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Small States and Alliances The Case of Slovenia

Introduction

In the eight years after attaining its independence, Slovenia has accomplished several essential changes for the successful transition from an authoritarian to a democratic society and political system. One of the fundamental issues of this process of democratization concerns the formation of a new national security framework and, within this, the creation of a system which ensures the effective military defense of the country. Slovenia, which is a small, newly established European state, has since independence been confronted with a number of options concerning the military aspect of its national security. These options are as follows:

1. the need for Slovenia to form its own armed forces and to rely upon collective systems of security;
2. to gain the status of armed or non-armed neutrality;
3. to sign defense agreements with other states;
4. to enter the process of European integration and to achieve Slovene membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and/or the Western European Union (WEU); and
5. a combination of two or more of the options mentioned above (Grizold, 1996:403).

The emerging political elite in Slovenia has serious difficulties to overcome in order to reach clear and unambiguous agreement on the key questions relating to the country's fundamental national interests. Nevertheless, the Slovene political establishment genuinely agrees that the international aspect of the country's defense policy should be based on the concept of defensive self-reliance coupled with the clear aim of attaining NATO membership as soon as possible. The main reasons for this preferred course of action are a result of several push-pull factors:

- a) the relative inefficiency of existing international security mechanisms which failed to resolve speedily the crises which followed the dissolution of the former Yugoslav Federation, especially in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina;
- b) the undisputed military inferiority of the small Slovene State;
- c) the strategic impetus which has influenced Slovenia's desire to enter the processes of European integration and, by extension, become a member of European security institutions; and
- d) the strategic reflection that the new geostrategic and military-political milieu in Europe in the 1990's also drives Slovenia to find its security "shelter" in the frame of broader European security organizations, particularly in NATO. Namely, the most important elements of the post Cold-War strategic security environment in Europe which affect (directly or indirectly) the national security of Slovenia are the following:
 - general détente among the great powers,
 - the withdrawal of Russian troops from Central Europe (and from the region surrounding Slovenia),

- the reduction of military troops and weaponry in most European countries on the one hand and the modernization and professionalization of their armed forces on the other,
- the strengthening of cooperation between NATO and Central-Eastern countries (NACC; Pfp, etc.),
- the military-political crisis in the Balkans as well as the accelerated arming of the countries bordering Slovenia,
- the escalating complexity of socio-economic, national and other issues in the post-socialist countries,
- the nascent competition among the great powers for new spheres of influence in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe,
- the demands of some neighboring countries for the resolution of the territorial and fixed property issues with Slovenia, etc.

Since 1993 membership in NATO has been one of the most important goals of Slovenian foreign policy. A status which would resemble neutrality or non-alignment never deserves serious considerations in the foreign policy making process. It could be expected that foreign policy decisions are made on a rational basis and for this reason could be subjected to more or less logical explanations. This means that political decisions could be at least partly explained on the basis of theoretical propositions. It is not our intention to provide thorough and unquestionable explanation, but rather an evaluation of some propositions of existing theory. Using these propositions we will propose some hypothesis as a basis to explain why Slovenia chose a policy of pursuing NATO membership as a security-policy orientation.

1. Theoretical Framework

In our analysis we will first refer to some theoretical propositions on reasons for alignment. Most theoretical propositions on alliances are based on realist theory of international relations. These explanations as the basic reason for alignment define intentions to aggregate capabilities of two or more states because of fear of power or threat represented by another state or group of states. "In concept and in practice, alliances combine the capabilities of nation-states not simply for the sake of forming associations but essentially to preserve, magnify, or create positions of strength for diplomacy or war" (Friedman, 1970: 10). Alliances are regarded as the reaction to threatening power. Another realist view claims that alliances are not simply reaction to threatening power, but rather reaction to perceived threat. "States ally to balance against threats rather than against power alone. Although the distribution of power is an extremely important factor, the level of threat is also affected by geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and perceived intentions" (Walt, 1987: 5). This explanation seems to be more useful for understanding Cold War alliance patterns. But balancing against power or threat is not necessarily the only reason for forming alliances, either in theory or in practice. Liska (1962: 30) pointed out three main grounds for alignment: internal and international security, stability and status of states and regimes. Some authors also stress functions of alliances in restraining members' behavior. As R. Osgood writes: "Next to accretion, the most prominent function of alliances has been to restrain and control allies...(1968: 24)

