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## **President Clinton's Secretaries of State**

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An important thread in the story of recent US foreign policy-making involves the movement of authority from the State Department to the National Security Council (NSC), especially to the NSC staff and the National Security Adviser. Presidents tend to enter office – Richard Nixon did, Bill Clinton certainly did – with a stated commitment to a strong Department of State and a strong Secretary. Very often, however, this commitment breaks down. It did so very spectacularly in the case of President Nixon; but the same process has also affected other presidencies. This article offers a brief review of Bill Clinton's two Secretaries of State, Warren Christopher (1993-97) and Madeleine Albright (1997-2001). It focuses particularly on their general orientation to the post, as well as their relationship with other foreign policy principals. The article additionally considers the roles of the two Secretaries in the context key transatlantic developments in the 1990s, notably concerning the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. By way of setting the stage for this discussion, let us remind ourselves of the particular bureaucratic difficulties faced by any recent or contemporary Secretary of State.

### **BEING A SUCCESSFUL SECRETARY OF STATE IN THE 1990s**

Many of the procedural problems of being Secretary derive from his or her lack of proximity to the president. The National Security Adviser is usually much closer to the keeper of power in the White House, both literally and in terms of being more intimately tied into the president's immediate political interests and fortunes. If nothing succeeds like success, as far as the National Security Adviser is concerned, nothing propinks like propinquity. To use the terminology of a 1984 study, co-written by Clinton's first National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, the Secretary of State is a departmental 'baron' rather than a presidential 'courtier' (1). By way of compensation, a successful Secretary must enjoy good presidential access and trust. Besides the almost ontological rivalry with the National Security Adviser, the Secretary of State has a 'natural' bureaucratic antagonism with the Secretary of Defence. The clashes between Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld during the first George W. Bush administration were unusual in their openness and intensity; they

reflected fundamental differences in international policy outlook. However, the Powell-Rumsfeld tension also drew in inherent differences of bureaucratic perspective. It is also not unusual for a Secretary of State to experience poor relations with the White House political staff, a body, of course, even more intimately attached than the NSC staff to the presidential political and electoral interest. Successful Secretaries of State have to negotiate these various minefields. They also have to combine the job of departmental manager with that of foreign policy principal.

It is frequently observed that several of the most apparently successful and influential Secretaries of State, including James Baker under President George H. W. Bush, have actually made rather light of their departmental management responsibilities. A 'strong' Secretary may actually preside over a demoralised and uncertain Department. A 1989 article in the *Foreign Service Journal* by a former director of the Foreign Service Institute began: 'The Department of State has qualities of a second-rate organisation: a poorly articulated mission, ill-defined goals, unhappy employees ... and an apparent indifference to developing effective executives' (2).

Clinton's two Secretaries of State faced deep-seated as well as more transitory difficulties in leading the Department. The State Department is regularly portrayed as prone to clientism. Another piece in the 1989 *Foreign Service Journal* recorded the 'negative stereotypes associated with the department', including the perception that Foreign Service Officers 'defend the interests of foreign countries better than those of their own country' (3). As James McCormick puts it, the State Department is, in bureaucratic terms, 'at once, too large and too small' (4). Policy recommendations have to traverse complex bureaucratic turf even before reaching the executive offices of the seventh floor at Foggy Bottom. Yet, as far as appropriations and the NSC interagency process is concerned, the State Department is often outgunned by the intelligence agencies and by the Department of Commerce.

Some particular features of the Clinton era should be noted. The early 1990s, of course, was the era of the 'Kennan sweepstakes' - the search for a successor to George Kennan's Cold War doctrine of anti-communist containment (5). The race was on to find a pithy and sellable purpose for American internationalism, and not least for the future of Cold War alliance structures. The ending of the Cold War had called into question the prospects for existing policy and alliance architectures. Not

only did a successful Secretary of State have to fight the Department's bureaucratic and budgetary corner, he or she had to argue the case for deeply engaged international diplomacy itself. A successful Secretary was required to transcend the, regularly breached but traditionally helpful, conceptual distinction between a 'thinking' NSC staff and a 'doing' State Department. 'Thinking', devising new theoretical underpinnings for US co-operative internationalism, to an unusual extent, *was* the job of Clinton's Secretaries of State. Above and beyond all this, the Secretaries had to contend not only with the rise of economic foreign policy, but also – at least during Warren Christopher's tenure – with President Clinton's preoccupation with domestic issues. During the post-Cold War era (let us say, roughly 1989 to 2001), it seemed as if, to quote Norman Ornstein in 1994, 'gloeconomcs drives geopolitics, compared to a Cold War agenda where geopolitics drove gloeconomics' (6). Clinton's concern to reprioritise economic foreign policy had major implications for America's chief diplomatic agency. The president's early focus on domestic reform also set a less than auspicious context for his entire foreign policy team. Political commentator Elizabeth Drew offered the following distillation of instructions coming from the White House in 1993: 'Keep foreign policy from becoming a problem – keep it off the screen and spare Clinton from getting embroiled' (7).

