

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Promises, Promises

THE SOURCE: "Pie Crust Promises and the Sources of Foreign Policy: The Limited Impact of Accession and the Priority of Domestic Constituencies" by Stephen M. Saideman and R. William Ayres, in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, July 2007.

THROUGHOUT THE 1990s, THE allure of joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union captivated the nations of Eastern Europe. But membership was not automatic. The original members of NATO and the EU made it clear that only the well-behaved needed apply, and that the official costs of acceptance would be steep.

Among a multitude of other requirements, NATO and the EU required the countries knocking on their doors to be democracies with market economies, to make either military or economic contributions to the community, and to protect minorities. Border disputes between countries that had been mortal enemies for centuries were expected to be resolved.

But "international institutions are overrated," write Stephen M. Saideman and R. William Ayres, of McGill University and Pennsylvania's Elizabethtown College, respectively. "Membership processes as instruments of influence on foreign and domestic policy are inherently limited." Membership is political, and if it helps the incumbent members to

admit a country, they do so—regardless of the formal merits of the applicant. Moreover, there are so many conditions of membership that the significance of each one pales in comparison to the others. Treaties can be signed and not implemented. Laws can be passed and not enforced. And once a country is admitted, it is quite free to backslide into business as usual. Kicking out backsliding members would be incredibly hard or impossible.

Membership in NATO and the EU is coveted because the former significantly increases a nation's security and the latter carries grand implications of "joining Europe" and is considered necessary for economic success. Even so, when average voters in Eastern Europe marked their ballots for a new government, it didn't much matter whether the candidates were for or against joining. The transition

from communism to capitalism was so brutal that in most elections, the electorate just chose to throw the bums out, Saideman and Ayres write.

Admission, the authors say, became less a question of "what you do" than "who you know." Cyprus was admitted even though it failed to reunify its Greek- and Turkish-dominated sections. Greece, an incumbent member of the EU, was Cyprus's patron, and admitting the island was Greece's price for supporting EU expansion. France pushed for the inclusion of Romania—which wasn't up to EU snuff on crime fighting and judicial reform—in part to offset the admission of pro-American Poland.

The Baltic states posed a difficult problem. They had sketchy records on minority issues (especially the treatment of Russians), but denying them admission would have seemed a

victory for the Russian heirs of the Soviet Union, under whose hated yoke Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania had chafed for more than half a century. They were admitted.

Hungary—whose wary neighbors have historically been sensitive to its irredentist tendencies—signed border pacts with Romania and Slovakia before joining NATO and the EU. Several writers have cited these treaties as success stories of the "conditionality" membership process. Saideman and Ayres, however, contend that Hungary agreed to

EXCERPT

Reconnoitering Ramadi

The homes were all behind tall, sand-colored walls that made it impossible for us to see what was happening inside. It was this type of structure that worried me during our senseless night patrols in downtown ar Ramadi, since anyone could just drop a grenade, or throw it from behind one of the walls, and then fire at us from the rooftops. There was nowhere to run, no cover, no ditch, no trench, just long roads with high walls that despised us.

—CAMILO MEJÍA, Army serviceman who served almost nine months in prison for refusing to return to Iraq, author of *The Road From Ar Ramadi: The Private Rebellion of Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejía*, in *Colortines* (July–Aug. 2007)

the border treaties because in return it received something more valuable for domestic political purposes: better protection for the 1.5 million Hungarians living in Romania and the 500,000 in Slovakia. So instead of being pushed by the NATO and EU application processes to abandon any territorial ambitions, Hungary has used them to advance its own foreign-policy objectives. It has since gone a very independent way, going so far as to purchase arms from a non-NATO country.

An accession promise, the authors say, is similar to Mary Poppins's description of pie crust: Easily made, easily broken.

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Terror in the Fields

THE SOURCE: "Responding to Systemic Crisis: The Case of Agroterrorism" by Lesley Seebeck, in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Sept. 2007.

"FOR THE LIFE OF ME," SAID SECRETARY of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson when he stepped down in 2004, "I cannot understand why the terrorists have not attacked our food supply, because it is so easy to do."

Anthrax and citrus canker are examples of contagions that could devastate agriculture. But no potential weapon would be cheaper or simpler to introduce than foot-and-mouth disease in livestock. The most contagious of all mammal diseases, it is common in the developing world, where it can be easily captured and transported without danger to humans. It debilitates animals, reducing



All nearby animals, even pets, were killed and burned to halt a foot-and-mouth outbreak in Britain.

their milk and killing their young. A small outbreak can devastate a nation's livestock industry.

"An agroterrorist attack lacks the shock value of immediate and bloody human carnage," writes Lesley Seebeck, an analyst in strategic policy for Australia's Department of Defense. But as antiterrorism efforts make mass murder harder to achieve, terrorist groups could change tactics.

Seebeck's inquiry into foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks in Britain during 1967–68 and again six years ago produced sobering results: The lessons learned in the 1960s offered little help later on. Modern agriculture, with its feedlots and factory farms, antibiotic-resistant germs, rapid movement of goods, and reduced inspections, has created many new vulnerabilities.

In 2001, the first cases of foot-and-mouth were discovered on February 19, among pigs that had eaten infected swill, possibly from a local Chinese restaurant that may have imported meat illegally from Asia. By the time British authorities were alerted, the virus had spread to 57

locations in 16 counties. Sheep and cattle were also affected.

Researchers scrambled to build computer models based on the 1960s crisis to help anticipate events. The models were simplistic, according to Seebeck, and lab work was slow. "Peace-time testing systems" were unable to cope with the demands of a nationwide outbreak.

London soon issued a draconian order: Slaughter all animals within 24 hours of infection, and all animals within a radius of nearly a mile within 48 hours. Researchers estimated afterward that well over 80 percent of the slaughtered animals had been healthy.

Eight months after the infection, technicians identified the last case. The outbreak had cost Britain as much as \$10 billion.

For this kind of threat, Seebeck writes, there is no single strategy. It can't be stopped at the border. An adequate defense must extend from beyond the horizon—tracking threats around the world—to local farmers and officials able to serve as first responders if trouble starts.