After the end of the Cold War many states sought membership in NATO. Theories of balance of power or balance of threat cannot adequately explain reasons for such behavior. Reasons for seeking to join NATO seem to be more complex. After the end of the global bipolar confrontation some middle and small states are still faced with threats, which are military in nature, but mostly not in the form of direct or intended threat with military force.

Those threats mainly refer to the uncontrolled spread of military conflicts. Despite of the end of the Cold War Slovenia after 1991 faced several military threats. The possibility that military operations could spread to Slovenian territory has been perceived since the beginning of the Yugoslav conflict. This possibility was substantially reduced with the implementation of the Dayton Agreement, but the region remains unstable.

Threat of global conflict during the Cold War was thus replaced by threats which are more regional in nature. History teaches us that states which perceived threat from their neighborhood frequently made efforts to enhance security by alignments with powers outside of the region. From this point of view endeavors for alignment are not in contradiction with existing theory. As McCalla (1996: 455) pointed out, "neorealist approaches say little about how decision makers will view residual threats or uncertainties following the breakup of a larger threat. ... Do many small threats require the same response as one larger one?" We believe that threats that remained after the end of the Cold War are for some states serious enough to encourage them to respond with endeavors to join NATO. But these considerations in our opinion only partly explain the intentions to join NATO.

To better understand the endeavors to join NATO we should look at other factors. Two sets of factors are in our opinion of great importance: 1) the broader political objectives which states seeking NATO membership pursue; 2) the attributes of NATO and the position of member-states in the Alliance and in the international community.

Our hypothesis is that the Slovenian political elites' (as in many other ex-communist states) intentions to join NATO are linked to broader political, economic and social goals. Those states after the end of the Cold War sought to ensure stability and social development with the quickest possible integration into the Western European institutional framework. In line with this they adopt Western style institutions, norms and values. Membership in NATO represents one way to become part of a stable and developed western Europe as soon as possible. Interest in NATO membership is frequently linked to the expectations of the so-called spill-over effect: the expectation that integration in one area will gradually spread to other areas. Such expectations link membership in NATO – which is basically integration in a military security region – to other possibilities for enhancing integration: political, economic and other areas. Such expectations are frequently expressed in political documents and in statements of political leaders.⁵² A recent study of attitudes of Slovenian political elites revealed that the gains of prospective membership in NATO are linked basically to non-security issues: "For political parties it is rather typical that they don't treat NATO primarily as a military, defense or security organization, but they assign to NATO other properties. As a consequence mainly economic, cultural (connected with values) and political (effect of enlargement on democratization) effects are expected after Slovenia will join NATO." (Malešič, 1999).

Political objectives which states pursue when joining NATO are better understood in light of NATO's attributes and the expected position of a given state after joining the alliance. When states decide to join an alliance they are faced with problems of intra-alliance relations,

52 The publication *National Strategy for Integration of the Republic of Slovenia into NATO* stresses security as well as other reasons for prospective NATO membership: inclusion of the Republic of Slovenia in the political and security framework of the most developed Western European countries and countries of North America; promotion of social and economic development and cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia with the NATO member countries; strengthening of credibility, promotion of international status, negotiating power and reaffirmation of the security and international and legal status of Slovenia in Europe and in the world; consolidation of the international identity of Slovenia as a democratic, peaceful country committed to the integration processes.

