

Executive Summary Backgrounder

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The Bucharest Summit: Time to Revitalize the NATO Alliance

Sally McNamara

Since the fall of the Soviet Empire, the rationale behind NATO's existence has been questioned. However, not only is NATO necessary for the West's protection, but its broader *raison d'être* has never been more meaningful. The common values that unite NATO members—freedom, liberty, human rights, and the rule of law—remain under threat from both state and non-state actors that are using asymmetric and symmetrical tactics.

It remains in America's vital interest to maintain and revitalize the NATO Alliance to address the global challenges of today and the future. The International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan has exposed strategic and political shortcomings, and the alliance must use the Bucharest Summit on April 2–4 to initiate reforms designed to cope with the demands of this rapidly changing security environment. NATO now needs a new post–Cold War role.

It is also vital that NATO members in Continental Europe take regional and international security more seriously in terms of defense spending and political will. The European Union (EU) has become far more concerned with creating a separate defense identity to constrain American power than with complementing it.

NATO has been one of the most successful multilateral institutions in modern history. It has secured peace in Western Europe for nearly 60 years and has done so without demanding the surrender

of member states' sovereignty or independence. It remains the central feature of the Euro–Atlantic community and a key target for accession for newly democratizing countries. But if NATO is to survive as a relevant institution capable of protecting the West and its strategic interests, it must be strategically reformed, enlarged, and politically revitalized.

New Strategic Concept. The alliance should embark upon a new strategic concept based on a shared threat perception. This new strategic concept should have the support of all NATO members, based on an implicit understanding of NATO's purpose, organization, and tasks. It should broadly outline how NATO can employ its military, diplomatic, and economic tools to address these threats, accompanied by a thorough public diplomacy effort at the highest levels.

NATO: Cornerstone of the Transatlantic Alliance. Afghanistan has tested NATO not just in theory, but operationally, allowing some nations to make positive transformations through their experiences in theater and work together in ways previously not considered. However, it has also exposed

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deep divisions, and the failure of some member states to meet their obligations has been spectacular. Although any serious reform of NATO will require strong leadership from the United States, it must be a recognizably multilateral effort and ensure the buy-in of all members.

Enlargement and Open Door Policy. The aspirant countries of Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia undoubtedly have political flaws, just as some of the accession countries of 1999 and 2004 had. However, they are European democracies on a long road of political, social, and defense reform that are willing and able to contribute to regional and international security. Although Georgia and Ukraine have some ground to cover before they should be treated as prospective members, they should be invited to begin the Membership Action Plan (MAP) process.

What the U.S. and NATO Should Do. At the Bucharest Summit, the U.S. needs to push for reforms to mold NATO into a modern, effective alliance that advances the interests of the United States and other NATO members. Specifically, NATO members should:

- **Start negotiating a revised strategic concept for NATO** that will outline the alliance's purpose, organization, and tasks based on a shared threat perception. Its realm of operation must be global, and its scope of action must be comprehensive.
 - **Reaffirm that NATO is the cornerstone of the transatlantic alliance** and the primary actor in European defense cooperation.
 - **Readmit France into NATO's integrated military command structures only if** Paris is willing to uphold the primacy of NATO in European defense cooperation and if the alliance can be confident that Paris will be a cooperative, not a confrontational, partner.
 - **Begin determining the NATO–EU relationship on a more systematic basis.** The European Security and Defense Policy should be a civilian complement to NATO missions, and its resources should be put at NATO's disposal in a fashion similar to Berlin-Plus.
- **Explicitly reject any movement toward a two-tiered alliance** and reinforce this message with more equitable burden-sharing arrangements.
 - **Launch a thorough public diplomacy effort** to communicate NATO's mission and purpose effectively, starting with a domestic and international strategy for Afghanistan.
 - **Conclude a comprehensive strategic political and military plan for Afghanistan** that makes a hard-hitting appraisal of what is needed politically and militarily to make Afghanistan a success.
 - **Accept Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia as full members of the alliance** and invite Ukraine and Georgia to begin the MAP process. NATO should also clearly restate its open door policy.

Conclusion. Washington has a small window of opportunity to mold NATO into a modern, effective alliance that advances the interests of the United States and the other member countries. The United States will always retain the option of unilateral intervention to defend its strategic interests, but effective partnering with NATO is a sensible and realistic way to formulate burden-sharing arrangements with its European allies.

There will always be serious threats to global security. If Europe's major powers genuinely believe that the world's response to these threats should be multilateral, they should invest in a thorough reform and revitalization of NATO. Anything less than a high-level endorsement of NATO on both sides of the Atlantic will doom it to marginalization.

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Background

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Since the fall of the Soviet Empire, the rationale behind NATO's existence has been questioned. However, not only is NATO necessary for the West's protection, but its broader *raison d'être* has never been more meaningful. The common values that unite NATO members—freedom, liberty, human rights, and the rule of law—remain under threat from both state and non-state actors that are using asymmetric and symmetrical tactics.

It remains in America's vital interest to maintain and revitalize the NATO Alliance to address the global challenges of today and the future. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan has exposed strategic and political shortcomings, and the alliance must use the Bucharest Summit on April 2–4 to initiate reforms designed to cope with the demands of this rapidly changing security environment. NATO now needs a new post–Cold War role.

It is also vital that NATO members in Continental Europe take regional and international security more seriously both in terms of defense spending and in terms of political will. The European Union (EU) has become far more concerned with creating a separate defense identity to constrain American power than with complementing it.

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Talking Points

- The Bucharest Summit should accept Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia to full membership and invite Georgia and Ukraine to undertake Membership Action Plans.
- Bucharest should mark the start of negotiations for a revised strategic concept to establish the NATO Alliance's aims, tasks, and priorities for the 21st century.
- NATO should conclude a comprehensive strategic political and military plan for Afghanistan that eliminates shortfalls in troop numbers and reduces the number of caveats.
- The Bucharest Summit needs to reassert the primacy of NATO as the cornerstone of the transatlantic security alliance, and EU security policy should complement NATO goals and missions.
- French readmission into NATO's integrated military command structures must not be conditioned on American support for an autonomous EU defense identity.
- NATO members need to meet the previously agreed benchmark of spending a minimum of 2 percent of GDP on defense.

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key target for accession for newly democratizing countries. But if NATO is to survive as a relevant institution capable of protecting the West and its strategic interests, it must be strategically reformed, enlarged, and politically revitalized.

Time for a New Strategic Concept

The Bucharest Summit should mark the start of negotiations for a revised strategic concept for NATO, which should be concluded in time for its 60th anniversary summit in 2009.¹ Since its foundation, NATO has successfully adjusted its core objectives and courses of action to the changing strategic situations in which it has found itself. Since 9/11, different security challenges and international threats have become obvious, including cyberterrorism and ballistic missile attack. NATO needs to adapt to this new strategic reality with the same political and military energy with which it confronted past threats.

The alliance should embark upon a new strategic concept based on a shared threat perception. This new strategic concept should have the support of all NATO members, based on an implicit understanding of NATO's purpose, organization, and tasks. It should broadly outline how NATO can employ its military, diplomatic, and economic tools to address these threats, accompanied by a thorough public diplomacy effort at the highest levels.

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer called for a new strategic concept in 2007, appealing to members to learn the lessons of Afghanistan and Kosovo and "enshrine them in our guiding documents so that they are implemented in practice."² However, he has found it difficult to get traction on this issue.³ As with every previous revision of the strategic concept, his proposal has met with resistance and debate about whether or not a new strategic concept is needed. Yet every previous revision

of the strategic concept has pointed the alliance in the right direction.