Public disputes between Secretary of State and National Security Council staff were not a major feature of the Clinton years. Certainly, procedural foreign policy cohesion was generally inferior to that prevailing under Clinton's immediate Republican presidential predecessor. However, the Clinton foreign policy team never exhibited the disarray of the Carter (Cyrus Vance *versus* Zbigniew Brzezinski) era, nor indeed of the first administration of George W. Bush. Clinton's two National Security Advisers, Tony Lake and Sandy Berger, remembered only too well how much the open Vance-Brzezinski split had harmed Carter's operation. The weekly 'pickle' (PCL) meetings between William Perry (Defence Secretary, 1993-7), Lake and Christopher, were designed to head off any such damage. Yet there were still important personality clashes and bureaucratic snafus. State was severely, even humiliatingly, marginalised on occasion, as during the planning for the 1994 invasion of Haiti. In July 1994, the *Washington Post* reported the 'bitter tension' between the State Department and the White House political staff. White House counsellor David

Gergen was transferred to Foggy Bottom, reportedly to provide State with ‘political reality checks in the foreign policy arena’ (8).

If the early Clinton foreign policy-making context was defined to some degree by ‘economics first’ and by presidential immersion in domestic agendas, the political framework for the later years was established by the Republican legislative election victories of 1994. State, along with the entire foreign aid budget became a hunting ground for Republican budget-cutters, led by Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Jesse Helms. In 1995, Helms proposed to collapse the quasi-independent Agency for International Development (AID), the US Information Agency (USIA) and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) into the State Department, pending a ‘major re-examination of attitudinal, procedural and management issues within the department itself’ (9). Helms’ initial plan was vetoed by Clinton, though the US Information Agency and ACDA were formally incorporated into the State Department in 1999. Though some of the reorganisation actually consolidated State’s authority, Clinton’s Secretaries of State had to fight hard for funding against a background of legislative assault and poor departmental morale. Warren Christopher informed Congress in 1996 that the US international budget had *already* been cut by half in real dollars since 1989. State Department employees began to display buttons bearing the slogan, ‘JUST ONE PER CENT’ – a reminder of the actual proportion of federal tax dollars devoted to non-military foreign spending.

Some thirty-two US embassies and consulates closed between 1993 and 1997. Under Warren Christopher and Madeleine Albright, the State Department was subject to constant and interminable reorganisations. In 1993, Vice-President Al Gore’s ‘reinventing government’ plan called for the integration of State’s ‘policy, program and resource management processes’ to suit its post-Cold War role and its ‘increasingly limited’ resources’ (10). A 1996 report from former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and former Ambassador Robert Barry resulted in a major expansion in the role of undersecretaries, constituting a kind of ‘corporate board’ for the Secretary (11). An internal report, *State 2000*, called for the radical integration of foreign and domestic policy, concluding: ‘We must learn, in fact, to see them as two parts of the same whole’ (12).

The problems of the State Department during the Clinton era – problems of direction and purpose, uncertainties connected to new threats and new agendas abroad, as well as the politics of divided government in Washington – were also the challenges facing Clinton’s foreign policy as a whole. How did Christopher and Albright measure up to them, particularly in the context of transatlantic relations?

## WARREN CHRISTOPHER

Unveiling a portrait of Warren Christopher in 1999, President Clinton described his first Secretary of State as America’s first diplomat in over 50 years to face ‘the challenge of defining our foreign policy without a single, overriding threat to our security’. Clinton also noted: ‘Chris has the lowest ratio of ego to accomplishment of any public servant I’ve ever worked with’ (13). For Madeleine Albright, Christopher was ‘a lawyer’s lawyer, who emphasized preparation, precision and perseverance’. Stories circulated about his mildness, his fastidiousness and his reluctance to express emotion. On a stopover visit in Ireland, Christopher famously ordered a decaffeinated Irish coffee with no alcohol. For Albright, he was ‘the consummate team player’ (14). To his critics, he was ‘Dean Rusk without the charisma’. For sceptical Democrats, he fell short of the job requirements for Secretary in the post-Cold War era. To quote David Halberstam: ‘Christopher, they thought, was too much the functionary, a capable and highly competent bureaucrat, but probably a limited one, a man lacking originality and beliefs of his own’ (15).