with problems of gains and liabilities, and with the entrapment-abandonment dilemma.⁵³ Nevertheless, our hypothesis is that states – and especially small states such as Slovenia, which has recently launched its campaign to join NATO – have little reason to be seriously concerned with this problem, which makes NATO a very attractive alignment. Problems of relations among allies have historically been very important in both theory and in practice. Machiavelli warned that an alliance between a great power and a small state could be dangerous for the latter since it could be subordinated to the interests of the great power. For the small state, such an alliance is reasonable only out of ‘necessity’ when it is militarily threatened. It can also be argued that alliances are not necessarily disadvantageous for small states. The effects of alliance membership for the small state depend on the form of alliance and the intra-alliance relations. Rothstein (1968: 24-4) claims that for small states, multilateral and mixed alliances (e.g., at least two great powers and one small power) are more attractive. Such alliances offer more deterrence and defense; the possibility that the alliance is little more than a facade for the great power’s policies is diminished while the small power’s potential for influencing alliance decision-making is likely to increase in a situation where power is diffused.⁵⁴ More members means more bargaining, more compromise and more opportunity for the small state to express itself effectively, and more opportunity to act as a balancing force within the alliance.

The position of small states within an alliance is affected by the degree of pluralism practiced within such an alliance and by the nature of the allies’ domestic political systems (Holsti 1973: 15-6). In more pluralistic alliances we would expect the influence of small states to be higher, as well as in alliances formed of democratic states which manage intra-alliance conflict by bargaining.

Because of NATO’s mixed and multilateral character and its practice of resolving internal conflicts in a democratic manner by bargaining and achieving consensus, small states that aspire to join the Alliance obviously are not concerned with their prospective status nor do they fear losing autonomy within the Alliance. Thus among political elites in Slovenia one frequently finds the expectation that membership in NATO will enhance the status of sovereign equality of the state in the international community. The Slovenian national strategy concept paper⁵⁵ stated that “prospective membership in NATO would signify strengthening of credibility, promote Slovenia’s international status and negotiating power and would be a reaffirmation of ... the status of Slovenia...” Slovenian prime minister Drnovšek stated several of his reasons for joining NATO including the “desire to legitimize the state as a developed democracy, since this also strengthens Slovenia’s image... and strengthens our position in the international community”.⁵⁶ It seems that expectations of higher international status and influence prevail over concerns about potential loss of autonomy and subordination to the interests of larger powers.

An additional factor which seems to influence the attractiveness of NATO membership is the diminished role of military power in inter-state relations in Europe and in the Western industrialized world. For this reason the possibility of future war is low. In this part of the world, as Väyrynen (1996: 114) observed, the utility of war has decreased. This is due to

53 *Entrapment-abandonment* dilemma refers to risks of alignment: “The risks include abandonment by an ally that fails to fulfill its commitment, entrapment in a war involving the ally’s interests rather than one’s own, and general loss of autonomy or freedom of maneuver.” (Barnett, Levy, 1991: 374).

54 As Belgian diplomat von Zuylen observed in 1930: *An alliance with a Great Power is one thing and an alliance with a group of powers is another: the first weighs indisputably on the liberty of small state; in the second the great powers neutralize each other.* (Rothstein, 1968: 124)

55 *National Strategy for Integration of the Republic of Slovenia into NATO*

56 Prime minister’s speech at Faculty of Social Sciences, Ljubljana – March 31, 1999.

several things: the destructiveness of nuclear weapons, the costs of severing economic interdependencies if war were to break out, and the increasing salience of norms prohibiting the use of military force in relations between states. Due to domestic political, economic, social and cultural changes in industrialized European countries and due to changes in patterns of relations among those states the emergence of a new major war in Europe is almost unimaginable. Some authors describe Europe after the Cold War as primed for peace (Evera, 1990).