The United States should make this revision a priority agenda item for the Bucharest Summit. The next U.S. Administration will almost certainly have higher priorities than reforming NATO. The United States needs to seize this moment to start the process to refocus NATO's attention on its enduring purposes and tasks.

NATO in Today's Strategic Environment

NATO's purpose should be a genuine commitment to ensuring the safety and security of member states' geostrategic interests at home *and* abroad. A new strategic concept would allow NATO to lay out its vision for where it wants to be in the next decade, both geographically and metaphorically, and would send a strong message to both its allies and its enemies.

The long-term commitment to ensuring security and stability in Europe should obviously remain a key principle of the alliance. A new strategic concept should therefore seek to find the right balance between NATO's European obligations and its expeditionary focus. NATO's commitment to the protection and, now, independence of Kosovo actually embodies many of the elements of the Afghanistan mission. The multifaceted Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission and its daily interaction with multiple international partners provide a positive model for how NATO will likely operate in future endeavors.

The Afghanistan mission, the alliance's first out-of-area mission, certainly represents a future direction for the alliance, both geographically and in terms of NATO's fundamental tasks. The alliance's ability to undertake out-of-area missions, followed by coordinated civilian-political reconstruction,

1. NATO's strategic concept defines the alliance's basic objective. It establishes NATO's aims and tasks and sets its priorities. It has evolved many times since NATO's founding, most recently in April 1999, when heads of state and government approved a new strategic concept at the Washington Summit.
2. Reuters, "NATO Chief Calls for New 'Strategic Concept,'" *International Herald Tribune*, February 11, 2007, at www.ihf.com/articles/2007/02/11/news/nato.php (March 17, 2008).
3. Secretary General Scheffer repeated his call for a new strategic concept at the 44th Munich Conference on Security Policy. See Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, speech at 44th Munich Conference on Security Policy, February 9, 2008, at www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?id=204&sprache=en (March 17, 2008).

interacting with multiple partners must be a major principle of the new strategic concept.

It is important, then, that NATO's global partnerships, both with organizations and with non-NATO member states, be determined in a more systematic fashion. Its ability to work closely and comprehensively with the United Nations, the G-8, the EU, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector is incredibly important, especially in post-conflict resolution and reconstruction. The interface between civilian and military instruments of power is a critical element of today's new security environment and may ultimately determine the alliance's success or failure in Afghanistan.

It is imperative, however, that NATO not concede the role of post-conflict reconstruction to the European Union. Although it must cooperate and work closely with the EU, which has civilian resources and expertise, it cannot afford an arrangement in which NATO does the fighting and the EU does the reconstructing. With significant membership overlap between the two institutions, this would essentially create a two-tier alliance in which a handful of NATO partners led by the U.S. and U.K. would do most of the heavy lifting and the majority of European nations led by France and Germany would undertake a purely hearts-and-minds agenda. U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has specifically warned against such an arrangement, with "some allies willing to fight and die to protect people's security and others who are not."⁴ Such a two-tiered arrangement would rip the heart out of NATO.

Obviously, military means alone will not achieve long-term stability in Afghanistan or Kosovo. That will come as part of a broader collective undertaking with other actors, including NGOs and the European Union, but NATO will need to be at the forefront of both missions and play the lead role in the multiple elements required to make them succeed.

Establishing NATO as a global player should be a crucial element of the new strategic concept. Trans-

atlantic security interests reach beyond Europe's borders, and NATO needs to play a more dynamic role on the international stage. However, the Afghanistan mission has revealed the profound lack of political will on the part of some NATO members to undertake this role and to assume an equitable share of the burden. NATO is already showing danger signs of turning into a two-tier alliance. NATO should be a defense alliance against all threats, regardless of origin, and act where it is necessary to defeat them. However, many national leaders have failed to persuade their publics that the Afghanistan mission serves either the alliance's interests or transatlantic security. To the alliance's humiliation, its European members have proven unable or unwilling to muster an additional 3,200 troops to send to southern Afghanistan following a request from Secretary Gates.⁵

Bucharest will provide a moment for the alliance to state definitively that its areas of interest extend beyond Europe. For too many alliance members, the crisis in Kosovo is real and immediate only because of its geographic nearness. Yet a failure in Afghanistan—and the inevitable resurgence of the Taliban—would also create a profound, long-term threat to European interests. The Bucharest Summit should resolve this issue and sell a strategic global vision for the future of NATO.

To fashion a strategic concept commensurate with NATO's interests and purposes, members will need to engage in both political and public diplomacy to demonstrate the value of defeating threats wherever they arise. Ultimately, unless member states are willing to engage in the full range of NATO missions on a broader front than was envisioned during the Cold War, the alliance will be permanently broken. The new strategic concept needs to make a strong case for making Afghanistan a success and for taking on future expeditionary missions as needed.

A new strategic concept would also give the United States a vehicle to address the alliance's

4. Roger Cohen, "The Long Haul in Afghanistan," *International Herald Tribune*, February 27, 2008, at www.ihf.com/articles/2008/02/27/opinion/edcohen.php (March 17, 2008).

5. CNN, "Germans Reject U.S. Troops Request," February 1, 2008, at www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/europe/02/01/germany.afghanistan (March 17, 2008).

shortcomings in Afghanistan and to focus efforts on revitalizing the ISAF mission. The process has the potential to unite the alliance and reassert cohesion for the ISAF mission. Considering the sense of frustration currently enveloping the alliance over Afghanistan, the formation of a new strategic concept is needed now.

Arriving at a Common Threat Perception

It is imperative that NATO members undertake an enhanced security dialogue to define the 21st century's key threats, beginning with Islamist terrorism. The fight against transnational terrorism is undoubtedly the defining battle of this generation, but it is not sufficiently clear that NATO's continental partners classify the terrorist acts committed by Islamist extremists in New York, Washington, Madrid, London, and Istanbul as anything more than a spate of separate criminal acts.

The atrocities committed by Islamic terrorists in Washington, New York, Madrid, and London were in fact attacks on the principles of freedom and liberty that define Western civilization. Al-Qaeda and its allies have targeted innocent civilians in Europe, America, Africa, the Middle East, the Far East, and Central Asia and will continue to advance their borderless war on Western values and attempt to break the West's will to fight an asymmetric "long war." A united transatlantic response through NATO and commitment to what is currently an indeterminable timetable for victory is not only necessary, but essential if Europe and America are to confront the domestic and global network of extremists who are intent on annihilating the West and its allies.

The strategic concept should also address the threats of ballistic missile attack, cyberterrorism, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In each area, NATO has the potential to add significant value to the efforts of individual member states and can prepare to assist them as an alliance in the case of emergency.

In many respects, a revised strategic concept would likely be very similar to the existing strategic

concept, which mentions, at least in passing, many of these threats.⁶ But by reprioritizing and focusing on new and evolving threats, a new strategic concept would send a powerful message that NATO is to be taken seriously in these matters. It would also emphasize current missions and emergent projects such as missile defense.

However, NATO should avoid turning the renegotiation of its strategic concept and the major threats to its geostrategic interests into a laundry list of members' social and economic bugbears. For instance, environmentalism is not a policy area that NATO should address. NATO members approach environmental policy in very different ways, and a number of international forums already deal with the thorny issue of emissions levels. A new common threat perception should specifically address the threats to members' immediate security and their broader geostrategic outlook. It should contain the biggest and most pressing challenges to international security and stability and avoid issues of social policy that some members may want to raise.

Capabilities: NATO's Transformational Agenda

Although NATO's capabilities have always involved diplomacy and defense, the alliance has recently focused on military capabilities in light of the demanding security environment in Afghanistan. Yet NATO operates on a political level as well and should systematically employ the strategic tools of dialogue and diplomacy alongside a high-tech and expanded military capability. The new strategic concept should look at how the alliance will conduct and sustain future operations and address the fundamental question of the interface between its civilian and military capabilities.

