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The American Hungarian Federation  
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## HUNGARY'S ACCESSION TO NATO

### *An expanded report*

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*The American Hungarian Federation of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. (the "Federation") was a member of the Hungarian American Coalition (the "Coalition"). As the Federation's representative to the Coalition, I was elected chairman of the latter's Information Committee. This expanded Report is based on an earlier report and is being posted by AHF for interested persons to read and use in their research on key events relating to NATO's enlargement and the debate to include Hungary in the alliance.*  
- Frank Koszorús, Jr

### INTRODUCTION

The Information Committee and its chairman (the "Committee") spearheaded the organization's advocacy relating to the enlargement of NATO and the inclusion of Hungary in the alliance. This effort included developing and articulating the organization's position concerning NATO and implementing strategies to achieve its objectives in Washington, D.C.

This Report highlights and documents the key activities of the Committee and its successful involvement in the NATO enlargement debate. The Report is not meant to be an exhaustive review of the Committee's (and the Hungarian American community's) work and it excludes the Committee's involvement in projects, such as the NATO conferences in Hungary, that fell outside efforts aimed at securing support for expansion in the United States.

The Committee vigorously advocated three issues: (1) the rapid expansion of NATO to include Hungary; (2) the importance of ensuring that minority rights not be ignored during the accession period and beyond; and (3) the rejection of a policy that would grant Russia a "veto" in NATO matters.

The Committee also asserted that NATO must neither deviate from its core function of protecting members from outside aggression nor treat its new members, including Hungary, differently when they join the alliance. Finally, because the Committee's chair believed that the enlargement of NATO was in the interest of the United States and all Hungarians, it cautioned against the expansion process being used to favor partisan political interests in Hungary during the national elections in the spring/summer of 1998.

The Committee's chairman adopted the strategy used by public policy advocates of aligning with larger and more influential organizations who supported expanding the alliance, particularly the Central and East European Coalition (the "CEEC")<sup>1</sup> and the Working Group on NATO Enlargement (the "Working Group").<sup>2</sup> As the CEEC representative and chairman of the Steering Committee of the Working Group, the Committee's chairman actively "worked" the issue of enlargement in Washington, D.C. He also coordinated grass roots initiatives that involved non-Coalition members, especially during the Senate debate on ratification and interacted with the influential U.S. Committee to Expand NATO ("U.S. Committee"). As a result of the Committee's activities, the Coalition became a lead member within the CEEC on NATO matters.

Both as part of an individual organization and as an active participant in the CEEC and the Working Group, the Committee's NATO enlargement efforts were comprehensive, coordinated and focused on the following institutions: (1) the Congress; (2) the White House and State Department; (3) the Republican and Democratic Parties; and (4) the electronic and printed media and other publications.

The Committee communicated extensively with the members of the Hungarian American community, keeping them informed of relevant procedural and substantive issues relating to NATO's enlargement and tasks to be addressed.

## **I. SUMMARY OF THE COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES**

### **A. The Congress**

Alarmed by the initial ambivalence of the administration to enlarge NATO, the CEEC, including the Committee, turned to the Congress with a two-fold mission: to pressure the administration; and to line up congressional support for enlargement.<sup>3</sup> It worked closely with key congressional leaders and their staff. The CEEC, with the Committee's active participation, played a major role in the drafting and passage of legislation related to NATO, including the NATO Expansion Facilitation Act and the 80 - 19 Senate approval of the resolution ratifying NATO's expansion to include Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The CEEC is composed of nineteen national membership-based organizations representing Americans of Armenian, Belarusian, Bulgarian, Czech, Estonian, Georgian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, and Ukrainian descent. These organizations cooperate in calling attention to issues of mutual concern, especially with respect to United States policy toward Central and Eastern Europe. The CEEC regularly meets with administration and congressional leaders and testifies before congressional committees.

<sup>2</sup> The Working Group represented diverse Americans and influential groups, such as the American Legion, American Jewish Committee, U.S. Committee to Enlarge NATO and the Polish American Congress.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the State Department instructed its Office of Congressional Affairs to "kill" the NATO Participation Act Amendments of 1995. The Senate's support was not a foregone conclusion. As late as July 3, 1997, Michael Dobbs writing for *The Washington Post* said, "[now] comes an equally daunting task: *convincing* the American public and *the Senate* that it is in U.S. national interest to commit American 'blood and treasure' to defense of East European cities like Gdansk, Brno and Szeged."