Christopher had been a deputy to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in the Carter administration, known particularly for his work in coordinating the human rights policy at interagency level and for his role in the Iran hostage diplomacy of 1979-80 (16). He worked on the Clinton transition team from his base in California. Leading candidates for the job of Secretary of State included Ed Muskie (for whom Christopher had worked following Vance’s 1980 resignation), Zbigniew Brzezinski (National Security Adviser under Carter), and Senator Sam Nunn (Democratic chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee).. Compared to other candidates, Christopher was indeed a team player and this seems to have increased his attractiveness to Clinton. Warren Christopher formed a solid link to the previous

Democratic administration, but one whose relatively low profile lessened the possibility of old conflicts being reignited. At 67, he was a Democratic 'grey-head'; several commentators pointed out that Christopher was precisely the same age as Clinton's deceased father (William Jefferson Blythe) would have been. During the transition Christopher was, according to Clinton, 'a whirlwind of activity' (17). Yet Christopher's effectiveness was hampered not only by Clinton's own unpredictable interventions, but also by his natural lack of forcefulness (18). As a prospective Secretary of State, Christopher had the advantage of being considerably younger than Muskie and personally more amenable to Clinton than Sam Nunn (19). Clinton seems, nevertheless, to have continued to regard Nunn as a species of Secretary-of-State-in-waiting, a situation which apparently prompted Christopher to offer his resignation in 1994. In due course, Clinton became reconciled to the Christopher style, valuing Christopher's reliability and dignified loyalty. According to Raymond Seitz (US ambassador to London), Christopher stood out in the early Clinton team 'like an adult in a kindergarten' (20).

Warren Christopher's problems included the lack of guaranteed presidential access. To some extent this was connected to the new 'economics first' agenda. US Trade Representative Mickey Kantor seemed to have better access to Clinton. Christopher had major difficulties both in articulating a post-Cold War vision and in asserting his leadership at State. To some degree this was a matter of personality and style. Seitz recalled him advocating the 'lift and strike' policy in Bosnia in 1993 'with all the verve of a solicitor going over a conveyancing deed' (21). For Sidney Blumenthal, Christopher had 'the appearance of gravity' but was 'without a vision' (22). Clinton's first Secretary of State also endured some damaging diplomatic calamities which undermined his reputation as a safe pair of hands. The European trip of May 1993 was actually acutely discomfiting for Christopher. His role in the Haiti decisions of 1994 was minimal – a fact reflected in the omission of discussion of the invasion from his memoir, *Chances of a Lifetime* (23). His subsequent visit to China, during which the authorities took the opportunity to arrest leading dissidents, also contributed to his reputation for ineffectuality (24). Within State itself, Christopher had public disagreements with Undersecretary Peter Tarnoff over the viability of 'assertive multilateralism'. The appointment of long-standing Clinton friend Strobe Talbott to lead Russia policy at State also ruffled feathers at the Department and raised

particular managerial difficulties for the Secretary. Clinton's shift to activism over Bosnia in 1995-6 additionally involved the recognition of Richard Holbrooke, rather than Christopher himself, as the effective leader of policy in this area. (25).

If Warren Christopher had his share of diplomatic embarrassments, his professional style generally saw him through. Even on the wider issue of 'vision', it can be argued that Christopher has been judged rather unfairly. Following the 'Kennan sweepstakes' agenda largely set by Tony Lake, Christopher made numerous efforts to construct a new rhetorical vision for American internationalism without the Soviet threat. He was certainly not helped but his own lack of personal forcefulness, yet others in the administration scarcely fared better. It may also be argued that the 'threat-less' early 1990s was not a propitious time for grand declaratory statements of internationalist purpose. The George H. W. Bush foreign policy team had provided a successful adjustment to post-Cold War conditions with little beyond the vague – and swiftly derided - 'New World Order' concept of 1990. 'Vision' can too often degenerate into rigidity, embarrassment and hot air. Yet to go too far along this line of argument would be to underplay unduly the need of the Clinton team to produce a meaningful successor to anti-communist containment as an integrating formula for the new foreign policy. The early notion of 'enlargement' (of markets and democracies) fitted the priorities of the Clinton administration well enough. However, it achieved little wider credibility, and became hopelessly confused in the public consciousness with NATO enlargement.