When joining an alliance states are concerned with the possibility of getting involved in conflict and with the costs and other consequences of such situation. States consider the possibility of becoming entrapped or abandoned by allies. The current situation in Europe and in the West indicates a very low possibility that NATO would be involved in a major military conflict. It seems that political elites in countries attempting to join NATO do not consider this a real possibility. Prospective membership in NATO is seen first of all as a chance to obtain gains connected with membership without serious danger of getting involved in a major conflict. In fact, NATO is recently concerned mainly with low intensity regional conflicts out-of-area. The contribution of small states to NATO activities in those conflicts does not require larger costs from such states. As a consequence, from the viewpoint of prospective members their contribution to NATO membership would not seem to present serious costs or other liabilities. Chances are that NATO members, especially the smaller ones, are able to exempt themselves from contributing to crisis management activities. Väyrynen (1996: 117) observed changes of position of lesser states in NATO after the end of the Cold War: "Member states have more freedom to decide their policies in regional conflicts and other issues. ...This trend has enhanced the role of middle powers and the freedom of action of the small states."

According to this conception of reality, states which attempt to join NATO have no reason to be concerned with the possibility that membership in the Alliance will involve them in a major conflict. The most likely possibility is future NATO involvement in regional crises. According to established practice, the possibility of members to choose the form and scope of their own contribution to such activities is large. Prospective members have serious reason to see the gains more than the liabilities and dangers which membership in an alliance usually can bring. For prospective NATO members the risk to be entrapped in war is very low, and due to the diminished utility of military force and expectation of peaceful relations among European states the abandonment risk has no substantive meaning.

2. The Present Slovenian Security Orientation

As a newly established nation-state, Slovenia continues to develop concepts, policies, and institutions to provide for its national security. It does so in the dynamic environment of the multifaceted proposals and efforts at European integration as well as the ongoing political-military crisis in the Balkans.

The following are fundamental considerations for understanding the present Slovenian national security policy, both internally and on the international level:

First, from the outset of modern Slovene independence, the desire to thoroughly reorganize the country's socio-political institutions and to reform the national security system was clearly expressed and unanimous among practically all the competing political parties in parliament. The basic issue of whether to reorganize the Slovene army or in fact to demilitarize the country, has, however, remained a divisive issue in government circles and among the public.

Second, the new Slovene constitution of December 1991 embodied seven basic changes affecting the national security system. These involve the initiation of a multi-party parliamentary democracy, division of power between executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, increased governmental authority over military budget and activities, reorganization of the Defense Ministry as well as consolidation of the army, abolition of all laws that gave the military autonomy in key social and political areas, and abolition of “special” military schools which previously took the place of public high schools and university.

Third, these reforms eliminate the privileged relationship the military used to enjoy with the ruling party and eliminate political and religious discrimination in military life. They also make the Slovenian military more socially representative in terms of gender, religion, and social origin.

Fourth, the military is now completely under civilian control, in keeping with the example of other developed parliamentary governments, and is more transparent in terms of access by parliament, the media, academia and the public. The new organization also ensures that military leadership is subordinate to the highest national representative power, that all national security decisions are made by parliament while the military itself is limited to an executive role. These are part of the overall depolitization of the military.

Fifth, problems have, however, arisen in Slovenia’s civil-military relations as it builds the new national security framework. These problems stem from delays in adopting new legislation and from the state’s ambiguous accountability to parliament and the public regarding national security affairs. These conditions, in turn, are symptomatic of antagonistic and immature Slovene politics, in which a newly emerging elite is still torn by internal strife, and in which civil and professional elements of society still lack substantial influence.

Sixth, on the international level, Slovenia has adopted cooperation instead of competition as a primary strategy for international problem solving. In the regional context Slovenia has striven arduously to improve relations with neighboring states. While largely successful in this effort, two key issues yet unresolved involve Italian “option” claims for property rights in Slovenia and the border dispute with Croatia.

Seventh, despite political squabbling and some public uncertainty, there is general consensus to proceed with European integration efforts including the EU and NATO. This is in fact Slovenia’s priority goal in its foreign policy, which officially commits the country to peaceful resolution of interstate conflicts but to defend itself with arms if attacked, alone, if necessary.