<sup>4</sup> While ratification required 67 votes in the Senate, conditions, or "poison pills," which could have affected a range of issues relating to NATO could have been imposed by a mere 51 votes. The CEEC opposed such conditions.

## 1995

In 1995, the CEEC successfully persuaded the U.S. House of Representatives to adopt an amendment on NATO enlargement to H.R. 7. The amendment clarified United States policy toward the states of Central and Eastern Europe and removed the Russian “veto” contained in the bill.

The chairman of the Committee was actively involved in drafting proposed legislative language regarding NATO expansion. He and other members of the CEEC worked closely with Sen. Hank Brown (R-CO) who, with strong bi-partisan support, offered the NATO Participation amendment to the Foreign Assistance Appropriations Act. The Committee also participated in efforts to ensure that the Senate’s version of the amendments did not differ from the House version.

On September 20, the CEEC held a press conference in the United States Capitol regarding the need for the United States to focus more on Central and Eastern Europe. The Committee prepared the CEEC’s statement (“Coalition Urges Rapid Expansion of NATO”) for the press conference.

## 1996

In 1996, the CEEC worked closely with Sen. Hank Brown and Congressman Benjamin A. Gilman (R-NY), Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, on a bill to provide NATO transition assistance to certain countries, including Hungary. The Committee not only worked on the draft language of the bill, known as the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act of 1996, but on June 20, 1996, its chairman testified on behalf of the CEEC before the Committee on International Relations of the U.S. House of Representatives.<sup>5</sup> Congressman James A. Leach (R-IA) characterized the Committee’s testimony as “one of the most thoughtful statements the [International Relations] Committee has received.” During debate on the bill, Chairman Gilman expressed his gratitude to the CEEC for supporting the legislation. “The [CEEC] has provided invaluable insights to the Committee on the economic, political and security concerns of Central and Eastern Europe,” he said.

The Committee helped draft a CEEC letter to the Congress endorsing the bill. It was signed by, among others, the Coalition’s and the American Hungarian Federation’s then chairman of the board of directors, Rev. Imre Bertalan.

The NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act of 1996 was signed into law by President Clinton on September 30, 1996.

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<sup>5</sup> The 1996 Act was designed to implement two laws that had been already enacted by the Congress to promote expansion of NATO: the NATO Participation Act of 1994; and the NATO Participation Act Amendments of 1995. Those laws authorized the President to provide assistance to the leading candidates for admission to the alliance to facilitate their transition to NATO membership. President Clinton did not utilize the authority of the two laws to avoid identifying the leading candidates as he would have been required to do to provide assistance under the two laws. The 1996 Act implemented the two laws by, among other things, designating Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic as eligible to receive transition assistance under the NATO Participation Act.

On May 14, the CEEC met with House Minority Whip David Bonior (D-MI). The Committee expressed the organization's concerns about progress in naming the first countries to be eligible for NATO membership. Rep. Bonior promised to join many of his colleagues in supporting expansion of the alliance.

On September 19, the CEEC sponsored a reception on Capitol Hill honoring, among others, Congressman Benjamin Gilman. The Committee's chairman presented the CEEC's plaque to Congressman Gilman.

On December 3, the chairman of the Committee and other members of the CEEC submitted letters to Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS), Senate Minority Leader Tom A. Daschle (D-SD), Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-GA), House Majority Leader Richard K. Armey (R-TX), House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-MO), and House Minority Whip David Bonior.

## **1997**

Throughout 1997, the CEEC continued to express its support for NATO enlargement to the Congress and communicated with the Senate NATO Observer Group.<sup>6</sup> On April 16, the Committee submitted a letter on behalf of the CEEC to Senator Trent Lott, Senate Majority Leader, and on April 30, the CEEC sponsored an all-day conference titled, "Security and Stability in Central and Eastern Europe: A Vital U.S. Interest." The conference, which was held in the Hart Senate Office Building, attracted over 150 attendees. The Committee's chairman was the moderator for the NATO panel of experts and prepared the CEEC's statement on NATO enlargement titled, "NATO Must Enlarge."

In September, the Committee together with veteran, religious and business leaders helped form the NATO Enlargement Working Group which held its first meeting at the Washington, D.C. offices of the American Legion. During that meeting, a Steering Committee was appointed to develop concrete steps the members of the Working Group would take to ensure Senate ratification of the accession treaties by an overwhelming majority. The Committee's chairman was selected to head the Steering Committee.

