

Delay NATO Expansion — But for the Right Reason

By J. MICHAEL WALLER

The former Warsaw Pact states are justifiably pursuing the right goal of full NATO membership, but for the wrong reasons. Similarly, the Clinton administration is taking the correct approach by delaying that goal, but for entirely the wrong reasons.

Rather than basing his caution on fears of provoking elements in Russia — an excuse that always has been used to justify a weak foreign policy — President Clinton should justify a delay in expanding NATO by setting down a precondition that only the Czechs, as summit hosts, seem willing to meet to a significant degree.

That precondition should be what the Czechs call lustration, a process of breaking up operational networks of the former communist system and helping create public confidence in new democratic institutions.

Democratic elections and market reforms were not enough to eradicate totalitarian structures. From Warsaw to Vladivostok, former communists have sought to entrench themselves and their friends — successfully in most cases — by taking advantage of the political, administrative, economic, industrial, judicial, military, police and other systems under their influence or control. Only by lustration can true democrats hope to break the stranglehold so that legitimate structures and processes can develop.

Lustration is the first line of self-defense for any formerly communist country which wishes to become fully sovereign. The Czechs, as the only nation that has made serious attempts at lustration, have not encountered the specter of resurgent communism. Poland, despite having a law on lustration, has not taken the process very far. Polish President Lech Walesa's recent warning of a communist resurgence in his country reflects the failure, and is anything but a reassurance that Poland will be a reliable NATO partner in the near future.

Furthermore, the possibility that entrenched and networked elements of the old regimes could be used by Moscow to undermine reform is not farfetched, especially when one considers the sad fates of some of the former Soviet republics. The former KGB maintains the old agent networks and archives that the Warsaw Pact internal security services once operated. Western counterintelligence occasionally reports that networks from former East Bloc services continue to act as surrogates for the unreformed Russian spy agencies. According to the Rev. Joachim Gauck, chief of the German government commission

handling the Stasi archives, Moscow preserved what it called the Interlinked System for Recognizing Enemies, which coordinated the internal security and political police forces of all Warsaw Pact states. Its huge database has not been transferred to the Russian state commissions which handle former Soviet Communist Party archives, nor to the post-communist governments in Central and Eastern Europe.

Instead, Russian External Intelligence Service chief Yevgeni Primakov announced that Moscow would keep the archives. Not long after assuming his post he said, "The intelligence service does not intend to provide former socialist countries with lists of agents who worked there." Russia under Boris Yeltsin has therefore chosen not to contribute to freedom in Central and Eastern Europe, but instead has preserved its potential to subvert and undermine the region. The havoc a Zhirinovskiy — himself a creature of the KGB — could wreak on Europe with such networks at his disposal is cause for great concern.

Polish journalist Jozef Darski, writing in the journal *Uncaptive Minds*, has noted that his country's new security officials from the beginning were "decidedly opposed to the dismissal of former secret collaborators and even known KGB agents." Warsaw's reluctance has been reflected throughout the region. Challenging the entrenched networks has reaped few rewards for political leaders courageous enough to try — in no small part because the West has not actively supported them.

Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis was the first, finding to his horror that leaders of his own party worked for the KGB. He persevered nonetheless. There was no rush from the West to help him succeed. When reformist Bulgarian Prime Minister Filip Dimitrov tried to rid his country of KGB agents by introducing lustration, his government collapsed. Yet the West barely noticed. Lustration in both countries stopped cold.

Lustration is not a witch hunt as former communists insist, but an application of principles employed by the Allies in postwar Germany and Japan to assure the integrity of the new democratic governments and institutions against entrenched Nazis and militarists. Fully consistent with liberal democracy, it is a guarantee of national sovereignty and of the security of the alliance overall.

NATO membership will do nothing to protect Central and East Europe from internal unconventional attack via the old KGB and other Soviet-era networks. Nor will new NATO members enhance the overall security of the alliance if they

cannot or will not render those networks ineffective.

Therefore, it is senseless to admit formerly communist countries into the alliance until they take measures to defend themselves internally. This means not only lustration, but the complete dissolution of remaining and unreformable security and military intelligence services, and the creation of entirely new services in partnership with the Western allies.

With so much time squandered since the 1989 revolutions, these processes are likely to come about only if the West offers leadership and a strong incentive. Admission must be made on a case-by-case basis. This way the West can help Central and Eastern Europe make a clean break with the Soviet past, and create the necessary conditions for the struggling democracies there to become reliable NATO partners and true allies.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL EUROPE.