Eighth, Slovenia sees the benefits of cooperation in the PfP as an improved psychological sense for security for the nation, participation in joint operational planning, development of NATO-compatible modern military defense structures and procedures, and eventual inclusion in an integrated pan-European military and political structure.

Ninth, the Slovenian public is well aware that within the framework of integration and détente in Europe, there is a real opportunity for NATO to reform and to strengthen its security role. In addition, the Slovenian public wants to be kept informed of both the strengths and weaknesses regarding Slovene membership in NATO.

3. The Security Importance for Slovenia's Bid to Join European and Transatlantic Institutions

Military intervention in Slovenia by the Yugoslav People's Army in 1991, the attempt to settle the entire Yugoslav crisis by arms as well as the inefficiency of the existing international security mechanisms and instruments dealing with this crisis, have brought about the recognition that the country needs to ensure its national security with the proper balance of both military and non-military instruments organized into a national security system. For Slovenia as a small state with limited socio-economic and military capabilities it is of utmost importance to join the processes of European integration and render its national security structure capable of integration into the larger all-European security system. Historical experience shows that every small state, which by definition has limited resources, can expect foreign help in ensuring its national security only if it is strategically, politically and economically important to one or more big powers. Therefore, it is obvious that the small state must, in ensuring its national security, rely to a higher degree first of all on its own national resources and capabilities. Nevertheless, after an adequate degree of internal stability and security is reached and a small state is able to act as a sovereign partner in the international community, it should, for the sake of its own security, co-operate in the shaping of a larger frame of international security.

Although the Slovene geopolitical position is not of the greatest interest to the big powers, its national security will be further influenced by the ongoing political-military crisis in the Balkans as well as by accelerated armament of the countries in this region. Therefore, Slovenia can consolidate and facilitate its evolving democratic system, national security, and further development within a democratic Europe based on the principles of mutual trust and coexistence and using peaceful means of solving international disagreements and conflicts. This requires the possibility of integrating the Slovene national security structure into the emerging pan-European security order. NATO represents one of the core organizations of European security and is enlarging its activity with new roles, missions, and partners. These considerations make Slovenia's efforts to join NATO understandable.

Achievement of this goal will have positive effects for Slovenia, including: faster connection to the economic and technological currents of developed Western countries, such as cheaper access to sophisticated military technology, security guarantees, etc. It should, however, be noted that Slovene membership in NATO would also mean an obligation to participate economically, politically, and militarily in defense and security tasks in solidarity with other members of the Alliance.

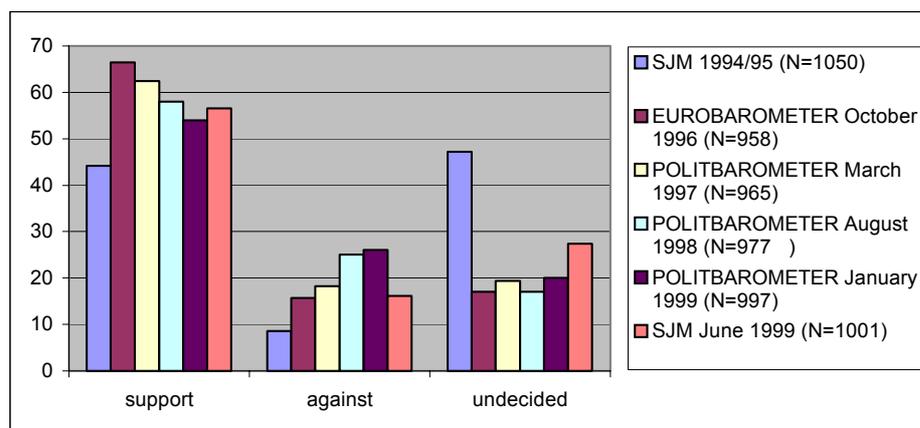
4. Public Opinion on Slovenia's Inclusion in NATO