The Committee also prepared questions on NATO which were submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 1 in connection with the confirmation hearings of Madeleine Albright.

On November 5, 1997, the Committee testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in favor of NATO's enlargement and its affect on the Hungarian minorities. This was one of eight hearings scheduled by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the fall of 1997.

## **1998**

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<sup>6</sup> The Senate NATO Observer Group was established in April 1997 and chaired by Sen. William V. Roth, Jr. (R-DE) and co-chaired by Sen. Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-DE).

1998 was an extremely busy time up to the ratification of NATO's enlargement by the Senate. The Committee intensified its efforts with the CEEC and the Working Group by submitting letters and meeting with Senators and their staff; circulating updates on the ratification schedule in the Senate, scorecards of each Senator's position on enlargement, and the substance of "poison pill" amendments that were intended by their sponsors to dilute the expansion of the alliance; and generating grassroots support in favor of ratification.

## **B. The Executive Branch**

The Committee as well as the members of the CEEC were concerned about the slow pace of expansion and the administration's hesitancy to enlarge the alliance. The CEEC spoke out forcefully about the need and desirability to expand NATO.

### **1. The White House**

#### **1996**

The CEEC's letter of January 26, 1996 and Position Paper on NATO Expansion the organization submitted to President Clinton, including a request for a meeting, is characteristic of the CEEC's advocacy for expansion. The Position Paper noted that in "January 1994, the . . . Administration committed itself to the integration of the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe into the defensive structure of the Atlantic community. Two years later, the questions the President posed - when the process of NATO expansion will begin, and who will join - remain unanswered. . . . The CEEC sees no forceful advocacy by the Administration to obtain consensus among the NATO allies for NATO expansion beyond vague and non-committal statements that sometime in an unspecified future some unnamed countries may join the Atlantic community." The CEEC urged the President, among other things, to issue a "declaration that before the end of 1996, the United States will propose to NATO the designation of countries that will be invited to join the alliance . . . and establish a clear time-frame for this [expansion] process."

In response, the President met with the CEEC on February 12, 1996. On April 18, 1996, the Committee submitted a follow-up letter to the President, thanking him for meeting with the CEEC and urging that bilateral treaties should not be a precondition to NATO membership.

President Clinton responded by writing that the "security of Hungary . . . is of direct concern to the United States. We will continue to deepen our cooperation - including security cooperation - with Hungary as we work toward the reintegration of these nations [Central and Eastern European] with the Western democratic community."

On October 10, 1996, the CEEC met with Sandy R. Berger, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Daniel Fried, Senior Director for East Central Europe at the National Security Council, and other White House officials. During the meeting, the chairman of the Committee stressed the necessity of having the President publicly announce that if reelected, he will seek to obtain the consensus of U.S. allies to finalize the first stage of expansion in his second term.

Thereafter, President Clinton's staff alerted the CEEC that the President would give a "major address" on NATO in Detroit and asked the organization to help ensure that the event would be well attended. On October 22, 1996, the President gave his speech in which he announced that NATO would take in the "first group" of new members in 1999, prior to the fiftieth anniversary of the Washington Treaty.

On October 25, 1996, the CEEC submitted a letter to Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott in which the organization expressed its appreciation for the President's Detroit address and urged the administration to take further steps to ensure the security of the region.

On December 3, 1996, the chairman of the Committee along with three other CEEC members submitted letters to the President and the Vice President.

## **1997**

Throughout 1997 the CEEC continued its dialogue with Daniel Fried and other White House officials. For example, on May 16, 1997, Fried convened a meeting of the CEEC to brief the CEEC about the NATO/Russian Charter which had been concluded 24 hours earlier.

On June 12, 1997 the White House initiated a conference call with the CEEC to advise the organization that the United States would propose that Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic be invited to join NATO at the Madrid Summit in July. Fried and Jeremy D. Rosner, Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State for NATO Enlargement Ratification,<sup>7</sup> briefed the CEEC.

The chairman of the Committee attended the NATO Summit send-off in the East Room of the White on July 3, 1997 during which President Clinton addressed the gathering.

The CEEC requested the Committee to submit a letter on September 16 to Rosner to thank him for meeting with the CEEC for a NATO enlargement strategy session on September 3.

