
Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty

By

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I will discuss NATO's [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] purposes in the Cold War and today; the role that NATO enlargement has played in advancing security and stability in Europe since 1989; the current proposed round of enlargement to include Albania and Croatia; and NATO's future relations with Georgia and Ukraine, whom NATO's leaders at the Bucharest Summit declared will become members of the Alliance. In addition, Russia's recent attack on Georgia and ongoing military activity in that country forms a backdrop to our discussion today.

NATO's Purpose

NATO, the world's most successful military alliance, has been and remains the principal security instrument of the transatlantic community of democracies. It is both a defensive alliance and an alliance of values. While it was created in the context of Soviet threats to European security, it is in fact not an alliance directed against any nation. Article 5 — NATO's collective defense commitment — mentions neither the Soviet Union nor any adversary. One of NATO's purposes was and remains to defend its members from attack. But another purpose was to provide a security umbrella under which rivalries among West European nations — France and Germany in particular — could be reconciled and general peace in Europe could prevail after the 20th century's two world wars. A third purpose was to institutionalize the transatlantic link. NATO's first Secretary General Lord Ismay described NATO's role in an acerbic but telling aphorism, saying that the Alliance's purposes were "to keep the Soviets out, the Germans down, and the Americans in." In the Cold War, NATO succeeded: under its umbrella, Western Europe remained free and united peacefully in the European Union.

Article 5 remains the core of the Alliance. Throughout most of the Alliance's history, we had expected that if Article 5 were ever invoked, it would have been in response to a Soviet armored assault on Germany. We never expected that Article 5 would be invoked in response to an attack on the United States originating in Afghanistan. But that is what occurred. NATO's response was swift and decisive. The United States was attacked on September 11, 2001; and on September 12, NATO invoked Article 5 for the first time in its history. In fact, while NATO's purpose of collective defense has remained constant, new threats have arisen. NATO thus has been required to carry out its core mandate in new ways, developing an expeditionary capability and comprehensive, civil-military skills. NATO is now "out of area" but very much in business — fielding major missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo and a training mission on the ground in Iraq. NATO is doing more now than at any time during the Cold War. While this is not the subject of our discussion today, NATO is still digesting the implications of these new requirements even as it continues fielding forces in Afghanistan.

NATO Enlargement

NATO enlargement was foreseen in principle from the beginning of NATO's existence with Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty. NATO brought in new members even during the Cold War: Turkey and Greece in 1952, West Germany in 1955, and Spain in 1982.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain and end of the Soviet Union, the purpose of defense against attack by Moscow seemed to recede. But NATO enlargement took on a more profound strategic aspect: for the

then-raw and apprehensive new democracies that emerged from the wreckage of the Soviet Bloc after the fall of Communism, NATO, ahead of the EU [European Union], became the institutional expression of their desire to join with Europe and the transatlantic world. For the United States and other NATO members, NATO enlargement, along with EU enlargement, became the means by which the vision of a “Europe whole, free, and at peace” started becoming reality.

American leadership in NATO enlargement was patient, deliberate, and the result of careful planning that began during the Administration of former President George H.W. Bush, crystallized under President Clinton, and evolved under President George W. Bush. The countries that had liberated themselves from Communism found themselves on uncertain ground, looking for direction. They were nervous about Russia. They were not yet confident in their own democratic institutions. And they were mindful of the problems of their last period of true sovereignty in [the] 1930s, when Europe, and especially Central and Eastern Europe, suffered from competing nationalisms and growing authoritarianism. Many worried that Eastern Europe after 1989 might fall back into the dangerous old habits of state-ism and nationalism and border and ethnic rivalries.

It was in this environment that NATO enlargement — occurring faster and initially with more determination than EU enlargement — became the instrument through which the Central and Eastern European countries reconciled with each other, and under which they advanced and completed reforms, setting aside nationalist rivalry much as their West European counterparts did after 1945. NATO made its first decisions about post-Cold War enlargement in 1997; and security, stability, and democracy deepened in Central Europe. With the terrible exception of the countries of the former Yugoslavia, which I will discuss later, the success that these countries achieved was so complete and so astonishing that few today even recall that Eastern Europe was widely expected to turn out otherwise. The policy of NATO enlargement, which many here today helped shape, was one of America’s and Europe’s greatest successes after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

NATO Enlargement & Russia

NATO enlargement was intended to achieve emergence of a Europe whole, free, and at peace: all of Europe, not just its Western half. It was not directed against Russia. Quite the contrary: NATO enlargement was designed to welcome new democracies in Europe in parallel to efforts to reach out to Russia and develop a new NATO-Russia relationship. In designing NATO’s new role for the post-Cold War world, the United States and NATO Allies have sought to advance NATO-Russia relations as far as the Russians would allow it to go.