Beyond 'enlargement', the early Clinton team vision for foreign policy centred on the global environmental agenda. Frequently denigrated, especially at NSC level as 'globaloney', global environmentalism had been given a formal ranking at State in 1993, when Congress was persuaded to create the new post of Undersecretary for Global Affairs. The first such undersecretary was former Senator James Wirth, whose brief encompassed much of what was to become the 'new security agenda' of cross-border threats of the later 1990s. Christopher is generally credited with little in the way of developing this agenda within State. He did have a commitment here, nevertheless. His concern for the environment ran back to his boyhood interests in North Dakota; he was influenced by Al Gore's environmental arguments and by the ideas of David Kennedy, a leading environmental campaigner and president of



Stanford University. Christopher actually gave, at Stanford University in April 1996, what seems to have been the first ever speech by a Secretary of State devoted entirely to environmental concerns. He outlined the ‘new threats’ such as ‘terrorism, weapons proliferation, drug trafficking and international crime’, but went on to emphasise particularly ‘the vast new dangers posed to our national interests by damage to the environment and resulting global and regional instability’ (26).

Christopher’s orientation to the duties of Secretary was, in Sidney Blumenthal’s word, ‘lawyerly’ rather than mission-driven (27). His policy stances, especially towards the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, were rooted in a caution which derived to some degree, no doubt, from his character, but also from internalised ‘lessons of Vietnam’. For Dick Morris, Warren Christopher was insufficiently ‘political’ (28). His intellectual orientation was towards incremental problem-solving rather than wider strategic development. At the bureaucratic level, Christopher was not particularly adept at defending State Department budgets and prerogatives. Following a State Department ‘Strategic Management Initiative’ in 1994, he actually set in motion the process of collapsing AID, ACDA and USIA into the State Department – a programme which was, as we have seen, taken up after 1994 by Jesse Helms. Warren Christopher’s defence of his department against Republican budget-cutters amounted essentially to his often repeated assertion that the 1994 elections ‘were not a license to lose sight of our global interests or to walk away from our commitments’ (29). A State Department official writing in the *Foreign Service Journal* noted that the Secretary’s strategy was ‘to use a Masada, stand-or-die tactic, refusing to identify which parts of the foreign affairs community he is prepared to sacrifice’. This had the effect that all parts of the budget became ‘equally vulnerable to congressional budget axes’ (30). Following the 1995 Republican Congressional takeover, Christopher found himself damaged not only by his less than sure footed response to the new legislative environment, but also increasingly embarrassed by the super-activism of his deputy Richard Holbrooke. Christopher is usually regarded as a poor choice as Clinton’s first Secretary of State. This is a little harsh. Christopher was a useful anchor for the frequently wayward early Clinton foreign policy process. Nevertheless, in a difficult time for internationalist diplomacy, Christopher failed to achieve that reputation for policy effectiveness in Washington which is a precondition for success.

## MADELEINE ALBRIGHT

The flamboyance of America's first female Secretary of State contrasted sharply with the style of her predecessor. Her appointment was aided by the support of Hillary Clinton. It was also assisted by the fact that, compared to her main rival, Richard Holbrooke – favoured by Vice President Gore as Christopher's successor – she was actually *less* inclined to grandstanding and freelancing. There were also indications that she was a Secretary of State who was broadly acceptable to the Republican leadership in Congress. She was confirmed by the US Senate, 99-0. The other main contender to succeed Christopher was Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell. Albright typically embarked on a Washington 'campaign' for the post. As she put it in her memoirs: 'I doubted that George Mitchell and Dick Holbrooke were sitting demurely at home waiting for the phone to ring' (31). The key to her strategy lay in the development of a counter-network of Washington contacts and in finessing the gender issue. The key was to avoid any suggestion that the appointment be 'made a litmus test of the President's commitment to womens' rights'. Clinton had already made numerous high-profile female appointments and was unlikely to respond positively to any attempt to railroad him into naming the first female Secretary of State. The Albright camp actually urged restraint upon womens' groups in connection with the appointment; the idea of issuing a pro-Albright letter to female members of Congress was shelved (32).