## **1998**

Although the focus of the Committee was the ratification of the accession treaties, it participated in a number of ceremonial and historic events at the White House relating to NATO's enlargement. For example, on January 16, the chairman of the Committee attended the signing ceremony of the Charter of Partnership among the United States and the Baltic countries.

On February 11, the chairman of the Committee, along with the chairman and president of the Coalition, attended the remarkable transmittal ceremony of the protocols

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<sup>7</sup> The Office of Special advisor was established in March 1997 to coordinate the government's efforts to build public and congressional support for NATO's expansion. The chairman of the Committee worked closely with Rosner and his deputy Cameron Munter.

of accession of Hungary as a NATO member that was held in the Benjamin Franklin Room of the Department of State.

On March 20, the chairman of the Committee attended a White House ceremony during which President Clinton called on the Senate to ratify NATO expansion promptly.

On May 22, along with three board members, the chairman of the Committee attended the historic Rose Garden ceremony during which President Clinton signed the instruments of ratification for enlargement of NATO.

## **2. The State Department**

Between April 1, 1996 and July 20, 1998, the CEEC met with Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbott on 4 occasions. These were key meetings because Talbott was the administration's most outspoken and influential Russophile. He eventually became a strong and effective advocate of expansion and played an important role in implementing President Clinton's enlargement strategy. The CEEC usually chose the chairman of the Committee to conduct the meetings with Talbott and advance the group's views on expansion. The CEEC also met with other State Department officials, including Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for Europe John Kornblum, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Central Europe Marshall Adair, Deputy Secretary for Canadian and European Affairs Ronald Asmus, and Coordinator for East European Assistance James Holmes.

The CEEC used every opportunity to call for the enlargement of NATO, as when it submitted a letter on July 10 to Secretary of State Albright objecting to the appointment of Stephen Sestanovich as ambassador-at-large to the states of the former Soviet Union on the grounds that, among others, Sestanovich had opposed NATO enlargement.

## **C. The Republican and Democratic Parties**

On April 18, 1996, the CEEC met with Don Fowler, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee and other members of the DNC. NATO enlargement, among other topics, was discussed during the hour-long meeting. Chairman Fowler requested the CEEC to prepare a draft statement for inclusion in the platform regarding NATO expansion.

Subsequently, the CEEC met with Haley Barbour, Chairman of the Republican National Committee. The chairman of the Committee prepared the draft platform statements for both political parties.

## **D. Articles, Interviews and Letters to the Editor**

The chairman of the Committee wrote a number of articles and letters to the editors and granted interviews concerning NATO enlargement, including the relationship between regional security and minority rights:

- “Amerikai szemmel,” *HVG*, February 25, 1995;
- “Four Views on an Expanded NATO: A Hungarian Voice,” *2B*, No. 5-6 (Vol. 3) 1995;
- interview by *Budapest Sun* (July 11-17, 1996) regarding Sen. Dole’s position on NATO enlargement;
- “Security or Self-Deception,” *Budapest Sun*, October 10 - 16, 1996;
- letter to the editor (unpublished), *The New York Times*, October 30, 1996 regarding NATO expansion;
- letter to the editor, *The Nation*, October 13, 1997 regarding the Coalition and NATO expansion;
- interview by *Magyar Nemzet* November 22, 1997 regarding joint DOD/DOS NATO fact finding trip to Europe and testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee;
- interview by *Duna-TV*, “Esti kerdes,” February 4, 1998, regarding the fact finding trip, the U.S. Senate debate, and minority rights as a guarantee of security;
- letter to the editor, “E.U. Membership,” *The New York Times*, March 5, 1998;
- letter to the editor (unpublished), *The Washington Post*, April 10, 1998, refuting assertion that Hungary brings nothing to the ranks of NATO but need;
- letter to the editor, “Dispelling illusions about NATO enlargement,” *The Washington Times*, April 15, 1998;
- “Integracio, NATO, es kisebbségi jogok: Elvalaszthatatlan erdekeink,” *Magyar Nemzet*, júnus 6, 1998;
- interviewed in 1998 by Professors George W. Grayson and James M. Goldgeier in connection with their respective books on NATO’s enlargement, including the role played by Hungarian Americans and other ethnic groups; and
- several articles written for *Hungarian American Coalition News*, e.g., “Hungary Invited to Join NATO: Opportunities and Challenges,” July-August 1997; “President Clinton Signs Protocols of Accession: NATO Ratification Proceeds in the Senate,” February 1998.