We wanted a new Europe and a new relationship with Russia at the same time. We sought to go forward, not backwards. Through the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council [NRC] in 2002 — the same year we invited seven eastern European countries to join NATO — we presented Russia the path toward building a partnership with NATO to strengthen the common security of all. Allies also decided not to shut the door to the possibility of even Russia itself becoming a member of NATO at some time in the future.

We assumed that we had in Russia a partner that was, over time, even if perhaps unevenly, moving toward more democracy at home and more cooperation with its neighbors and the world. But developments in recent years have forced us to question this assumption. Russia has turned toward authoritarianism at home and pressure tactics toward its neighbors. Now, by attacking Georgia, Russia has sought to change international borders by force, bringing into question the territorial settlement of the breakup of the USSR in 1991. “Revisionism” has a bad history in 20th century Europe and seems no better now. We want to have a partner in a Russia that contributes to an open, free world in the 21st century, not a Russia that behaves as an aggressive Great Power in a 19th century sense that asserts — as President Medvedev recently did — a sphere of influence or “privileged interests” over its neighbors and beyond.

Some argue that NATO itself was an aggressive instrument whose enlargement somehow caused Russia's own aggressive actions. This reflects ignorance of history. NATO did not take down the Iron Curtain. NATO did not trigger the collapse of the Soviet Union. NATO did provide the conditions of security and stability under which the people of Eastern Europe — Poland, Hungary, then Czechoslovakia, the Baltic States, and others — could reclaim their own nations. By preventing the expansion of Soviet power, NATO created the conditions under which the internal weaknesses of that system would themselves bring about its collapse. And NATO enlargement did not produce some massive encirclement of Russia. NATO enlargement created in Central Europe an area of peace, security, and stability. Stable, free market democracies along Russia's border rather than dictatorships are in everyone's best interest, including Russia's. Rather than shun Russia, or foment hostility to Russia, NATO, even as it grew, reached out to Russia to build and expand ties by helping one another as "equal partners" to face common threats and challenges.

Imagine the circumstances if NATO had not enlarged. The nations of Eastern Europe would be unsure of their place in the world, consigned to a grey zone. Some of them are anxious now, thanks to Russia's invasion of Georgia. But imagine their fear were they not members of NATO. Kept out of NATO, they likely would have re-nationalized their own defense establishments in ways that would raise tensions not only with Russia but also among their neighbors. But thanks to NATO enlargement, the part of Europe to Russia's west is the most benign and peaceful it has ever been in Russia's history. I do not expect Russians to thank us for this achievement, but they would be right to do so.

The Balkans

The area of former Yugoslavia was the greatest and most terrible exception to the mostly good history of post-1989 Europe. The violent breakup of that country threw that region into a downward spiral from which the successor nations are only now recovering.

But we believe that NATO enlargement — along with EU enlargement — can do for the Balkans in this decade what it did for Central Europe in the previous decade. Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia — whose admission into NATO has been delayed only because of a dispute with Greece over its name — have undertaken and implemented the sort of reforms we have sought in significant part because they want to get into NATO. By providing general security to the Balkans, starting with the two aspirant nations whose accession the Administration is seeking the Senate's advice and consent; we can consolidate general peace and security in the Balkans. The policy of NATO enlargement has been working for these aspirant countries and for the United States, and the Administration believes that this round of NATO enlargement can open the way for all the nations of the Balkans to become part of the European mainstream.

Let me say a few words about each of these countries.

Albania

In the 17 years since Albania freed itself from one of the world's most repressive Communist dictatorships, Albania has made steady progress in creating stable, democratic institutions and a free market economy. The road has not always been easy; in 1997, Albania was shaken by a major financial scandal and domestic turmoil. But its desire for NATO membership has both shaped and motivated Albania's progress.

Militarily, Albania is transitioning to a smaller, voluntary, professional military. It has put international assistance to good use by restructuring and strengthening its armed forces to the point where Albania has become a strong and reliable partner on NATO missions, with troops in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. The government is also working with international assistance to make Albania landmine-free by 2010.

Albania has also made significant progress in democratic reforms. It has more work to do, and we expect its reforms to continue. Albania must accelerate judicial reforms and stay on track with its electoral reforms. The fight against corruption must be total in order to show that no one is above the law. A zero-tolerance policy — particularly in public services such as tenders, taxes, licensing, and health care — must be backed up by systematic investigations and prosecutions. By putting more emphasis on the key roles of an independent prosecutor and judiciary, Albania can send a strong message of its determination to overcome past practices.

