Marines pull the body of a fallen comrade from the rubble after a terrorist truck bomb destroyed a barracks in Beirut, killing 241, in 1983; public support for the mission increased *after the incident.*

Lebanon was divided before the bombing, with most Americans disapproving. Support for the mission *increased* after the October barracks bombing, rising from 40 percent in September to 61 percent in November. By early 1984, however, the public apparently had cooled off or come to see the operation as futile, for its approval retreated to pre-attack levels. In February, President Ronald Reagan pulled the marines out of Beirut, and the next month, formally ended the U.S. peacekeeping role.

In the case of Somalia, public support for the mission did fall (to less than 40 percent approval, by one survey) in reaction to the firefight in Mogadishu that left 18 Rangers dead, Burk says. But support had already declined sharply before the incident—from more than 80 percent approval in January 1993 to less than 50 percent in September. The mission, Burk notes, had changed: what began as a Bush administration humanitarian famine-relief effort became after that January, a Clinton administration attempt to end the civil war in Somalia and build a new nation. The American public did not go along with the change of mission.

Most Americans do consider the risk of casualties "a crucial, perhaps the most important, factor affecting their support of a decision to use armed force," Burk writes. And in past ventures overseas, as political scientist John Mueller showed in *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (1973), the accumulation of casualties over time did lead to an erosion of public support in the Korean and Vietnam wars. But that is not the same, Burk notes, as saying "that the public will only support what are virtually casualty-free military deployments."

Invite the Bear?

"Rethinking Europe" by Charles A. Kupchan, in *The National Interest* (Summer 1999), 1112 16th St., N.W., Ste. 540, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Enlarging the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) may have been a bad idea, but now that Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic have been admitted, argues Kupchan, a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, enlargement

Why Wright Was Wrong

In *The Power Elite* (1956), one of the classic books of the 1950s, sociologist C. Wright Mills maintained that behind the democratic facade, power in America rested with a small circle of leaders in the military, big business, and government. The military would become ever more dominant, he predicted. Alan Wolfe, a sociologist at Boston University, observes in *The American Prospect* (May–June 1999) that Mills was wrong for an interesting reason.

At the time Mills wrote, defense expenditures constituted roughly 60 percent of all federal outlays and consumed nearly 10 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product. By the late 1990s, those proportions had fallen to 17 percent of federal outlays and 3.5 percent of GDP. Nearly three million Americans served in the armed forces when The Power Elite *appeared, but that number had dropped by half at century's end. By almost any account, Mills's prediction . . . is not borne out by historical developments since his time.*

And how could he have been right? Business firms, still the most powerful force in American life, are increasingly global in nature, more interested in protecting their profits wherever they are made than in the defense of the country in which perhaps only a minority of their employees live and work. Give most of the leaders of America's largest companies a choice between invading another country and investing in its industries and they will nearly always choose the latter over the former. Mills believed that in the 1950s, for the first time in American history, the military elite had formed a strong alliance with the economic elite. Now it would be more correct to say that America's economic elite finds more in common with economic elites in other countries than it does with the military elite of its own. The Power Elite *failed to foresee a situation in which at least one of the key elements of the power elite would no longer identify its fate with the fate of the country which spawned it.*

must be continued in order to embrace an unlikely new recruit: Russia.

"Committing to enlargement is to commit to establishing NATO as *the* central vehicle for building a stable Europe," he writes. "To halt its expansion at Poland's eastern border therefore makes no strategic sense." European stability in the coming decades will depend crucially on "whether Russia exercises its power in a benign or malign manner," Kupchan maintains, and with Russia inside NATO, the West can better support democratic reform there and encourage responsible behavior.

"To buy time for Russian democracy to deepen and for its economy to recover and mature, a small second wave of enlargement, one not likely to provoke Russia (Slovenia, Austria, and Romania are prime candidates), should begin immediately," Kupchan urges. "But the third wave should include Russia—so long as its economic and political circumstances improve." He suggests 2010 as "a reasonable target date for Russia's entry into NATO."

Were NATO enlargement halted now, Kupchan argues, the "security predicament" of those states that lie between NATO nations and Russia (the Baltics, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Belarus, and Ukraine) would be worsened; or if those states were gradually admitted to the organization, Russia would be dangerously isolated—and unlikely to "stand by idly as every country on its western flank joins an opposing military bloc."

With Russia inside NATO, Kupchan contends, "the Atlantic community [would have] more influence over developments in Europe's east. . . . At stake are the security of Russia's nuclear weapons and technology, Russia's relationship with China, the stability of Ukraine, and access to Caspian oil—interests that warrant deep Western engagement."

Russian membership, of course, would alter the character of the alliance, which was formed a half-century ago to counter the Soviet threat to Western Europe. But that danger no longer exists, notes Kupchan. He formerly opposed enlargement because it would needlessly irk Russia, would resurrect the dividing line between Europe's west and east, and ignored the need to fundamentally redefine the organization. "NATO must transform itself if it is to remain relevant," he writes. "Its focus on defending the territory of members needs to give way to an emphasis on peacekeeping and on deepening cooperation among former adversaries."

As NATO is thus transformed, Europe must take up more of its own security burden, Kupchan says. In the long run, he believes, "a more balanced relationship between the United States and Europe, and a European security order that is more European and less Atlantic, hold out the best hope for preserving a cohesive transatlantic community."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

A New Age of Productivity?

A Survey of Recent Articles

U.S. labor productivity has been growing at an average annual rate of nearly two percent since early 1995—and even faster in recent quarters. For some prophets of the Information Age, that rather dry sentence is like the sun at long last breaking through the clouds of economic statistics. *Finally*, proof that the oft-heralded "new era" has arrived!

Most economists, however, remain skeptical. Daniel E. Sichel, a senior economist with the Federal Reserve System, concedes that the recent productivity performance raises "the tantalizing possibility" that businesses are finally reaping the long-awaited benefits of information technology. But maybe not.

Sichel—one of seven authors who address the subject of productivity in *Business Economics* (Apr. 1999)—detects a "sharp increase in the contribution of computer hardware to output growth" in recent years, but believes that this may well be only "a transitory response" to a good economy and tumbling computer prices, which encourage corporations to buy more computers.

The recent acceleration in the growth of productivity, maintain Congressional Budget Office economists Robert Arnold and Robert Dennis, is partly the result of recent revisions in the Consumer Price Index to prevent overestimates of inflation. Indirectly, say Arnold and Dennis, those revisions probably boosted measured productivity growth by between .3 and .4 percentage points. They, too, point to the transitory effect of a flush economy.

Despite all the "new era" talk, Arnold and Dennis observe, "the vaunted upturn is far from bringing us back to the high productivity growth of the 1950s and 1960s." Between 1947 and 1973, that growth averaged 2.7 percent a year; between 1973 and 1998, 1.1 percent. The "slowdown," note Arnold and Dennis, may actually represent a return to more normal conditions.

New (Economic) Age types often point to the healthy corporate profits of recent years despite only modest price increases, observe economic consultants Susan C. Lakatos and Jason Benderly. "Corporate restructuring and technological advancement (in particular, the nearly universal adoption of personal computers)" are said to be the source of productivity gains. If that were so, the authors say, then large corporations, which have been "on the leading edge of the restructuring and technology revolutions," should collectively outperform the economy. The large corporations in the Standard & Poor's 500 Stock Index have indeed enjoyed dramatic growth in profits in recent years—but no better than that of other companies. The big increase in profits, Lakatos and Benderly believe, has come from falling interest rates and the abandon-