## **E. Other Information Dissemination and Grass Roots Initiatives**

The Committee communicated extensively with the Coalition's Board of Directors as well as with non-Coalition members, such as the California Ethnic Leadership Council, concerning NATO enlargement. The written communications consisted of reports, action plans, action alerts, and congressional scorecards that kept a running count of each U.S. Senator's position on expansion. This information dissemination effort was part of a larger grass roots outreach campaign that intensified during the Senate debate on enlargement.

## **II. FACT FINDING TRIP TO NATO HEADQUARTERS, HUNGARY, POLAND AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

The chairman of the Committee was invited to participate in a fact finding mission to Central Europe, October 18-26, 1997, that was jointly sponsored by the Departments of Defense and State. The trip included visits to NATO headquarters in Brussels, the U.S. European Command headquarters in Stuttgart, and Hungary (Kecskemet airbase and Budapest), Poland and the Czech Republic. The purpose of the trip was to assess the progress each of the three Central European countries had made to join NATO.

## **III. THE COMMITTEE DID NOT VIEW NATO EXPANSION IN A VACUUM**

### **A. The Link Between Minority Rights and Security**

While the Committee articulated its support for the enlargement of NATO to include Hungary, it repeatedly and forcefully urged that minority rights should not be neglected in the expansion process. Characteristic of the Committee's view was its chairman's testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations which noted that although NATO is the "cornerstone" of European stability, enlargement of the Alliance "is not a panacea for ethnic peace. . . . The United States, therefore, can cement long-term stability," the Committee argued, "by promoting the ability of minorities to enjoy the fruits of democracy." The Committee cautioned that "NATO enlargement must not be seen as a means of sweeping minority rights under the rug." The Committee also expressed its concern that substituting bilateral treaties for minority rights would be a hollow formality that would not necessarily enhance regional security or alleviate the problems faced by the Hungarian minorities.

The need to repeatedly raise this issue is apparent from the following passage:

"In a separate meeting with Kovacs [in 1995], the U.S. delegation focused on *Budapest's need to resolve its border and minority issues*. When Holbrooke tried to make the point that the U.S. respected Hungary's history, Fried broke in to say: 'No we don't. We hate it. When you say Trianon we understand the political and emotional content of what you are trying to say but we want to run screaming out of the room.' Everyone laughed, but the Hungarians got the point. . . . Several weeks later, Prime Minister Horn pulled aside the U.S. Ambassador to Hungary, Donald Blinken, at an

embassy reception to tell him that he had gotten the message, that negotiations with Slovakia and Romania were on track, and that he was optimistic but could not guarantee that both treaties might be concluded by mid-March 1995. Shortly thereafter, Hungary and Slovakia reached agreement on a new treaty governing minority rights in both countries.” (Emphasis added)<sup>8</sup>

Hungary, of course, did not have border issues with its neighbors. To the extent minority issues existed, they were caused not by Hungarian policies but by the lack of respect for the rights of the Hungarian historical communities in Romania and Slovakia – conditions that unfortunately still exist. Moreover, the Horn government failed to make this case.

## **B. Russia**

The Committee and the CEEC consistently noted that although they did not believe that Russia should be isolated and that mechanisms between NATO and Russia, such as the Founding Act, needed to be developed, they vigorously urged that Russia should under no circumstances be permitted to exercise a “veto” in NATO matters or be allowed to slow the expansion process.

## **C. Hungarian Domestic Politics**

The Committee viewed NATO enlargement as being in Hungary’s and the United States’ vital national interest. Therefore, it was gratified that all of the Parliamentary political parties supported Hungary’s accession to NATO. As this Report documents, the Committee consistently urged the rapid expansion of the alliance. In March 1998 Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MISS) postponed further debate on NATO until other bills that had been shelved by the Democrats were considered. The Committee was concerned both about the impact of the postponement on expansion and on Hungarian domestic politics. Its statement noted that “the Senate should swiftly ratify enlargement considering the vital security interests that are involved. If the vote is delayed until the Hungarian national elections in early May, steps must be taken to prevent the Senate vote to be used as a political football in Hungary.”<sup>9</sup>

## **IV. POST RATIFICATION ACTIVITIES**

The chairman of the Committee was appointed an Honorary Board Member of the 50th NATO Summit Anniversary Host Committee and a Special Guest of Prime Minister Viktor Orban during the April NATO Summit and 50th Anniversary Celebration in Washington, D.C. The chairman of the Committee participated in several events relating to the Summit and Celebration, including: the White House dinner; dinner with Prime Minister Viktor Orban; the Opening Ceremony in the Mellon Auditorium; the

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<sup>8</sup> Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO’s Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, Columbia University Press (2002) at 148-149.