In summary, NATO's invitation is a sign that Albania has made enormous steps forward. But it also has raised the bar, and more reform is still needed.

Fortunately, the history of NATO enlargement in the past suggests that countries continue reforms rather than abandon them, when they join the alliance.

Croatia

Croatia is already a valuable NATO partner; it has pledged about 300 troops in Afghanistan and is one of the only non-NATO members currently training Afghan military units in that country. As a military partner, Croatia has completed most of the restructuring that was needed and is currently focused on modernization, deployability, and interoperability.

Croatia has also proved its political and economic maturity. It recently completed another successful round of national elections and has become a stable democracy with strong institutions. Its election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council beginning last January has enhanced its importance as our regional and global partner on issues of international peacekeeping operations, non-proliferation, counterterrorism, and regional peace, and stability.

Regionally, Croatia maintains positive bilateral relations with all of its neighbors. The Croatian government is playing a positive role in Kosovo. It is promoting stability in Bosnia, and it has reached out to moderates in Serbia.

Croatia also faces challenges, including the important issue of home reconstruction, repossession, and infrastructure development for war refugees. Croatia reported meeting its 2007 benchmarks on providing housing units to returning refugees; but the government expects almost 10,000 unresolved applications in years to come, which will pose a long-term political and financial challenge.

Judicial reform remains another challenge for the government; and Croatia has taken steps to address this, including reducing case backlog and improving training and supervision of judges and court administration.

Finally, Croatia must address its property restitution legal framework so that it does not discriminate against current non-Croatian citizens who had property expropriated during World War II and the Communist regime.

Given Croatia's strong track record in implementing reforms, we have every confidence that it has the will and capacity to be a good and contributing member of the alliance.

Macedonia

Macedonia largely escaped the civil wars that destroyed the former Yugoslavia and has made strides in building a free-market, democratic system. A multi-ethnic state, it has chosen the route of compromise rather than nationalist extremism. In 2001, with support from the United States, NATO, and the EU, Macedonia concluded the Ohrid Framework Agreement [FWA] that ended an ethnic Albanian insurgency by enshrining enhanced minority rights. Since then, it adopted the constitutional and legislative

changes mandated by the agreement and has worked steadily to implement the agreement. Macedonian Governments always have included ethnic-Albanian and Macedonian parties, who have worked to forge political compromises in the overarching interest of the country.

Macedonia continues to be a steadfast partner in the fight against terrorism. It has regularly maintained its troop contributions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bosnia [EUFOR — European Union Force]; and it is committed to fund its defense to support peacekeeping as well as continued reforms.

Macedonia has also made good progress in strengthening the rule of law and tackling corruption. The government has pursued bold economic reforms to attract investment, boost the economy, and reduce unemployment; and we are confident that Macedonia will continue to pursue a reform agenda in line with its NATO and EU aspirations.

Like Albania and Croatia, Macedonia still has work to do: the parliamentary elections last June 1 were marred by irregularities, including intra-Albanian violence, and although reruns showed improvements, overall the elections fell short of international commitments. The Macedonia Government has made arrests and is pursuing cases; and we are urging follow-through to prosecute and sanction the perpetrators and put in safeguards for future elections. Following the elections, the soundly defeated opposition parties boycotted parliament. We urged their return, which the main ethnic Macedonian opposition party has, and encouraged a conciliatory approach from the governing coalition.

The United States continues to support Macedonia receiving a NATO invitation. Its invitation was delayed because of the dispute with Greece over Macedonia's name. Allied leaders made clear at Bucharest that this dispute is the only thing holding up a membership invitation. As soon as this dispute with Greece is resolved, Macedonia will receive an invitation to join the Alliance. Both Greece and Macedonia are engaged in negotiations on the issue, led by UN [United Nations] mediator Matthew Nimetz. We believe a mutually-acceptable solution is possible, in the interest of both countries and the region, and indeed urgent. Now is the time to settle this issue and move forward.

Last April 3rd, President Bush said both Croatia and Albania have “demonstrated the ability and the willingness to provide strong and enduring contributions to NATO. Both have undertaken challenging political, economic, and defense reforms. Both have deployed their forces on NATO missions. Albania and Croatia are ready for the responsibility NATO brings, and they will make outstanding members of this Alliance.”