Hard Power. NATO is a military alliance. Therefore, if it intends to undertake out-of-area missions, it must have the manpower and resources to sustain them militarily. Afghanistan has demonstrated that NATO does not have a sufficient commitment of forces from its members to sustain genuinely multinational, long-term expeditionary operations. Most

6. Press release, "The Alliance's Strategic Concept," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, at www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm (March 17, 2008).

alliance members are hamstrung by political paralysis and unreasonably low-levels of defense spending. Each alliance member, especially those in Continental Europe, needs to address these questions and examine its ability to provide what NATO needs in key areas such as air-to-ground surveillance, strategic airlift, and aerial refueling.

One way to leverage cash-strapped defense budgets is to invest in multinational logistics. With the enormous costs associated with modern weaponry, defense expenditures should take on a more global character. As technology becomes more expensive and advanced, the interoperability of defense systems will likely become not just desirable, but essential to joint military efforts such as the one in Afghanistan. A multinational standardization of equipment under the NATO umbrella would be a flexible and efficient use of resources to contribute to operational success in the long term.

It is imperative that NATO take the lead in coordinating such projects. However, the European Union is actively duplicating NATO in this field. Through its European Defense Agency (EDA), the EU is pursuing jointly funded, interoperable projects, which exclude non-EU countries. With its desire to create a stronger European defense industrial base, the EU is in a position to skew the procurement agenda against NATO's broader interests. In this age of digital warfare and tight budgets, procurement decisions are critical, and the EU should not be in a position to pursue its own political and economic agenda at the expense of the alliance. It also remains to be seen whether the EDA can inject any real free-market ethos into the rather protected EU defense sector or is merely another failed European institution-building measure.

Most European nations need to continue transforming their militaries into modern, interoperable fighting machines. Multinational logistics bring

NATO countries together and are integral to transforming the alliance.

With its existing expertise and American leadership, NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT) is a perfect vehicle for addressing these shortfalls and determining each member's exact contribution to NATO. Even NATO members without high-end expeditionary capabilities can offer a specialized role to the alliance, such as the Czech Republic's nuclear, biological, and chemical defense capabilities.⁷ ACT, not the unproven and duplicate European Defense Agency, should be the primary vehicle for cooperation and collaboration among NATO members in streamlining and improving NATO's defense capabilities. It is time to abolish the European Defense Agency, which was founded with no legal basis in 2004 and has not added significant value to Europe's defense goals.

The NATO Response Force (NRF) should be fully developed to use resources most efficiently and to meet NATO's operational requirements. It has already shown incredible promise during its deployments, including its quick response to the humanitarian crisis precipitated by the Pakistani earthquake in late 2005. As a "highly ready and technologically advanced force...that the alliance can deploy quickly wherever needed," the NRF is an innovative and useful mechanism to undertake NATO's missions in today's security environment⁸ and a key transformational aspect of the alliance. As former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld noted in 2005, "The NATO Response Force will over time prove to be the key to maintaining NATO's relevance in a world where threats emerge in unpredictable ways and unpredictable places."⁹

The NRF needs sufficient forces and resources, but the EU has played a dangerous game by constituting its own separate crisis-response battle groups, which pose an enormous challenge to the NRF's

7. Michèle A. Flournoy and Julianne Smith, *European Defense Integration: Bridging the Gap Between Strategy and Capabilities*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 2005, at www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/051001_edi_report_.pdf (June 22, 2007).
8. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "The NATO Response Force," January 22, 2008, at www.nato.int/issues/nrf/index.html (March 17, 2008).
9. Donald H. Rumsfeld, news conference at meeting of NATO Defense Ministers, Brussels, June 9, 2005, at www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=3217 (March 17, 2008).

future success. Under its Headline Goal 2010, the EU now has fully operational, rapidly deployable battle groups that can be deployed at the U.N.'s request. Yet without additional money and men, Europe's battle groups should be seen as nothing less than a direct duplication of the NATO mechanism.

The Bucharest Summit needs to recommit to the NRF concept and analyze its missions and tasks to suit the revised purpose of the alliance. The NRF should not be allowed to fall by the wayside for lack of European commitment or because of EU duplication, which is exactly what is happening. In the words of Peter Schmidt, a defense analyst at the Institute for International and Security Affairs, "The reality is that NATO and the EU are chasing after the same highly skilled soldier and of course the same euro to finance these missions. There is now immense strain on the defense plans of NATO and the EU."¹⁰

If European powers genuinely wish to complement NATO, they could easily do so by spending more on defense and rapidly modernizing their militaries. NATO has undertaken key transformation initiatives to become a leaner, more effective fighting machine, using innovative instruments such as the NRF to face the strategic challenges of the 21st century. NATO's Allied Command Transformation can improve military effectiveness and interoperability, support alliance operations, and ultimately create a "credible, sustainable and agile organization."¹¹ Both the European Union and the NATO Alliance should support this aim at the highest levels and take the strategic decisions necessary to make it happen.

Soft Power. Since Afghanistan has demonstrated that success involves both military and civilian capabilities, alliance members need to do more than merely increase defense spending and upgrade military hardware. The alliance needs to recognize the

value of employing tools of post-conflict reconstruction and benchmarking best practices in interfacing with outside agencies.

In this respect, the EU has capabilities that it should make available to NATO. It also presents a way of formulating a sensible working relationship between the two entities that draws some of the poison from the EU's naked power grab in the defense sphere.

Through the Feira Goals, the EU has equipped itself with extensive civilian crisis management capabilities. It has 5,700 police officers, 630 legal experts, 560 civilian administration experts, and 5,000 civil protection experts available and has already enjoyed some limited operational success in low-level, modest missions. Operation Concordia in Macedonia, followed by the civilian policing missions Proxima and EUPAT, went relatively smoothly and made a marginal contribution to the West's overall success by putting Macedonia and Bosnia on a more stable footing. The EU is currently planning to deploy 1,800 civilian officials—including judges, prosecutors, policemen, and customs officials—to Kosovo to take over from the United Nations and assist with the growth of the fledgling democracy.¹²

The EU should continue to use its resources to complement NATO missions and work closely with the alliance on how to best deploy them, since they are frequently the same troops anyway.¹³ The EU should move away from using defense policy merely to further its integrationist agenda and make a truly meaningful contribution to international stability by making its civilian resources available to NATO coordinators. It remains completely incongruous that the Berlin-Plus arrangements ensure EU access to NATO capabilities and common assets but do not grant NATO reciprocal access to the EU's extensive civilian capabilities.

10. Judy Dempsey, "NATO Retreats from Establishment of Rapid-Reaction Force," *International Herald Tribune*, September 20, 2007, at www.iht.com/articles/2007/09/20/europe/force.php?page=1 (March 24, 2008).

11. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Allied Command Transformation, "Vision Statement," at www.act.nato.int/welcome/mission.html (June 22, 2007; unavailable March 17, 2008).

12. For details of the EU mission, see Tony Barber and Chrystia Freeland, "Law and Order Force to Secure Kosovo Stability," *Financial Times*, January 25, 2008, at www.ft.com/cms/s/0/702f813e-cae8-11dc-a960-000077b07658.html (March 17, 2008).

13. Operation Concordia and Operation Althea both employed large numbers of the same troops from the preceding NATO contingent, who merely operated under a different insignia.

Public Diplomacy. The ability to communicate its mission effectively and engage in systematic, well-planned public diplomacy will be critical to NATO's transformation agenda. Its public diplomacy strategy should seek to explain both current and future missions, communicating the central features and ultimate goals of its missions and operations. NATO's target audience should also be both domestic and international.