<sup>9</sup> As the Senate action was delayed, several Coalition members called upon the Majority Leader not to schedule the vote on ratification to coincide with Hungary’s elections to prevent giving Hungary’s ruling Socialist/Free Democrat coalition an undue advantage in the elections. Since the leadership of the Coalition failed to adopt this statement, it was issued by several individuals, including the chairman of the Committee, on their own behalf.

congressional ceremony; dinner at the Hungarian embassy; dinner at the Czech embassy; the Library of Congress dinner sponsored by the Host Committee; and the congressional breakfast organized by the Polish American Congress.

On November 12, 1998, the chairman of the Committee was a panelist in a seminar titled, "The New Diplomacy: Lessons Learned from the Campaign for the First Round of NATO Enlargement." The seminar was hosted by the United States Information Agency and the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University.

On April 2, 1999, the chairman of the Committee participated on a panel addressing Hungary's Road to NATO during a symposium at Indiana University.

The chairman of the Committee continued to be active with the CEEC in supporting the "open door" policy.

## V. SELECTED ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The CEEC's substantial contribution to NATO's enlargement was recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* which noted in its May 5, 1998 edition that "[n]ineteen U.S. ethnic groups, under the banner of the Central and East European Coalition, bombarded the Senate with letters and phone calls on behalf of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. The same coalition will be back to push for another round of expansion next year."

James M. Goldgeier, *Not Whether, But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO*, (Brookings Institution Press, 1999) ("[T]he groups representing Americans of central and eastern European ancestry had formed a coalition [CEECE], which met every Wednesday to plot its lobbying strategy." Early on "the ethnic communities in the United States were putting tremendous pressure on the administration to go beyond Partnership for Peace.")

George W. Grayson, *Strange Bedfellows: NATO Marches East*, (University Press of America, 1999) ("Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, and other Central and Eastern-European ethnic groups roamed the corridors of Senate office buildings in search of votes.")

Ronald D. Asmus, (*Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, Columbia University Press, 2002) ("On November 30, 18 ethnic groups of Central and East European origin met in Washington to coordinate a lobbying effort in favor of enlargement. On December 6 they founded the Central and East European Coalition (CEECE). . . . In early 1994, the . . . CEECE approached key Republican Senators and Congressman seeking their support in stepping up the political pressure on the Administration on enlargement. . . . When such legislation [promoting a commitment to enlargement] was being discussed in Committee, various groups of the CEECE would organize calls, letters or simply line up outside of a congressman's office or hearing room to ensure that their views were known.")

Acknowledgment's received by the chairman of the Committee included:

- letter from Senator Jesse Helms, Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Ranking Minority Member, January 29, 1998;
- letter from Jeremy D. Rosner, Special Adviser to the President and Secretary of State for NATO Enlargement, May 14, 1998;
- letter from Prof. George W. Grayson, The College of William & Mary, July 27, 1998;
- letter from Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus, November 3, 1998;
- acknowledgment from Prime Minister Viktor Orban, spring 1999; and
- recognition from Magyar Radio Szulofoldunk "Magyarország NATO Csatlakozasert 1999."

## **CONCLUSION**

It was an especially humbling and gratifying experience to participate in the debate relating to the enlargement of NATO during this exciting, challenging and historic period. I believe that the record more than supports the conclusion that the Hungarian American community made a considerable contribution to the debate on enlarging NATO and including Hungary in that expansion.

I would like to express my appreciation to all those who supported our efforts and initiatives, including the officers, directors and members of the Federation and the Coalition. I would especially like to recognize Rev. Imre Bertalan for his assistance, Agnes and Laszlo Fulop of Minnesota Hungarians, Inc., for their quick responses to our calls to action and their initiatives in their home state, and Jeno Megyesy and Peter Ujvagi for their invaluable work with the Republican and Democratic parties respectively.