As US Representative to the United Nations during the first Clinton administration, Albright had been associated with concept of 'assertive multilateralism'. The expansiveness of this early vision was quite swiftly undercut by the more restrained pragmatism put forward by Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff, as well as by Clinton's own Presidential Directive 25 (33). Albright's most celebrated comments as Secretary of State related to the view of America as 'indispensable nation' and to her description of her own 'mindset' as 'Munich not Vietnam' (34). The 'indispensable nation' mantra was taken up by key administration figures. Introducing his new Secretary of State in December 1996, Clinton made a point of using the phrase. The

‘Munich not Vietnam’ motto was designed to fix the view of Albright as a principled doer rather than a pragmatic temporiser. It fitted in, of course, with her extraordinary family history. As Strobe Talbott later put it: ‘More than any of the rest of us, she was literally a child of the cold war: she had been eleven in 1948, when a Soviet-instigated coup d’etat forced her parents to gather up the family and flee their native Czechoslovakia’ (35). Brought up a Roman Catholic, Albright only discovered her Jewish origins following her appointment to Foggy Bottom. Opposing Christopher, Albright had strongly supported the invasion of Haiti in 1994. As Secretary of State she was in the vanguard of the administration’s activist wing in relation to Balkans policy. Her own self-assessment was as a ‘pragmatic idealist’ – a Dean Acheson for the 1990s. For Thomas Lippman, she ‘struggled throughout her tenure to reconcile her proud image as a tough-talking, straight-shooting “doer” with the administration’s *Candide*-like belief in human improvement – that is, with its embrace of global meliorism’ (36).

Albright certainly seems to have seen herself as a counterbalance to the administration’s wider tendencies both to naïve ‘do-goodery’ and to pragmatic wilting under pressure. Here was a Secretary of State who was manifestly not short on ‘vision’. Numerous speeches – for example, her address in Prague of July 1997, her Harvard commencement address of June 1997 and her Henry Stimson Center speech of June 1998 – outlined her expansive, interventionist and anti-appeasement views. A former assistant to Zbigniew Brzezinski, Albright had, in David Halberstam’s words, ‘climbed the foreign policy establishment carefully and slowly’; yet, beyond her general reputation for hawkishness, ‘no one associated her with any particular view or wing’ of the Democratic Party (37). As UN Representative, Albright had been prominent in broadening the US remit in Somalia and had argued without success for more activism on Bosnia. During the second administration, she wasted no opportunity to remind her listeners, often including the president himself, of the stated ‘goal that America should remain the world’s strongest force for peace, liberty, prosperity and security, so that we can build a future for the next generation free from the worries and plagues of the past’ (38). Her model was Dean Acheson. ‘The test of our leadership, although far different in specifics’, wrote Albright in 1998, ‘is essentially the same as that confronted by Acheson’s postwar generation’ (39). The task at hand was nothing less than the creation of a post-Cold war liberal world order,

with American power as its fulcrum. The Clinton administration needed to match the ‘leadership and creativity’ of the Truman/Acheson years. In some respects the contemporary challenge was easier. ‘In truth’, Albright acknowledged, ‘Acheson confronted a chorus of critics far fiercer than mine’ (40). Even the Congressional Republican leadership after 1994 did not attack Albright’s basic loyalty in the way their predecessors had attacked Acheson’s in the 1940s. In the 1990s, according to Albright, the danger was as much the post-Cold War ambivalence towards internationalism as political partisanship. ‘We invest fewer resources in defense, diplomacy, and development. Since nations no longer need our protection from the Soviet Union, our international leverage, despite our strength, is not what it was in Acheson’s day’ (41).

Albright’s role as a policy advocate was seen most clearly in respect to the Balkans. By the time of her arrival at the State Department, Bosnian policy had already shifted, and Christopher-like caution was strongly out of fashion. Indeed, her appointment was itself an aspect of the Clinton administration’s shift on Bosnia. Her major substantive impact was on policy towards Kosovo in 1999. Clinton himself, Defence Secretary William Cohen and Sandy Berger were far from sure that force would work in Kosovo. At a Principals’ meeting on June 15, Albright’s case for a strong line against Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic was met by “‘there goes Madeleine again” glances’ (42). Albright’s reputation is closely bound up with what a *Time* magazine cover during the Kosovo bombing campaign dubbed ‘Madeleine’s War’. Defending US conduct in the approach to conflict, she later dismissed as ‘nonsense’ the view that, at the Rambouillet conference in February 1999, ‘we missed signals from Belgrade that Milosevic was willing to sign an agreement’ (43).