Although NATO is meant to have a public diplomacy mission, it does not have NATO representatives or offices in members' capitals as the EU does. This has led to mixed messages on the Afghanistan mission, for example, where messages from Kabul have not always been consistent with those coming from individual members. NATO should immediately use its professional diplomats, operating specifically under a NATO banner, to emphasize the major successes of Afghanistan, explain the mission, and operationalize a public diplomacy strategy to generate wider support for its mission both in Afghanistan and in member states. NATO also needs to brand its missions much more distinctly, similar to the EU's prolific use of its blue flag.

NATO is one of the few multilateral institutions that have been successful both in practice and in theory, but there is a limit to how much stress can be put on a minority of members. NATO is an alliance, not a coalition of the willing. Revitalizing and reforming it will require the exercise of strong political will at the head-of-state level. It is incumbent upon every alliance member to demonstrate such political will at the Bucharest Summit and commit to the future of the alliance through a new strategic concept.

Afghanistan: A True Test of the Alliance

There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies and that is fighting without them.

—Winston Churchill¹⁴

For the Bucharest Summit to be a success, it must address the difficult issues surrounding NATO's ISAF mission in Afghanistan. In many ways, the Afghanistan mission is a test case for how the alliance will

Contributing Nation		Troops*	Contributing Nation		Troops*
Albania		140	Latvia		100
Australia		1,070	Lithuania		260
Austria		3	Luxemburg		9
Azerbaijan		50	Netherlands		1,650
Belgium		370	New Zealand		115
Canada		2,500	Norway		495
Croatia		190	Poland		1,100
Czech Republic		135	Portugal		160
Denmark		780	Romania		535
Estonia		130	Singapore		2
Finland		105	Slovakia		70
France		1,515	Slovenia		70
Georgia		1	Spain		740
Germany		3,210	Sweden		345
Greece		150	Switzerland		2
Hungary		230	Macedonia		130
Iceland		10	Turkey		675
Ireland		7	United Kingdom		7,800
Italy		2,880	United States		15,000
Jordan		90			
Total Support Elements (rounded)				43,250	

* Totals include both NATO and National Support Elements.
Source: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "International Security Assistance Force," February 6, 2008, at www.nato.int/isaf/doculepub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf (March 19, 2008).

operate in the future. Key questions to be addressed include military–civilian cooperation and reconstruction, national caveats, and NATO's broader transformation agenda.

The mission in Afghanistan requires steadfast commitment to providing security for Afghan civilians, rooting out Islamic extremists, boosting the Afghan economy, and helping the Afghans to build a responsive government that will be an effective ally in the war on terrorism. Mission success essentially requires the victory of peace and stability in this area of the world, which is fundamental to the West's interests.

14. Carlo D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002), p. 693.

The creation of Afghanistan as a viable state that respects and upholds the common values of rule of law, human dignity, and equal rights is a major test not just of the NATO Alliance, but of the wider international community's will to sustain and protect this new democracy. It is also demonstrably in the West's interest to ensure that Afghanistan does not again become a sanctuary for al-Qaeda and Islamist terrorists. As NATO Secretary General Scheffer recently said in Washington:

In an age where external and internal security are more and more interwoven, Afghanistan is a mission of necessity rather than one of choice. Just seven years ago—that's not long ago—Afghanistan was the grand central station of terrorism. If this mission were not to succeed—and let me be very clear, it is succeeding and will succeed—Afghanistan would once again pose a clear and present danger to itself, its region but also the broader international community.¹⁵

In such a precarious region, Afghanistan's success or failure will have profound global implications, especially for the promotion of moderate Islam. If the West fails in Afghanistan, the biggest beneficiaries will surely be those who wish to impose a radical, perverted form of Islam on Afghanistan and return it to a barbaric medieval state.

Military Success. Sadly, the mission in Afghanistan, which is sponsored and supported by the U.N., has revealed something that NATO desperately wanted to avoid: the virtual creation of a two-tiered alliance. Although many European nations are more inclined toward reconstruction and humanitarian missions for political reasons, alliance members must not be allowed to opt for one or the other exclusively.

In forming new patterns of cooperation within the alliance, it is sensible to draw upon the expertise and experience of certain member states in post-conflict reconstruction. However, the alliance must not allow member states to withdraw from riskier military endeavors in exchange for commitments in the field of reconstruction. As the alliance's current strategic concept notes, NATO "must, above all, maintain the political will and the military means required by the entire range of its missions."¹⁶

The inability or unwillingness of certain nations to shoulder the burden of NATO's obligation in Afghanistan is ripping the heart out of the alliance, and this is unacceptable. The NATO Alliance was built on the enduring values of civilized democracies and solidarity among the member states to export, not just consume, security. To have large, wealthy nations refuse to pull their weight at the expense of the other members is fundamentally wrong. As NATO spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Rejean Duchesneau notes, "If you sign on to the mission, you should sign on to the whole package."¹⁷

One program that has particularly suffered from inadequate manpower is the Coalition Embedded Training Teams, which offers mentorship, advice, and training to Afghan National Army (ANA) battalions in areas such as intelligence, communications, and logistics. Less than 20 NATO troops are needed per Afghan battalion. The program has proven extremely successful in building a modern Afghan army and in communicating ISAF's message to ordinary Afghan communities.¹⁸

Perhaps the most significant vindication of this program was the retaking of Musa Qala from the Taliban in December 2007 by the Afghan National Army, backed by NATO troops.¹⁹ Not only does this represent a massive step forward in the ANA's capabilities, but it freed political space for

15. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, "Afghanistan and NATO: Forging the 21st Century Alliance," address at Brookings Institution, February 29, 2008, at www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2008/0229_NATO/20080229_nato.pdf (March 17, 2008).

16. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "The Alliance's Strategic Concept," April 23–24, 1999, at www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm (March 20, 2008).

17. Jim Michaels, "Nations Limit Use of NATO Forces," *USA Today*, September 28, 2006, at www.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-09-28-afghanistan-nato-caveats_x.htm (March 17, 2008).

18. Sergeant Frank Magni, "Vermont Guardsmen Train, Mentor Afghan Soldiers," *DefendAmerica*, August 13, 2004, at www.defendamerica.com/articles/aug2004/a081304b.html (March 17, 2008).

reconciliation and democratization. Mullah Abdul Salaam, a former Taliban commander who broke ranks shortly before the Taliban's defeat, has since become governor of the town. He has the backing of both the Afghan government and the local tribes. This constitutes a significant political and military breakthrough.²⁰

This program has had other notable successes and has undoubtedly bolstered the ANA. The ANA captured senior Taliban leader Mullah Mahmood at a checkpoint in March 2007 as he was attempting to escape wearing a burka.²¹ This came on the heels of the ANA's capture of Mullah Mohammad Wali, another Taliban extremist.²² The Afghans have even projected an extremely ambitious plan to reach the ANA's target strength of 70,000 soldiers by the time of the Bucharest Summit,²³ which is far earlier than the expected date of 2009.²⁴

The Afghan National Police have now been brought into the training program as they grow in both numbers and ability, complementing the overall security situation in Afghanistan. However, the program has just 500 NATO and coalition trainers and needs an additional 300.²⁵ This number will continue to increase as the ANA increases its troop numbers. Senator Joe Lieberman (I-CT) has even called on President George W. Bush to support expanding the Afghan army's end strength to 200,000 soldiers at the Bucharest Summit.²⁶ NATO should be embarrassed that Afghanistan is standing up army battalions faster than it can find the less than 20 trainers needed to assist each new battalion.

