

7-4-1997

# NATO Expansion: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly

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## Recommended Citation

(1997) "NATO Expansion: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 10 , Article 1.  
Available at: <http://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol2/iss10/1>

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International Bulletin of Political Psychology

Title: NATO Expansion: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly

Author: Editor

Volume: 2

Issue: 10

Date: 1997-07-04

Keywords: NATO, Membership

Former United States national security advisors Zbigniew Brezinski and Anthony Lake have strongly supported expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a "creative response to three strategic challenges", but their case is wanting. (1) They write that expansion will strengthen the Euro-Atlantic alliance to take on new missions in a larger and undivided Europe. However, enlarging NATO's membership could well decrease achieving consensus for initiatives and increase the number and resistance of blocs within the alliance much as occurs in many parliaments which allow party membership based on small percentages of total votes and variants of proportional representation. (2) They write that expansion will serve as a hedge against Russia reverting to "past behavior", especially because aggressive and uncooperative behavior from Russia will render the NATO-Russia council impotent. However, they discount that the NATO-Russia council is a fudge factor accepted by Russia out of political weakness. If and when weakness become strength, the council's viability will be moot save as a pawn, bargaining chip, or--pardon the pun--red herring. They also discount that expansion itself may be a significant slight to Russia, as to other political entities with imperialistic track records, and will be avenged when power balances inevitably change in the future. (Is revenge a dish that is best tasted cold?) (3) They state that expansion has encouraged and will continue to encourage democracy and security cooperation among the Central European states of the former Soviet Union. However, they do not address the counter that democracy and security cooperation maybe occurring because they're in the interests of these states--regardless of expansion. Brezinski and Lake's position may be no more than an example of an illusory correlation between two variables and may lead to the logical proposition that without expansion these countries would jettison democracy and cooperation like the proverbial baby and the bathwater. NATO expansion may well be the right way to go, but Brezinski and Lake do not make the case. (Brezinski, S., & Lake, A. (June 30, 1997.) For a New World, a New NATO. The New York Times. (<http://www.nytimes.com>).)