Beyond the Balkans, Albright was a high-profile Secretary who was, in contrast to Christopher, relatively unconcerned about making enemies. Like Christopher, she tended to see State’s takeover of AID, ACDA and USIA as something of a gain for her own department, rather than a victory for Republican budget cutters (44). Though unable to halt the dynamic of Republican foreign aid and foreign affairs budget cutting, she developed a surprisingly good relationship with Jesse Helms. In March 1997, she was actually photographed holding Helms’ hand at a joint lecture in North Carolina. There ensued a *quid pro quo* wherein the administration accepted the

organisational changes to the Agency for International Development, the US Information Agency and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, in return for Helms' agreement to push for ratification of an international agreement which barred the development of chemical weapons. (The Chemical Weapons Convention passed the Senate in April 1997) (45). Albright was the highest-ever ranking US diplomat to visit North Korea (October 2000). She supported and identified herself with the policy shifts of the second Clinton administration, including intense bombing and the embrace of the doctrine of 'regime change' in Iraq (46). The second Clinton administration was also increasingly willing to countenance unilateral policy options. Indeed the Kosovo campaign, which was waged without UN authorisation, exposed a difficulty in working with the NATO allies which was to be reflected in later US caution about multilateral warfare (47). Albright also played a central role in the various Middle East initiatives of 1997-8 and 2000. The villain at Camp David in 2000 was, according to Albright, Yasser Arafat: 'the Palestinians 'wouldn't yield a dime to make a dollar' (48). She wrote in 2006 that Arafat 'could have been the first president of an internationally recognised Palestine'. Instead, 'he chose ... the applause of supporters who praised him for refusing to sign away even a slice of "Arab land" or acknowledge the sovereignty of Israel over the Western Wall' (49).

Albright was not devoid of pragmatism; her line on Kosovo in the early part of 1999, for example, was muted in face of the bureaucratic obstacles which then presented themselves (50). However, as her account of the Camp David negotiations demonstrates, her approach to international questions was relatively straightforward, swift in identifying the 'bad guy', and rather short on nuance. In these respects she was the opposite of Christopher. Her enemies within the administration certainly included Defence Secretary William Cohen. She also clashed on occasion with Sandy Berger, though she appears to have recognised that the National Security Adviser frequently reflected the complex doubts, especially regarding Kosovo, of Clinton himself. Later on a major critic of the interventionist foreign policy of the George W. Bush administration (51), in some respects, she laid the foundations for it.

## CHRISTOPHER, ALBRIGHT AND NATO ENLARGEMENT

The case for enlarging NATO in the early part of the first Clinton administration was made within the State Department, not by Christopher, but in a widely circulated memo from Lynn Davis, Undersecretary for International Security. In August 1993, Davis and State Policy Planning head Sam Lewis formally put the case for enlargement to the Secretary of State. According to Davis and Lewis, the fudging of the enlargement issue, which had taken place under the George H.W. Bush administration, should not continue. Further ‘avoidance of this issue will undermine NATO by reinforcing the growing perception that the Alliance is only marginally involved in addressing Europe’s new security problems’ (52).

Christopher generally accepted the line being urged upon him by his juniors at State, who were now being supported by Tony Lake at the NSC. The case against enlargement was presented to Christopher by some fifteen senior diplomats, who anchored their case in the likely reaction in Moscow. Outlining an argument that was to be taken up by none less than George Kennan, the diplomats asserted that enlargement would isolate Russia. The project of integrating Russia into western security, economic and political networks had been an important part of the late- and post-Cold War dynamic, and had brought success. Extending NATO up to the Russian border would engender perceptions of encirclement, marginalisation and even gratuitous humiliation (53).