Moving Forward. As the security situation improves in Afghanistan, the political space to build Afghanistan's democracy will become more stable. As NATO applies a full spectrum of operations, it is developing better tools of comprehensive thinking and finding ways of adapting to today's security environment. It should aim to sustain development on all fronts and utilize the military and cultural strengths of alliance members in moving forward.

The Bucharest Summit will provide a singular moment to turn the page on the "blame game" and come to a new understanding about how to make Afghanistan a success. The message of blame has conspicuously failed to generate further public support for the Afghanistan mission, since it largely emphasizes what has gone wrong in the region.

The comprehensive strategic political-military plan for Afghanistan, which hopefully will be taken forward at Bucharest, presents a major opportunity for the transatlantic alliance and the international community to demonstrate their commitment to the stability of Afghanistan and the security of its peoples. In the plan, NATO members should:

- **Firmly commit enough troops to eliminate shortfalls**, especially in areas where NATO is short of key enablers, such as reconnaissance, engineering, air support, special operations, and intelligence. NATO needs to add enough depth and capacity to address gaps in theater—gaps that the enemy will exploit.

19. Xinhua, "3 Afghan Soldiers Killed, 3 Injured in Roadside Blast," CCTV, February 13, 2008, at www.cctv.com/english/20080213/103681.shtml (March 17, 2008).

20. Center for Defense Information, "Afghanistan Update: Jan. 1–31, 2008," February 11, 2008, at www.cdi.org/program/document.cfm?DocumentID=4206 (March 17, 2008).

21. Center for Defense Information, "Afghanistan Update: March 1–31, 2007," April 20, 2007, at www.cdi.org/program/document.cfm?DocumentID=3928 (March 17, 2008).

22. "Afghan National Army Captures Suicide Attack Facilitator," US Fed News, March 12, 2007.

23. Hamid Shalizi, "Afghanistan Army to Reach Targeted Strength by March," Reuters, December 2, 2007, at www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSISL5175520071202 (March 17, 2008).

24. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, "Analysis: How Solid Is the New 'Afghanistan Compact?'" February 3, 2006, at www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/02/421fed0a-07a6-4eb9-bd05-c103f7e650fa.html (March 20, 2008).

25. Colonel Jim Klingaman, news briefing from Kabul, Afghanistan, U.S. Department of Defense, February 8, 2008, at www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4140 (March 17, 2008).

26. Joe Lieberman, "A Surge to Help Afghanistan," *The Washington Post*, March 6, 2008, p. A19, at www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/03/AR2008030302630.html (March 21, 2008).

- **Commit to training and equipping the Afghan security forces**, including the Afghan National Army, to an appropriate level so that they can assume more responsibility for their own security.
- **Recognize that the stakes in Afghanistan are monumental**, both for Afghanistan and for the future of NATO. This should be accompanied by a thorough public diplomacy effort to build public support, especially within member states. The plan should state explicitly that the Afghanistan mission is a long-term mission that will require ongoing operational and peacekeeping commitments by the alliance.
- **Explicitly affirm that NATO is a military alliance** and not a coalition of the willing. It must reject any move toward becoming a two-tiered alliance, especially the false choice between military operations or participation in development. All alliance members are responsible for both.
- **Identify where the Afghans must improve.** Bad governance and corruption are huge impediments to progress in Afghanistan, and the Karzai government must address these issues in the central government, particularly in the Afghan National Police, and with provincial and tribal leaders.

NATO Secretary General Scheffer recently noted that 7 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan and that 6 million children are now in school, including 2 million girls. He also noted that the vast majority of security incidents are taking place in a small geographic area, affecting just 6 percent of the overall population.²⁷ Macroeconomic and social indicators are also good, showing vast improvements in basic health care and an increased number of health workers.²⁸ This progress would have been unimaginable just seven years ago when Afghanistan was under the brutal tyranny of the Taliban.

However, NATO will need to maintain pressure on the Taliban insurgents to free the political and social space required for Afghanistan's democratic development. As NATO provides a more secure and stable environment, the potential for economic development will increase, offering alternate financial opportunities for Taliban "day fighters."

The international community is not only still necessary to ensure that Afghanistan remains on a positive path, but also welcomed by the Afghan government and its people. American journalist Roger Cohen describes the mission in Afghanistan as "Europe's Iraq."²⁹ Certainly, strength, resolve, and leadership are needed there just as much as in Iraq, and the Bucharest Summit has the potential to inject them back into the alliance.

NATO: Cornerstone of the Transatlantic Alliance

Afghanistan has tested NATO not just in theory, but operationally, allowing some nations to make positive transformations through their experiences in theater and work together in ways previously not considered. However, it has also exposed deep divisions, and the failure of some member states to meet their obligations has been spectacular. Although any serious reform of NATO will require strong leadership from the United States, it must be a recognizably multilateral effort and ensure the buy-in of all members that wish to remain part of the alliance. As former Senator James Talent notes, "Nations should recognize that they must bear their share of the burden if they seek their share of the authority."³⁰

Spending. If the Bucharest Summit is to put the heart back into the alliance, its members should fulfill the previously agreed benchmark of spending 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) on defense at a minimum. Just four (Bulgaria, France,

27. Scheffer, "Afghanistan and NATO."

28. NATO Army Colonel Jeffrey Johnson recently noted that 79 percent of Afghans now have access to health care services, compared to just 8 percent when the Taliban government fell in 2001. See Gerry J. Gilmore, "Afghans Make 'Tremendous Progress' in Health Care, U.S. Officer Says," American Forces Press Service, February 19, 2008, at www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=49007 (March 17, 2008).

29. Cohen, "The Long Haul in Afghanistan."

30. Senator Jim Talent, "New Wine in Old Bottles: Moving Towards a Post Cold War Policy," *Forward! The Magazine of Conservative Way Forward*, Conference 2007, at www.conwayfor.org/forward/forward0907web.pdf (March 17, 2008).

Greece, and the U.K.) of the 21 EU–NATO members meet this benchmark. On average, EU–NATO members spend just 1.6 percent of GDP on defense, and this decline must be reversed.³¹

Caveats. The Bucharest Summit also needs to end the vast majority of national caveats. Caveats severely impede the multinational nature of missions and operationally impede their planning and execution. As a NATO Parliamentary Assembly resolution noted in 2005, caveats limited the ability of NATO forces to respond to the civil unrest in Kosovo in March 2004, and their removal has since created more flexible and capable response mechanisms.³²

NATO should not need to experience a similar crisis in Afghanistan before removing caveats there.³³ Caveats have become a major headache for the ISAF mission, including:

- The geographical restriction of German troops to the calmer northern areas,
- Barring Southern European troops from fighting in snow,
- One nation banning troops from other nations from flying in its aircraft.³⁴

In February 2007, NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe General John Craddock called for removal of all caveats.³⁵ U.S. Senator John McCain (R–AZ) also called on European nations to “reconsider” their caveats.³⁶ Although the Riga Summit declared that national caveats could be

lifted in times of emergency, very little has changed, and caveats continue to operate to the detriment of the alliance.³⁷

General Dan McNeill, NATO’s ISAF leader, recently repeated General Craddock’s 2007 statement calling for the elimination of caveats.³⁸ Serious action is long overdue, and Bucharest offers members of the alliance a chance to succeed where they failed in Riga. Secretary Gates recently noted that “brothers in arms achieve victory only when all march in step toward the sound of the guns.”³⁹ NATO is an alliance of 26 members that need to stand *together* as the flag bearers of liberty and freedom.

The Primacy of NATO. The Bucharest Summit also needs to reassert the primacy of NATO as the cornerstone of the transatlantic alliance, a policy that has been eroded over time by the integrationist and expansionist policies of the European Union. The EU’s renamed constitution, the Lisbon Reform Treaty, proposes to undo the very linchpins of the NATO Alliance and undermine the supremacy of NATO as Europe’s primary defense actor.