An atmosphere acknowledging the indisputable advantages of admission to NATO has been created in Slovene political spheres. This perception has been popularized by party leaders and the media, as well as by non-governmental organizations (notably, the Atlantic Council of Slovenia). In the campaign period prior to the parliamentary elections in November 1996 some party leaders expressed doubts about the actual necessity of joining NATO. The political elites brought their opinions into line very fast. They could not ignore the prevailing public opinion, in which a trend of increasing support for NATO has been observed.

4.1. Support for NATO Membership

Between the end of 1994 and October 1996 public opinion polls showed an increase in public support for the government's efforts to join NATO. This surge upward was recorded in all population categories and has at the beginning of 1997 stabilized at around 60 percent of respondents in favor of government policy. At the same time, the number of those who disagreed with this policy also rose, but only slightly. From late 1994, when the question on NATO membership was asked for the first time, to March 1997, large changes occurred in the undecided category. The share of these respondents fell and according to the survey from March 1997 it stabilized at around one-fifth of the total population polled (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: Support for Slovenian government's endeavors to join NATO



Sources: Anton Grizold et al., National Security of Slovenia, Ljubljana: Faculty of Social Sciences, Defense Research Centre, 15 December 1994 19 January 1995. Niko Tos et al., EUROBAROMETER, Ljubljana: Faculty of Social Sciences, Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Centre (POMCRC), October 1996. Niko Tos et al., POLITBAROMETER (March 97), (August 98), (January 99), Ljubljana: Faculty of Social Sciences, Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Centre. National Security of Slovenia/SJM, Ljubljana: Faculty of Social Sciences, Defense Research Center, June 1999.

Entry to NATO is most favored by the group of male respondents age 46 to 60, with vocational or high school education, employees and pensioners. Disagreement with this policy is highest in the group of respondents under 30 years, highly educated, farmers and self-employed. In the group of the undecided, the majority were women (housewives). It is interesting that respondents who oppose admission to NATO are generally against any international integration for Slovenia.

The US Information Agency (USIA) published slightly different figures. In its survey of 1996, 32 percent of Slovenians were strongly in favor of Slovenia becoming a full member of NATO, 39 percent somewhat in favor, 13 percent somewhat opposed and 11 percent strongly opposed Slovenia becoming a NATO member.

4.2. On What Does Admission to NATO Depend?

According to Slovenian public opinion, the greatest factor that can influence the admission of Slovenia to NATO is Slovenian diplomacy (see Table 1). This opinion is held mostly by males with high school education, with center-right and center-left political orientation. One quarter of the respondents think that the speed of Slovenia's accession to NATO will depend mostly on NATO itself. These respondents are predominantly under 30, with university backgrounds, from urban centers and supporters of the two social-democratic parties currently

in the opposition (United List of Social Democrats, Social Democratic Party). One fifth of respondents attribute responsibility for the speed of admission to the Slovenian Ministry of Defense and to the Slovenian Army. This opinion is held mostly by respondents with primary school education, students and the respondents with Christian-Democratic political orientation. Again, women prevail among those who could not decide. In general, female respondents were rather undecided regarding the issues of Slovenian defense policy.

Table 1

Impact on the Speed of Slovenia's Admission to NATO (Percentages)	
Slovenian diplomacy	31.2
NATO	23.9
Slovenian Ministry of Defense and Slovenian Army	20.7
Don't know, undecided	24.2