On Macedonia, the President said: “We regret that we were not able to reach consensus today to invite Macedonia to join the Alliance. Macedonia has made difficult reforms at home. It is making major contributions to NATO missions abroad. The name issue needs to be resolved quickly so that Macedonia can be welcomed into NATO as soon as possible.” That remains our perspective.

These countries have had their challenges. They know that they have work to do. Their challenges are familiar to us from experience over the past twenty years of post-Communist transformation. Given their progress so far, we see a historic window of opportunity to bring them into the European mainstream. By having these countries join the Alliance, it will not only help stabilize a long-turbulent region; but it will show others in the Balkans that there is an alternative to nationalist or ethnic divisions and violence. And we believe it will inspire people in Montenegro; Bosnia; Kosovo; and, we hope, Serbia, to follow the same path.

Georgia and Ukraine

There is another part of Europe still at risk, as Russia's recent actions have dramatized.

NATO has unfinished business in Georgia and Ukraine. The leaders of these nations aspire to NATO

membership. Neither nation is ready for NATO membership now. Both nations realize this. The question is whether these countries should have the same prospect to meet NATO's terms for membership as other European nations. We believe that they should. Indeed, NATO's leaders at the Bucharest Summit agreed, declaring that Georgia and Ukraine will become members of the Alliance.

Both countries face challenges. Ukrainian society is far from united about the prospect of NATO membership, and many Allies question the maturity and stability of its leadership. Quite apart from the issues arising from Russia's attack on it, Georgia has much work to do in strengthening its democratic institutions before it would meet NATO standards.

As we consider the desire of these countries to join the Alliance, we should make clear that they have much work to do at home and that this work is their responsibility to undertake.

This is why the United States supports approving both countries entry into NATO's Membership Action Plan, the so-called MAP. MAP is not NATO membership. It is not a promise or guarantee of membership. It is simply a work program to help these countries make the progress they must make if they are to become NATO members someday, as NATO has already confirmed they will. What we should not do is give Russia a veto over NATO's decisions or consign these or any countries to a Russian sphere of influence.

Russia has made clear that it would regard even a MAP for Georgia or Ukraine with hostility. We regret this position. We believe it is the wrong choice, both for the long-term security and stability of Russia's neighbors as well as for Russia itself. NATO's growing relations with nations east of the old Iron Curtain have brought greater security and stability; Moscow's reaction has produced anxiety and tension. Moscow should reconsider its course.

We seek good relations with Russia. We take into account Russia's security concerns. But we also take account of the concerns and aspirations of people who live in the countries around Russia. Russian security cannot be achieved through imposing insecurity on its neighbors. We cannot, by lack of resolve, consign other countries to a Russian sphere of influence in which their future is limited to those aspirations that Moscow permits them to have. Free people have the right to choose their own path; and it is the policy of the United States, upheld by every Administration since the end of the Cold War, to respect and support their choices.

Russia itself recognized this right when it signed the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation. One of the core principles of the Founding Act is "the aim of creating in Europe a common space of security and stability, without dividing lines or spheres of influence limiting the sovereignty of any state."

Looking Forward

NATO's mission remains the same: the collective defense of its members. Its impact on European security and peace was profound and positive first during the Cold War and then in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. The way in which NATO carries out its core tasks has and will continue to evolve to meet the changing threats. We have seen these in recent years: terrorism, cyber-attacks, and energy security. We have seen that threats may come from far afield.

Since security in Europe is not complete, we have to consider the implications of Russia's attack on Georgia. Georgia is not a NATO member, and Article 5 does not pertain to it. But the actions and the rhetoric coming from Russia's leaders have raised concerns by countries that are NATO members.

NATO's routine work has always meant participation in collective defense planning, cooperative exercises, and staying alert to new threats and developments. Certainly the events of August have

reinforced the importance of such thinking. Article 5 has and will continue to have, meaning for all of NATO's members.

I wish to express my thanks to the Committee for your bipartisan support over the years, not only for NATO enlargement, but to help NATO evolve from its Cold War roots into an institution prepared for 21st century challenges. Our nation's support for a "Europe whole, free, and at peace" has served as a beacon of hope for many countries that faced an uncertain future. Neither their development nor their freedom was guaranteed. Yet over 100 million Europeans in the past decade have found security, stability, and greater prosperity, in significant part as a result of being welcomed into the NATO Alliance. This has made America's work in the world that much easier, for it is a hallmark of our foreign policy that the spread of freedom and security benefits us as well as its immediate recipients. The advance of freedom and security in the world has sent a powerful message to many others, including those who still aspire to join: that there is a reward for putting cooperation over conflict.