The wording of the Lisbon Treaty gives great momentum to the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP):

The Union’s competence in matters of common foreign and security policy shall cover all areas of foreign policy and all questions

31. Based on constant prices. NATO International Staff, “NATO–Russia Compendium of Financial and Economic Data,” December 20, 2007, at <http://nids.hq.nato.int/docu/pr/2007/p07-141.pdf> (March 17, 2008).

32. See NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Resolution 336 on Reducing National Caveats, November 15, 2005, paragraphs 3 and 4, at <http://natopa.ibicenter.net/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=828> (March 17, 2008).

33. *Ibid.*, paragraphs 7 and 8.

34. Reuters, “Restrictions on NATO Troops in Afghanistan,” AlertNet, November 26, 2006, at www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L26451165.htm (March 17, 2008).

35. Jason Straziuso, “Afghan Commander Expects Suicide Attacks,” *The Washington Post*, January 29, 2007, at www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/29/AR2007012900279.html (March 17, 2008).

36. Senator John McCain, speech at 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy, February 10, 2007, at www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?id=186&sprache=en (March 17, 2008).

37. Vince Crawley, “NATO Leaders Strengthen Commitment to Afghanistan,” America.gov, November 29, 2006, at www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2006/November/20061129120544eafas0.3363459.html (March 17, 2008).

38. David Blair, “General Criticizes Afghanistan Troop Restrictions,” *Daily Telegraph*, March 3, 2008, at www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2008/03/03/wafghan103.xml (March 17, 2008).

39. American Forces Press Service, “Gates: NATO Must Increase Assets, Cut Caveats in Afghanistan,” U.S. Department of Defense, October 25, 2007, at www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=47936 (March 21, 2008).

relating to the Union's security, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy that might lead to a common defence.⁴⁰

With both NATO and EU rapid reaction forces and numerous duplicate structures (e.g., planning cells, military staffs, and the European Defense Agency), the ESDP has undeniably created an overlap. The Lisbon Treaty, which is currently undergoing ratification, contains a new declaration on mutual defense that would directly duplicate NATO's long-held Article V security guarantee.⁴¹ Rather than addressing Europe's individual or collective weaknesses, the ESDP has created more problems than it has solved and uproots the fundamental premise of the alliance. As British Shadow Defense Secretary Dr. Liam Fox notes, "The EU Constitution is reshaping our Defence Alliances by stealth away from NATO and towards the EU."⁴²

The Lisbon Treaty will also assert the EU as a supranational actor on the world stage in the place of nation-states. It creates, in all but name, an EU Foreign Minister who is selected by a qualified majority vote, not a unanimous vote. This EU official will have:

- The power to appoint EU envoys;
- A bigger profile, budget, and diplomatic corps;
- The right to speak on behalf of member states in multilateral institutions, including in the U.N. Security Council upon request; and

- The right to propose EU military missions on behalf of the European Commission.⁴³

Brussels clearly intends to become the U.S. Administration's first port of call when the U.S. is conducting foreign policy in Europe. However, the Administration should not expect the same cooperative response in Brussels that it receives within the NATO Alliance.

The French Connection. When President Nicolas Sarkozy addressed the U.S. Congress in November 2007, he directly linked French readmission into NATO's integrated military command structure with the development of an autonomous EU defense identity. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner recently restated that position⁴⁴ and claimed that Washington finally "acknowledges the necessary complementarity of the two organizations."⁴⁵ The full development of an independent ESDP is a long-term French foreign policy goal and will be the centerpiece of the French Presidency of the European Union, starting July 1, 2008.⁴⁶ However, France's dream can be realized only with both British and American support.

Paris is offering Washington an increased French presence within NATO operations in exchange for American support of an EU defense identity.⁴⁷ Washington should not be tempted to accept this offer, which would bargain away the future of the transatlantic alliance for the possibility of up to 1,000 more French troops in Afghanistan or for

40. Treaty of Lisbon, Article 1, Sec. 27, p. 33, amending Article 11(a)(1).

41. "If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States." Treaty of Lisbon, Article 1, Sec. 49(c), p. 44, inserting Article 28 A(c)7.

42. Liam Fox, "Britain, Europe, and NATO—Heading in the Wrong Direction," speech to Transforming Network Centric Warfare Forum, January 30, 2008, at www.conservatives.com/tile.do?def=news.story.page&obj_id=142045 (March 17, 2008).

43. The High Representative has the right to propose EU military missions on behalf of the EU Commission, but unanimity voting will remain in the European Council.

44. M. Bernard Kouchner, press conference, Brussels, March 6, 2008, at www.ambafrance-uk.org/Bernard-Kouchner-talks-to-press.html (March 20, 2008).

45. Bernard Kouchner, "Keeping the Peace," *International Herald Tribune*, March 10, 2008, at www.iht.com/articles/2008/03/10/opinion/edkouchner.php (March 20, 2008).

46. *Ibid.*

47. Elaine Sciolino and Alison Smale, "Sarkozy, a Frenchman in a Hurry, Maps His Path," *The New York Times*, September 24, 2007, at www.nytimes.com/2007/09/24/world/europe/24sarkozy.html (February 11, 2008).

some cosmetic diplomatic entente. As former U.K. Shadow Defence Secretary Bernard Jenkin recommends, France's involvement with NATO should be considered only if France reaffirms NATO supremacy in European defense and security and if NATO can be confident that France will not engage in deliberately disruptive policies.⁴⁸

France's exclusion from NATO's integrated military command structures does not prevent it from being a full and active member of the alliance. France is a key NATO member, and approximately one-third of its 10,000 forward-deployed troops are under NATO command.⁴⁹ More than 1,500 French troops are participating in NATO's ISAF mission,⁵⁰ and Paris recently took command of KFOR, which has more than 2,200 French troops.

Detachment from NATO's military command structures, following President Charles de Gaulle's withdrawal in 1966, merely excludes Paris from NATO's overall defense planning. However, it is a full member of all key decision-making bodies and transformation initiatives, including the Military Committee, ACT, and NRE,⁵¹ and currently has 290 military personnel in NATO.⁵² If France genuinely wants to contribute more to the Afghanistan mission or to step up its influence within NATO, it can do so quite easily without forcing Washington into an unholy bargain.

The United Kingdom needs to partner with the United States to present a united front on this question. President Sarkozy's scheduled state visit to the United Kingdom before the Bucharest Summit is no

coincidence.⁵³ EU defense integration makes sense only with British involvement, both because of the pitiful defense budgets of most European countries and because their armies have far less operational experience than Britain's battle-hardened troops.

Britain has a unique opportunity to withdraw itself from further EU integration in this field and reassert the primacy of NATO. Although Britain has lost its power to veto the integrationist plans of other member states under the enhanced cooperation arrangements of the Lisbon Treaty, it does have a modicum of opportunity to halt the creation of a separate EU defense identity by virtue of its superior defense position within Europe.⁵⁴

However, if Britain opts for deeper involvement in EU defense plans, this will have profoundly negative consequences. Deeper involvement in EU defense will detract from member states' NATO obligations and further decouple the EU from NATO. The creation of duplicate military structures and doctrines with autonomous decision-making powers independent of NATO represents a major geopolitical rupture between Europe and Washington that will serve neither side.

Although the Lisbon Treaty reins in Britain's ability to veto integration in the defense sphere, it cannot force Britain to fund this dangerous endeavor. With one of the world's strongest and ablest militaries, Britain has a practical, if not political, veto that it should use to maximum effect. Although the politics driving the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and ESDP cause incredible damage in and of

48. Bernard Jenkin, "A Defence Policy for the UK: Matching Commitments and Resources," *Conservative Way Forward*, pp. 37–38, at http://accessible.bernardjenkin.org.uk/files/pdf_pdf_5.pdf (February 11, 2008).

