

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A. Conclusion

After the Cold War ended, the United States sought not only to preserve the transatlantic alliance but also to enlarge it. This research proves that the rationale to preserve and enlarge the alliance was largely compatible with offensive realism. Evidence in the form of declassified materials from two U.S. presidential administrations suggests that both the Bush and Clinton administrations based their policy on sound strategic motives: to extend America's power and influence over Europe. Both presidents had to deal with uncertainty surrounding the Soviets and then Russia's future. Under Bush, the United States was not expecting the Soviet Union to collapse and had to prepare for a post-Cold War world where the Soviet Union was still a potential geopolitical threat in Europe. This underlines the Bush administration's support for German reunification and the subsequent inclusion of a reunified Germany into NATO. With the Clinton administration, the United States faced an even more favorable security environment. The United States recognized the profound changes the end of the Cold War had brought and sought to capitalize. Nonetheless, the Clinton administration still had to deal with the uncertainty problem in the forms of ongoing conflicts in the Balkans and democratic reforms taking place inside Central and Eastern European countries, especially Russia. Taking advantage of America's unrivaled primacy, the Clinton administration promoted the expansion of free market and democratic governance through NATO enlargement to create a security environment that is much more favorable to U.S. interests and values. At the same time, the United States was also hedging against the possibility of Russia taking on an aggressive foreign policy in the future.

B. Suggestions

Findings of this study are worth further analysis. My research has largely been based upon internet-accessible archival materials. And while the evidence from these materials supports the central thesis of this research, further and more complete examinations of the archival collections could shed new light into the rationale for enlarging NATO after the Cold War. Therefore, it is for those

historians and political scientists who have the capital to make direct visits to presidential libraries in order to examine the collection of documents related to NATO enlargement.