In June 1993, Christopher was prepared, at the Athens NATO summit, to hold open the prospect of enlargement though with little in the way of definite commitment. By early 1994, he was defending NATO expansion as a contribution to ‘European stability and to transatlantic burden-sharing’ (54). The push for expansion was kept alive by the Partnership for Peace agreement with Moscow, announced in January 1994. Partnership for Peace, a compromise between the pro-expansion State Department (led in this policy area by Strobe Talbott) and the cautious Pentagon, represented an effort to ease Russian worries by bringing Moscow into a modulated consultative role with NATO. At this stage, Clinton also announced his own commitment to expansion – to a position not of ‘whether’ it would occur, but ‘when’. During 1994-5, the key mover of the enlargement agenda at State was Richard

Holbrooke, who was appointed as Assistant Secretary for Europe and Canada in September 1994. Holbrooke worked with an inter-agency bureaucratic coalition, with Nicholas Burns and Alexander Vershbow at the NSC. The split with the Defence Department became apparent with the issuing of the ‘Perry principles’ – Secretary Perry’s conditions for accepting new NATO members – during 1995. While the Pentagon demanded progress towards democratic accountability and compatibility of armed forces between new and old members, Christopher became an important public advocate of the programme. In September 1996, with the Partnership for Peace now agreed with Moscow, Christopher announced that the first invitations to join the new NATO would be issued in 1997. It was widely assumed that these invitations would go to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. As the presidential election approached, however, Christopher’s own bureaucratic standing slipped in the anticipation that he would no longer be in office after January 2007. Tony Lake issued his memo, ‘NATO Enlargement Agenda Game Plan’ in June 1996 and on *his* departure from office in January 1997, handed over the policy lead to the new National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger (55).

Portrayed by Moscow as ‘Madam Steel’, Clinton’s new Secretary of State was an unambiguous advocate for expansion. By this time, some of Moscow’s more serious fears had been allayed, not only by the Partnership for Peace, but also by the apparently mutually agreeable settlement in Bosnia. Albright’s Senate confirmation statement set the tone for her stance on NATO. Characteristically calling up the shade of Dean Acheson, she looked ‘to do for Europe’s East what NATO did 50 years ago for Europe’s West: to integrate new democracies, defeat old hatreds, provide confidence in economic recovery and deter conflict’ (56). Strobe Talbott recalled her saying that she felt the case for admitting the Central European countries into NATO ‘in my bones and in my genes’ (57). Moscow’s final reconciliation to expansion occurred at the Helsinki summit of March 1997 alongside new cooperative agreements. Russian President Boris Yeltsin was prepared to accept expansion provided no former Soviet states were included in the first accessions. Albright’s role in all this was central. At Helsinki she developed working relationships with Yeltsin and with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov. Replying to Yeltsin’s comments about her Cold War Czech background, she replied (as Strobe Talbott puts it ‘rather sternly’): ‘A new Russia has been born and it has nothing in common with

the former Soviet Union, and that goes for Russian foreign policy as well' (58). At the Sintra (Portugal) NATO meeting in May 1997, she persuaded the West Europeans to restrict the number of new entrants to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. NATO's decision was finalised in Madrid in July. Following the Madrid summit, Albright gave an emotional account of the enlargement process in Prague, talking of 'three journeys': her own journey to America, Europe's journey from war and communism, and the Czech Republic's journey to its 'rightful place in the family of European democracies' (59). Her main priority now was to persuade the US Senate to ratify the new arrangements. Her successful campaign emphasised NATO adaptation and burden-sharing, as well as the march of democracy. The campaign went hand-in-hand with an assault on the forces of neo-isolationism and American introversion. At Harvard University in June 1997, for example, she urged her country not to forget 'what the history of this century reminds us, that problems abroad, if left unattended, will all too often come home to America' (60). The new members were welcomed to the Washington NATO summit in 1999.

The story of NATO enlargement under Clinton puts into sharp focus the differences between his two Secretaries of State. Christopher worked slowly, reacting to the pro-enlargement bureaucratic consensus as it built. His style was rational, cautious and sometimes dilatory. Albright was emotional, utterly committed to the cause of NATO expansion, and also extremely effective, especially in dealing with NATO allies and with the US Senate in the ratification debate. In the first Clinton term, as James Goldgeier argues, Tony Lake was the enlargement 'conceptualizer' and Richard Holbrooke its 'enforcer' (61). Yet the picture had changed by 1997. Albright did not have to develop new arguments, merely to run with the dynamic begun in the first administration. More generally, though she articulated a forceful case for committed American internationalism and greatly raised the profile of the State Department, she was unable to secure resources for American diplomacy commensurate with the role of 'indispensable nation'. The White House, rather than Foggy Bottom, remained in control of major foreign policy initiatives. Even at the end of the Clinton years, State remained a body which was struggling to come to terms with a world without the integrating Soviet threat.



## NOTES

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