49. "En garde: French Defence Policy," *The Economist*, U.S. ed., January 19, 2008.

50. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "International Security Assistance Force," February 6, 2008, at www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf (March 20, 2008).

51. French Embassy Press and Information Service, "News from France," February 22, 2008.

52. Leo Michel, "What Place for France in NATO?" National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, at www.ndu.edu/INSS/Repository/Outside_Publications/Michel/Michel%20Point%20de%20vue%20Le%20Monde%20June%205%202007%20English%20version.pdf (March 20, 2008).

53. President Sarkozy will pay a state visit to the United Kingdom on March 26–27, 2008. France Embassy in the United Kingdom, "President Sarkozy to Pay State Visit to UK," at www.ambafrance-uk.org/President-Sarkozy-to-pay-State.html (March 20, 2008).

54. "The Union shall replace and succeed the European Community." Treaty of Lisbon, Article 1, Sec. 2(b), p. 12, amending Article 1. Member states can undertake "to establish enhanced cooperation between themselves within the framework of the Union's non-exclusive competences." Treaty of Lisbon, Article 1, Sec. 22, p. 30, amending Article 10(1).

themselves by marginalizing U.S. influence in Europe, a military-ready EU force operating independently of NATO would be far worse.

Washington should take care not to bypass the United Kingdom on this question. Prime Minister Gordon Brown has been lukewarm on the question of further EU defense integration, and Washington should not encourage Sarkozy to outmaneuver Britain. The price being asked for any such deal is already too high, but risking diplomatic damage to the Anglo–American Special Relationship would be truly disastrous. Although Washington is keen to cement the recent détente with Paris, it needs to recognize that France’s relatively recent enthusiasm for the transatlantic alliance represents the personal zeal of President Sarkozy and may not outlast his administration.⁵⁵

Bucharest: An Enlargement Summit

NATO enlargement is a story of success. Bruce Jackson, president of the Project on Transitional Democracies, argues that “we have never had cause to regret an expansion decision.”⁵⁶ The fourth and fifth waves of accessions from Central and Eastern Europe were especially significant and saw NATO securing its post–Cold War democratic gains and fostering a sense of normalcy for those countries.⁵⁷ NATO is a successful security alliance, determined to confront threats at home and abroad and solidify its democratic reach, and its further enlargement makes sense.

The aspirant countries of Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia undoubtedly have political flaws, just as some of the accession countries of 1999 and 2004 had. However, they are European democracies on a long road of political, social, and defense reform that are willing and able to contribute to regional and international security. At a time when larger,

older member states are failing to fulfill their alliance responsibilities adequately, expecting perfection from smaller and poorer aspirant members is unfair, especially when they are already contributing to NATO missions.

The Adriatic Three. To the end that the Adriatic Three (A3) countries wish to produce, not just consume, security, they have made significant progress. They have worked steadily through the Membership Action Plan (MAP) process, and the United States should work closely with them to ensure that they are invited to become full members in Bucharest.

The United States and its NATO allies have shown tremendous leadership in the Balkans, setting transformation agendas and demanding democratic and free-market reforms in aspirant countries. The U.S.–Adriatic Charter, which was signed by Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, and the United States in 2003, not only propelled the Adriatic countries toward the reforms necessary to secure NATO membership, but also built solid diplomatic relations among nations that are now mutually supportive and trustful of one another. As these countries have pursued membership together and proven their worth in theaters such as Afghanistan, they have developed a certain amount of mutual trust and political capital, creating increased stability and normalcy on a trilateral basis.

The A3 countries already work under NATO concepts and are rapidly transforming their militaries from Soviet-era gigantism to more mobile and expeditionary forces.

In 1990, Albania boasted an army in the hundreds of thousands, focused solely on conventional threats. Current force strength is approximately 16,000 troops and is on track to achieve its target of complete modernization by 2010.⁵⁸ Albania has also complied with the majority of the economic

55. Nile Gardiner, “The Bush–Sarkozy White House Summit: A U.S.–French Entente Cordiale,” Heritage Foundation WebMemo No. 1692, November 5, 2007, at www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/wm1692.cfm.

56. Bruce P. Jackson, “At NATO, No Time for Cold Feet,” *The Washington Post*, February 4, 2008, p. A21, at www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/03/AR2008020302357.html (March 17, 2008).

57. In the fourth wave of accession, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland acceded to NATO in 1999. In the fifth wave of accession, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia acceded in 2004.

58. Sverre Myrli, rapporteur, “The Three Adriatic Aspirants: Capabilities and Preparations,” 165 DSCFC 07 E rev 1, paragraph 23, at www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=1167 (March 17, 2008).

and political demands of the MAP, including constitutionally electing the president, creating a stable and growing economy, and reaching the important NATO benchmark of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense by 2008—two years ahead of schedule.⁵⁹ Moreover, it has pledged to maintain this level of spending until 2020, a remarkable commitment by any standard.⁶⁰

Albania has also shown itself to be a “fighting ally” of both NATO and the United States. It sent combat forces to Iraq at the very beginning of the invasion and maintains a significant contingent in Iraq today.⁶¹ Albania currently manages multiple medical and combat deployments in Afghanistan, having tripled its troop numbers since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom,⁶² as well as participating in EU-FOR, the EU’s operation in Bosnia.⁶³ It has contributed to NATO’s Operation Endeavour in the Mediterranean⁶⁴ and in September 2007 was the first country to eliminate its stock of chemical weapons.⁶⁵

Croatia has also made significant progress toward membership by adopting a national security strategy and increasing its mobile expeditionary force posture. Like its co-aspirants, it has successfully moved through the MAP cycles and fulfilled the technical criteria for membership.⁶⁶

Croatia has made extraordinary progress in reforming its armed services and expects to become an immediate exporter of security upon accession, sharing both the burdens and benefits of NATO membership.⁶⁷ Croatian Foreign Minister Gordan Jandrokovic recently announced that Zagreb was planning to increase its ISAF contingent from 200 to 300 troops later this year.⁶⁸ Croatian Defense Minister Branko Vukelic recently accepted that reform must continue in key sectors, such as the judiciary and public administration, and that accession would not signal the end of political reform.⁶⁹ Support for NATO membership has surged among Croats, with 59.3 percent favoring membership in a poll on March 10.⁷⁰

Macedonia is now a multiethnic, open society with a multilingual parliament and few ethnic tensions. It has expressed a desire to become a full member of the Euro-Atlantic community with the end goal of fully integrating the Balkans into the Euro-Atlantic framework. Significantly, it has a fully professional and multiethnic armed force.

With defense spending well above 2 percent of GDP,⁷¹ cross-party support, widespread public support, and a commitment to supporting NATO and the United States in both Afghanistan and Iraq, Macedonia is a post-conflict country ready for

59. Fatmir Mediu, Minister of Defence of Albania, address at Defence Ministerial Meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, June 14, 2007, at www.nato.int/docu/speech/2007/s070614p.html (March 17, 2008).

60. *Ibid.*

61. “Lest Anyone Forget: Western Relations with the Islamic World Are Based on Shared Humanity,” *The Times* (London), June 11, 2007, at www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/leading_article/article1913069.ece (March 17, 2008).

62. BBC News, “Bush Greeted As Hero in Albania,” June 10, 2007, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6738055.stm> (March 17, 2008).

63. Gordon R. England, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense, “NATO in the 21st Century: Albanian and Macedonian Perspectives,” speech in Washington, D.C., February 01, 2007, at www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1116 (March 17, 2008).

