members, the aspirant country can not be admitted.

But the third analysis gives interesting outcomes. This phase is pointing out that the interests among the NATO members are not unchangeable. Along with the shift in the relations on the international arena, there is a shift in the members’ interests, too. The country that was once rejected doesn’t mean that would never be able to become part of the Alliance.

Understanding NATO enlargement, according to the analysis made above, seems to be presented mostly in the realist perspective. But the neo-liberal institutionalism also meter in the explanation.

According to the analysis, seeing from realists perspectives, NATO is an organization driven by the interests of its members. As realists argue, the states are seeing the international system as an anarchic system where there is a lack of higher authority to prevent and counter the use of force and this system can be only realized through self-help. But because they are always intimidate that other country can use the force, they are caught in security dilemma. This dilemma is overborne by balancing the power. Faced with unbalanced power, states try to increase their own strength or they ally with others to bring the international distribution of power into balance.

Balancing is a product of the aim to survive. And because the international system is regarded as anarchic and based on self-help, the most powerful units set the scene of
action for others as well as themselves. For realists institutions are reflection of "state calculations of self-interest based primarily on the international distribution of power. The most powerful states in the system create and shape institutions so that they can maintain their share of world power, or even increase it".

But according to this analysis, it seems like not always the powerful states influence on the decisions made in NATO. Because, if this was the case, than how can we understand the outcome of the Bucharest Summit or the outcomes in the other two enlargements? Greece is not a powerful country and it still managed to object the Macedonian inclusion into NATO even though USA wanted Macedonia to be part of NATO. The way of making decisions in NATO- which is based on consensus- allowed this small power to make difference in the processes and Macedonia not to be included. It was the same with the inclusion of the Baltic countries. Even though the USA was considering the admittance of this country into the first enlargement, the opposition coming from the Russia had influenced much on the Western European NATO members; made them firm in opposing this inclusion and the Baltic region didn’t become included in the first post-cold war NATO enlargement.

Someone here can argue that in Macedonian case or the Baltic one, the support coming from a powerful country like USA, seems like not important, even though in the analysis made above it was concluded the opposite. In order to make this clear, and settle the arguing, I would only remind that in those cases, where the most of the countries were supported by any member, there was not opposition coming from other members that were not mentioned as supporters.

As the neo-liberal institutionalism are arguing, creating this ‘sets of rules (formal and informal) that prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations’101. Having set of rules points out that there is an organization, and that this organization as such meter and make significant differences in conjunction with power realities. NATO is seen an institution that represents the interests of its members, but also represents the interests of the organizations.

100 Mearsheimer, p. 13-14
101 Keohane (1988)
Chapter 5

5. Final remarks

The purpose of this study was to make an analysis that would give a better understanding of the NATO enlargement. This was done by analyzing and discussing the factors present in the international arena that contribute to the decision if the enlargement should occur or not, and which country and on what base can participate in this organization. The main research question was: *What are the factors that have influence on the NATO enlargement?* It is more than clear that the time when NATO decided to enlarge itself, requirements were created which the aspirant country should fulfill in order to be granted a membership. But following the processes of NATO enlargement, it is clear that NATO was enlarging gradually. Many times there were statements by NATO officials that some countries were fulfilling the requirements but were still not admitted. This gives a clear picture that the requirements were not the only criteria that the country should fulfill in order to become a NATO member. These poses the next questions: then, *what are the other criteria that the country should fulfill in order to become part of the Alliance and how these criteria are defined, or more precisely on what basis?*

The first analytical section of this article makes the argument that there are ‘additional’ factors that are as much relevant as the NATO requirements in order one country to join NATO. In the analysis these additional factors are grouped in three different sections: the country’s characteristics, the relations on bilateral level, and the relations on international level. Beside the NATO requirements, which are mostly incorporated in the first section, relevant factors are geographic location of the country, the support that one country have from the NATO’s member countries and the events that are happening on the international arena.

The second analytical section of this article was addressing these ‘additional’ criteria trying to understand how this criteria are defined using the theoretical framework to
understand on what presumption they are based. The argument made in this section is that aside from the fulfillments of the NATO criteria, what is even more relevant for a country to become part of NATO is the interest and benefits the NATO countries have in order to take this country in the Alliance.

But the enlargement is not only about the requirements that NATO want in order NATO enlargement as a process to be understood. There are many relations that are also important for this policy to occur. The relations between NATO and Russia, and the relations between all the countries in the Alliance should be ironed and be positive, in order the enlargement process to be conducted. This goes along with the understanding of the events on the international arena and changes in the NATO missions. Following the NATO enlargements made until now, looking back from the end of the Cold war, it is clear that in the first one it was still case of balancing with Russia and the possible threat coming from it, but the second and third was made as a way of combating the terrorism.

Seeing that every NATO enlargement is linked with any fermentations of conflict or crisis, it is easy to be concluded that NATO would still enlarge and enlargement processes would most probably still take place when crisis on the international level would occur. All these relations (the ones on bilateral level and the ones on international level) sift the members’ interest and have influence on the enlargement’s decisions.

The decision-making process is also one important aspect to be understood. As stated before, all NATO decisions are made in the North Atlantic Council, where every country should give its consent for the decision to be made. But the question now, when NATO expanded this much, is “will it be possible for NATO to make every decision by requiring unanimous consent of every country”. There were proposals that NATO should change the vote system and is still unclear if this is going to happen or not. But if it will, then, how the vote system is going to be organized? Will ‘veto’ play role as a tool in this organization, and which countries would be the ones having it?

Understanding NATO enlargement is still an unclear process. What I can conclude of the analysis made in these two separate sections is that NATO enlargement is a
complex thing. Even though there are these NATO requirements on the one hand, and the ‘additional’ factors revealed in the third Chapter, on the other, what is still unclear is should they all be fulfilled in order a country to become member. There were cases where some very same factors were relevant for the one country but irrelevant for the other. Probably the most relevant requirement in order the Enlargement to occur is the necessity the interest to go in both ways. It is not only the country to show willingness to become part of it, and working hard toward the inclusion, but also NATO members’ interest in including this country into the Alliance. Probably the future enlargements that would take place, would give us a more clear and consistent picture how this process is conducted.

Until then, what’s clear from this analysis is that, the aspirant country can only dedicate on hard work and fulfillment of the NATO requirements; support the NATO missions, gain sympathy from any powerful NATO members, and when this is done wait maybe a crisis to occur or something that would impact the members’ interest to regard aspirant country as a country of interest and make it a full member of the Alliance.
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