Source: Niko Tos et al., EUROBAROMETER, October 1996, N=958

It is obvious from the documents adopted by government and parliament that Slovenian political elites coordinated their policies involving basic foreign security directions. Public opinion polls confirmed that these policies enjoy public support. The problem is that the consensus was achieved mainly on an emotional level. For example, agreement on admission to NATO was produced largely without any particular knowledge of this subject. No study has been commissioned or presented which would assess what or how much Slovenia can contribute to integration into NATO, what can be expected from it and what sacrifices are involved. Opinions about accession to NATO were made in an ad hoc manner by political elites as well as by the general public. Thus, the Slovenian Government could in its approach to NATO rely on a high degree of agreement, which was, however, based predominantly on the emotional appeal of NATO. Although politics in general is often emotionally colored, in particular when knowledge on a given matter is insufficient, it will be vital that any future issue related to external security is decided on the basis of rationality. Otherwise a stable and long lasting functional and guided consensus will not be attainable. A rational decision will be possible only on the basis of comprehensive knowledge of relations with NATO, which the Slovenian public still lacks. Lack of integral information was also evident from the results of the survey POLITBAROMETER 3/97 (FSS-POMCRC), conducted in March 1997, where 16.4 percent of the respondents considered themselves well-informed about Slovenia's rapprochement to NATO, while 30.1 percent considered themselves ill-informed.

4.3. Reputation by NATO Admission

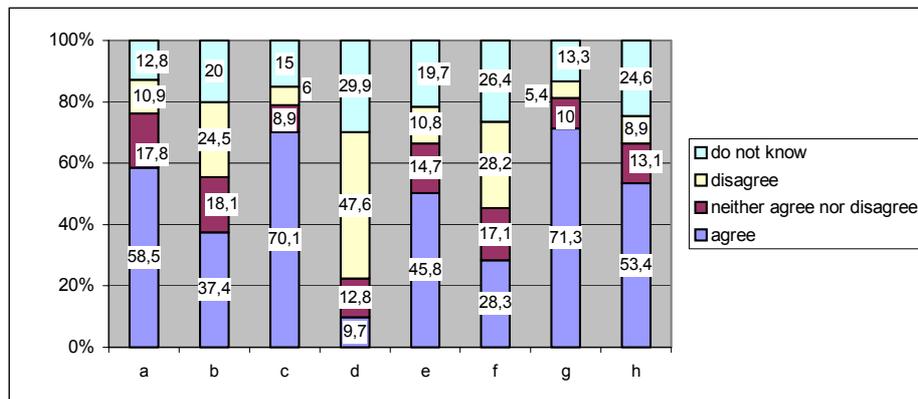
When we claimed that Slovenia's decision for admission to NATO was an emotional one, we assumed that it was mostly based on emotional arguments. The December 1994/January 1995 public opinion poll showed that the most convincing public arguments for joining were those related to an improved international reputation of Slovenia (see Graph 2 and 3).

The respondents had three groups of statements at their disposal to agree or not to agree with. One group consisted of statements on the political nature of admission to NATO, as: enhancing the country's reputation, strengthening of military security, difficulties in the EU integration process, limitations on Slovenian sovereignty. The second group of statements touched the internal defense/military outcomes of admission, such as: easier access to modern weapons for the Slovenian military, more efficient armed forces, sending Slovenian troops to defend another NATO member country, participation of Slovenian enterprises in NATO military projects, and the substantial increase of defense expenditures. The third group related

to the foreign armed forces, which are represented through the symbol of military bases. Slovenia never had any foreign military bases on its territory, so people do not have a real impression, except to the extent they remember the barracks of the former Yugoslav army, which were a kind of military base. The statements referred to the bases as an environmental threat, as a loss of territory, as a source of social disturbance and as employers of civilian population. In all of the three groups there were advantages and disadvantages. The highest support got the statements that admission to NATO would: strengthen Slovenian military security (71,3%), make access to modern weapons easier (70,1 %) and increase the reputation of Slovenia in the international community (58,5%). The lowest agreement was with the statements on getting more difficulties in the EU integration process (9,7%) and on military base personnel as a disturbing factor in the social environment (28,3%).

It is possible to extrapolate a common pattern of thinking, in which respondents predicted the advantages of admission to NATO at the abstract or general level, but expected disadvantages in nearly all practical matters – budget, bases, troops in out-of-border operations.

