

these developments. But surely the likelihood of such an outcome was foreseeable. After all, they knew from the start that the policy they were pushing would be negotiated not by a Talleyrand or a Metternich—or an Acheson or a Kissinger—but by Bill Clinton, the man who feels everyone's pain. Kissinger has been clear-eyed enough to label what happened at Helsinki a fiasco.

This image of a Europe "made whole" again after the division of the Cold War is one that the advocates of NATO expansion appeal to frequently. But it is not a convincing appeal. For one thing, coming from some mouths it tends to bring to mind Bismarck's comment: "I have always found the word Europe on the lips of those politicians who wanted something from other Powers which they dared not demand in their own name." For another, it invites the question of when exactly was the last time that Europe was "whole." In the 1930s, when the dictators were on the rampage? In the 1920s, when Germany and Russia were virtual non-actors? In 1910, when Europe was an armed camp and a furious arms race was in progress? In the 1860s, when Prussia was creating an empire with "blood and iron"? When exactly? And then there is the simple and undeniable fact that at every step of the way—and regardless of how many tranches of new members are taken in—the line dividing Europe will not be eliminated but simply moved to a different place. Only if Russia itself were to be included would Europe be "whole." Anyone who doubts this should consult an atlas.

One final note: During the last few months advocates of expansion have been resorting more and more to an argument of last resort—one of process, not of substance. It is that the United States is now so far committed that it is too late to turn back. That argument is not without some merit, for prestige does count, and undoubtedly prestige would be lost by a reversal at this stage. But that granted, prestige is not everything. When the alternative is to persist in serious error it may be necessary to sacrifice some prestige early, rather than much more later. To proceed resolutely down a wrong road—especially one that has a slippery slope—is not statesmanship. After all, the last time the argument that it is too late to turn back prevailed was exactly thirty years ago, as, without clear purpose, we were advancing deeper and deeper into Vietnam.

[From the New York Times, February 5, 1997]
A FATEFUL ERROR—EXPANDING NATO WOULD
BE A REBUFF TO RUSSIAN DEMOCRACY

(By George F. Kennan)

In late 1996, the impression was allowed, or caused, to become prevalent that it had been somehow and somewhere decided to expand NATO up to Russia's borders. This despite the fact that no formal decision can be made before the alliance's next summit meeting in June.

The timing of this revelation—coinciding with the Presidential election and the pursuant changes in responsible personalities in Washington—did not make it easy for the outsider to know how or where to insert a modest word of comment. Nor did the assurance given to the public that the decision, however preliminary, was irrevocable encourage outside opinion.

But something of the highest importance is at stake here. And perhaps it is not too late to advance a view that, I believe, is not only mine alone but is shared by a number of others with extensive and in most instances more recent experience in Russian matters. The view, bluntly stated, is that expanding NATO would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-cold-war era.

Such a decision may be expected to inflame the nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion; to have an adverse effect on the development of Russian democracy; to restore the atmosphere of the cold war to East-West relations, and to impel Russian foreign policy in directions decidedly not to our liking. And, last but not least, it might make it much more difficult, if not impossible, to secure the Russian Duma's ratification of the Start II agreement and to achieve further reductions of nuclear weaponry.

It is, of course, unfortunate that Russia should be confronted with such a challenge at a time when its executive power is in a state of high uncertainty and near-paralysis. And it is doubly unfortunate considering the total lack of any necessity for this move. Why, with all the hopeful possibilities engendered by the end of the cold war, should East-West relations become centered on the question of who would be allied with whom and, by implication, against whom in some fanciful, totally unforeseeable and most improbable future military conflict?

I am aware, of course, that NATO is conducting talks with the Russian authorities in hopes of making the idea of expansion tolerable and palatable to Russia. One can, in the existing circumstances, only wish these efforts success. But anyone who gives serious attention to the Russian press cannot fail to note that neither the public nor the Government is waiting for the proposed expansion to occur before reacting to it.

Russians are little impressed with American assurances that it reflects no hostile intentions. They would see their prestige (always uppermost in the Russian mind) and their security interests as adversely affected. They would, of course, have no choice but to accept expansion as a military fait accompli. But they would continue to regard it as a rebuff by the West and would likely look elsewhere for guarantees of a secure and hopeful future for themselves.

It will obviously not be easy to change a decision already made or tacitly accepted by the alliance's 16 member countries. But there are a few intervening months before the decision is to be made final; perhaps this period can be used to alter the proposed expansion in ways that would mitigate the unhappy effects it is already having on Russian opinion and policy.●

PEACE CORPS DAY

● Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge March 3 as Peace Corps Day, celebrating the 37th anniversary this past Sunday of President Kennedy signing the legislation that created the Peace Corps on March 1, 1961. As a former Director of the Peace Corps I want to pay tribute to that organization as an example of Americans at their best.

Since 1961, more than 150,000 Americans from all across the nation have served in the Peace Corps in over 132 countries. Today nearly 6,500 volunteers currently serve in the 84 countries, addressing critical development needs on a person-to-person level, helping communities gain access to clean water; grow more food; prevent the spread of AIDS; teach English, math, and science; help entrepreneurs start new businesses; and work to protect the environment.

Peace Corps volunteers have improved the lives of many people abroad

during their terms of service. They have rightly earned great respect and admiration for the American people and for American values. But they have also brought the benefits of their experience home and continued to contribute to their own communities and to our nation as volunteers and in leadership positions. Returned Peace Corps volunteers find their experience, their knowledge of other cultures, and the self-assurance they gain stand them in good stead in their own careers. But they also share the benefits of their time in the Peace Corps with many others. We call this the "Domestic Dividend."

To commemorate Peace Corps Day, more than 5,000 current and returned volunteers will go back to school today to speak with students about their overseas experiences, some via satellite or phone, but most in person. This is part of the agency's global education program "World Wise Schools." Today more than 350,000 students in all 50 states will learn about life in communities of the developing world by talking the volunteers who have lived there. For example, Peace Corps Volunteer Amy Medley will get to talk to her pen pals from Walden Middle School in Atlanta, Georgia for the first time. She will be calling from Africa, where she is currently serving as a science teacher in Eritrea.

As we celebrate today, interest in the Peace Corps is growing. In 1997 more than 150,000 individuals contacted the Peace Corps to request information on serving as a volunteer, an increase of more than 40 percent since 1994. In view of this interest and the tremendous success and record of the Peace Corps, President Clinton has called for an expansion of the Peace Corps in his 1999 budget, putting the agency on a path to fielding 10,000 volunteers in the year 2000. This is a request and a goal I strongly support.

Mr. President, for 37 years, the Peace Corps has extended a helping hand to the world and Peace Corps volunteers have demonstrated in countless ways the generosity and dedication to service that is so much a part of the American character. So I will take this opportunity to salute all of our Peace Corps volunteers, past and present, and to thank them for their service. We appreciate all they have done and continue to do and I look forward to seeing the Peace Corps continue its outstanding record of service into the 21st Century. ●

COMMEMORATION OF CHIEF A. MARVIN GIBBONS

● Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I had the honor of joining with Mrs. Mary Anne Gibbons, a number of firefighters from the State of Maryland, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, the United States Fire Administration, and others in dedicating the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Chapel in commemoration of Chief A. Marvin Gibbons.