64. Mediu, address at Defence Ministerial Meeting.

65. Jacquelyn S. Porth, “Weapons Destruction Program Reduces Threat, Enhances Security,” *America.gov*, September 10, 2007, at www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/September/20070910122132sjhtrop0.4438898.html (March 17, 2008).

66. European Information Service, “NATO Enlargement May Be Slowed Down,” March 10, 2008.

67. Fran Visnar, “Croatia to Export Security,” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, March 10, 2008.

68. “Croatia Pleased with Participation in NATO Conference,” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, February 10, 2008.

69. “Croatian Defence Minister Pleased with Signals Given over NATO Entry at Munich,” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, February 10, 2008.

70. “Latest Poll Shows Nearly 60 Per Cent of Croats Support NATO Membership,” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, March 10, 2008.

NATO membership. Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki has even outlined an “ambitious plan” to increase the number of Macedonian troops stationed in foreign territories—including Afghanistan, Iraq, and Bosnia-Herzegovina—from 3.5 percent to 8 percent of Macedonia’s total army.⁷²

The A3 medical mission in Afghanistan exemplifies how serious the A3 nations are about NATO accession and their obligations under the U.S.–Adriatic Charter. Undoubtedly, much work still needs to be done in these countries, and they must view NATO membership not as an end to reform, but as a major milestone on the road to further reform, especially if EU accession is to be kept on track.

The thorny issue of Macedonia’s name should not be an impediment to the successful enlargement of NATO at the Bucharest Summit, and the United States must make it clear that a veto by Athens will not be welcome. The United States recognized Macedonia in 2004 on a bilateral basis, and NATO enlargement into the Balkans makes sense politically and strategically. The NATO Alliance must not be held hostage by this complex issue, which should ultimately be resolved bilaterally under the auspices of the United Nations.

Albanian Minister of Defense Fatmir Mediu recently argued that the ultimate benefit of NATO membership for the A3 countries will not be for the West to bring security and stability to Southeast Europe, but for the region to realize its own destiny.⁷³ NATO membership will allow these aspirant countries to speak the common language of freedom, liberty, and democracy and create “a new dynamic in the region”⁷⁴ after the horrors that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia.

An Open Door Policy. Granting full NATO membership to the A3 countries and inviting

Ukraine and Georgia to join the Membership Action Plan would send a powerful message that the Balkans are moving past their history of conflict and are on the road to stability. In this region, once isolated from the West by religious and ethnic intolerance, incredible progress has been made, largely due to NATO intervention, American leadership, and regional and political reconciliation. NATO is a proven entity in the region that has worked actively toward regional security and stability.

It is important that NATO maintain its open door policy. Thus far, NATO enlargement has been a success story, both for the alliance and for the accession states. NATO enlargement has exemplified a cooperative approach to security that has contributed significantly to newly democratized members building modern security sectors and becoming positive actors on the world stage. Although Georgia and Ukraine have some ground to cover before they should be treated as prospective members, they must be given the tools with which to begin. The MAP process is one such tool.

German Minister of Defense Franz-Josef Jung has noted that “NATO is not only a military alliance. It was and still is a community based on values. Our door is open to those who are prepared to adopt the principles that govern our Alliance.”⁷⁵ However, Chancellor Merkel’s *volte-face*, recently implying that Georgia and Ukraine should not be invited to join the MAP at Bucharest, will be seen as nothing short of appeasement of Russia.⁷⁶

Significantly, for the first time since the NATO–Russia Council was created in 2002, President Vladimir Putin will attend the annual NATO summit, if only to further intimidate and threaten Georgia and Ukraine.⁷⁷ However, Russia’s threats to aim nuclear missiles at Ukraine if the two countries seek

71. England, “NATO in the 21st Century.”

72. Jennifer Campbell, “Macedonia Has Ambitious Plans,” *Ottawa Citizen*, February 13, 2008.

73. Atlantic Council, “NATO Membership: Has the Time Come?” event, February 19, 2008.

74. “NATO Chief Offers Encouragement to Croatia’s Membership Bid,” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, February 9, 2008.

75. Franz-Josef Jung, “The World in Disarray—Shifting Powers, Lack of Strategies,” Munich Conference on Security Policy, February 8, 2008, at www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2008=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=203 (March 17, 2008).

76. United Press International, “German Chancellor Skeptical on NATO Enlargement,” March 10, 2008.

77. John Vinocur, “Will NATO Confront a Party-Crashing Putin?” *International Herald Tribune*, February 26, 2008.

NATO membership will remind Kiev why it wanted membership in the first place and should solidify the alliance's intention to invite them to explore membership.⁷⁸ As Senator McCain said:

These two nations have every right to aspire to democracy and security as other states closer to the heart of Europe. Ukraine and Georgia have difficult neighbors and domestic challenges; they are young democracies and their road ahead will be difficult. But they should know that we will support them every step of the way, and we can show them this by supporting their aspirations at Bucharest.⁷⁹

What the U.S. and NATO Should Do

At the Bucharest Summit, the U.S. needs to push for reforms to mold NATO into a modern, effective alliance that advances the interests of the United States and other NATO members. Specifically, NATO members should:

- **Start negotiating a revised strategic concept for NATO** that will outline the alliance's purpose, organization, and tasks based on a shared threat perception. Its realm of operation must be global, and its scope of action comprehensive.
 - **Reaffirm that NATO is the cornerstone of the transatlantic alliance** and the primary actor in European defense cooperation.
 - **Readmit France into NATO's integrated military command structures only if** Paris is willing to uphold the primacy of NATO in European defense cooperation and the alliance can be confident that Paris will be a cooperative rather than a confrontational partner.
 - **Begin determining the NATO–EU relationship on a more systematic basis.** The European Security and Defense Policy should be a civilian complement to NATO missions, and its resources should be put at NATO's disposal in a fashion similar to Berlin-Plus.
- **Explicitly reject any movement toward a two-tiered alliance** and reinforce this message with more equitable burden-sharing arrangements. Specifically, the ACT must be given authority to streamline and improve NATO's defense capabilities, members need to meet the previously agreed benchmark of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense, and the vast majority of national operational caveats must be eliminated.
 - **Launch a thorough public diplomacy effort** to communicate NATO's mission and purpose effectively, starting with a domestic and international strategy for Afghanistan.
 - **Conclude a comprehensive strategic political and military plan for Afghanistan** that makes a hard-hitting appraisal of what is needed, both politically and militarily, to make Afghanistan a success and includes firm guarantees from NATO members to eliminate caveats and address troop shortfalls.
 - **Accept Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia as full members of the alliance** and invite Ukraine and Georgia to begin the Membership Action Plan process. NATO should also clearly restate its open door policy.

Conclusion

Washington has a small window of opportunity to mold NATO into a modern, effective alliance that advances the interests the United States and the other member countries. The United States will always retain the option of unilateral intervention to defend its strategic interests, but effective partnering with NATO is a sensible and realistic way to formulate burden-sharing arrangements with its European allies.

There will always be serious threats to global security. If Europe's major powers genuinely believe that the world's response to these threats should be multilateral, they should invest in a thorough reform and revitalization of NATO. Anything less

78. Peter Finn, "Putin Threatens Ukraine on NATO," *The Washington Post*, February 13, 2008, p. A8, at www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/12/AR2008021201658.html (March 17, 2008).

79. Press release, "Senator McCain Urges NATO Renaissance," Office of Senator John McCain, February 08, 2008, at http://mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressOffice.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=fad06a37-9c77-56fa-31e2-c4bce3d559ac (March 17, 2008).

than a high-level endorsement of NATO on both sides of the Atlantic will doom it to marginalization.

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