Graph 2: Positive and negative aspects of NATO membership (SJM 1999)



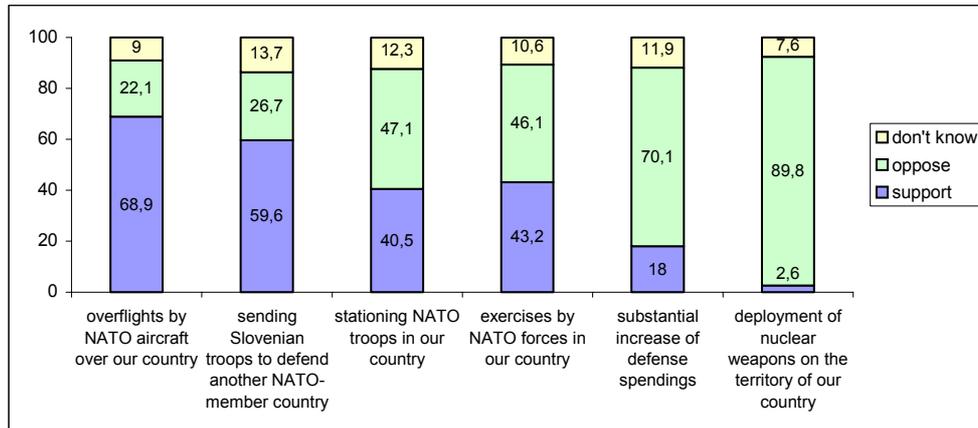
Legend:

- increase reputation of Slovenia in the international community
- limitations to sovereignty of Slovenia
- easier access to modern weapons for Slovenian military
- difficulties in EU integration process
- more efficient armed forces
- military base personnel as disturbing factor in social environment
- strengthened Slovenian military security
- participation of Slovenian enterprises in NATO military projects

Although generally supportive of NATO membership, Slovenians remain largely reluctant to assume responsibilities they may be required to shoulder (see Graph 3). This discrepancy may reflect a lack of understanding of what full NATO membership entails. Namely, according to the USIA survey from 1996, Slovenians were less supportive of sending Slovenian troops to defend another NATO country, to have NATO troops stationed in the country, and to increase the percentage of the national budget spent on the military rather than education and health care, than the majority of other CEECs surveyed. Our latest survey (SJM June 1999) shows a slightly different picture. Graph 3 shows that the majority of respondents support overflights by NATO aircraft over Slovenia (68.9%) and sending Slovenian troops to defend another NATO member (59.6%). Nevertheless, the majority of respondents oppose

deployment of nuclear weapons on Slovenian territory (89.8%) and the substantial increase of the defense budget (70.0%). In addition, it seems that the Slovenian public is divided on two important NATO issues: a) the stationing of NATO troops in Slovenia (47.1% oppose and 40,5 support) and b) the exercises of NATO forces in Slovenia (46.1% oppose and 43.2 support).

Graph 3: Support and opposition towards would be responsibilities in NATO



5. Concluding Remarks

The evolving post-Cold War security matrix in Europe contains elements of peace, stability and security as well as elements of instability, insecurity and danger. This new European security environment thus produces positive and negative effects on the European countries' security.

The main positive effect of this environment on Slovenian national security comes from the general easing of tensions among the European powers resulting in a lower risk of an outbreak of a large military conflict and a direct military threat to European countries. On the other hand, the most severe negative effect on Slovenian national security derives from the Balkan conflict area.

All in all, the post-Cold War European security environment has brought about the recognition that Slovenia should ensure its national security within the larger, evolving multi-institutional European security structure.

Since Slovenia, as a small state with limited socio-economic and military capabilities, will certainly never become such a strong military power as to be able to threaten other states, one of its fundamental national interests is to become involved in the process of European integration by becoming a full member of the EU and NATO.

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