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On NATO Expansion

The expansion of NATO has been hotly debated by American conservatives. As a conservative Catholic Pole living in Poland, I am obviously interested in this debate, not least because Poland and America are part of the same civilization. Any matter of importance to either nation has to be seen within a wider context of the cultural and civilizational challenges faced by the West.

Clearly, One-Worldism – the unholy quest for power around the globe by the anti-Christian managerial elite – has to be stopped. American conservatives, most notably in *Chronicles*, have shown that this dangerous ideology aims at replacing Christianity with the totalitarian utopia of liberal democracy. Some of them – such as Samuel Francis – even sketch a long-term strategy for recapturing America from the managerial establishment. But the basis for their opposition to NATO enlargement is more problematic.

Six years ago, watching Pat Buchanan’s campaign for the Republican nomination, I thought his “isolationism” was a proper reaction to, and a necessary cure for, the American ills inflicted by the managerial and intellectual elites of the New World Order variety. Moreover, I considered America’s withdrawal from Europe to be healthy for a continent corrupted to the core. Regardless of whatever dangers this would pose to Poland and to my family, I saw the American withdrawal as necessary for re-Christianizing the West. (Of course, “isolationism” was to be accompanied by the abolition of the welfare-warfare state in America, and a renewed interest in a strict constructionist view of the Constitution.)

But nothing like this happened. Conservatives proved incapable of (or uninterested in) changing the status quo. These same “conservatives”, in a moralizing tone, then protest the expansion of NATO to Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. But their opposition is based on a misreading of Russia, both past and present. They believe Russian wrongdoings stem from an unfair distrust of Russia. They allow for some nationalistic, anti-Western, and militaristic tendencies in the Russian bear, but their Russia is an essentially benign, stable and trustworthy country with strong and vivid cultural ties to Christianity. The problem with this is that such a Russia ceased to exist in the early 13th century, when it was conquered by Mongols. True, the Khans’ rule was abolished at the end of the 15th century and, thank God, both the Slavic language and the Orthodox Church survived. Unfortunately, the subjugation of the individual and of the Church to the Mongol-style political, social and economic order took hold

and continues to this day. How can American conservatives and moralists ignore the Russian imperialism of the last centuries? (One should note that the opposition to NATO expansion by those conservatives who introduce their stand as *realpolitik* has equally weak foundation. Most notably and sadly enough, starting in 1995, Mr. Buchanan not once uttered an ahistorical nonsense to support his claim that Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, let alone other Eastern European countries, better become parts of Germany or Russia, who cares which country of which great power by the way.)

Of course, a peaceful cooperation with Russia would be welcome. Cooperation is needed, but an unthoughtful appeasement is the worst possible strategy to help Russia rejoin Europe after centuries of being a part of Eurasian land-mass. And more time is needed to see that the long period of Russian imperialism is over. NATO expansion (possibly with more Eastern European countries admitted in the future), perhaps followed by NATO's dissolution when the new Russia becomes trustworthy, could bring Russia back into the European fold while stabilizing foreign affairs for everyone in the process. In fact, it is one of the necessary conditions of rebuilding the true unity of Europe – East and West – and rediscovering its common roots and cultural and religious heritage. To think that this laudable aim can be achieved leaving Warsaw, Prague and Budapest defenseless is preposterous.

Admittedly, whatever the needs of Warsaw, Prague and Budapest, it does not follow that it is the United States' responsibility to meet them. Indeed, the only legitimate objection to NATO expansion is that it's not an issue for America: Poles, not Americans, should die for Poland. But if this is so, why doesn't America disengage from Europe entirely? Because this is not happening, the refusal to admit Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary into NATO can only be seen as the abandonment of these countries to an historically aggressive neighbor. And, while it still does not follow from the above how America should proceed, it points to the fact that the controversy over the enlargement, and possible restructuring, of NATO should be considered from a wider perspective of international relations within the countries of the same Christian heritage.

I neither know nor have the right to deliberate on whether America should help my region, though I personally would consider it a blessing. Only America can decide this. Whether she is still capable (and willing) to think in terms of a wider family of Christian nations, only time will tell.

December 1997