

**Testimony of Bruce Pitcairn Jackson**  
**Before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**On the NATO Summit in Bucharest**  
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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on “NATO: Enlargement and Effectiveness” as we approach the NATO Summit in Bucharest, which is now less than three weeks away. The NATO allies face a range of decisions at Bucharest including missile defense and operations in Afghanistan, as well as the very important question of NATO expansion and the preparation for membership of potential candidates. I would like to offer some context for this complex expansion question confronting NATO Heads of State, which if it goes forward requires the advice of this Committee and consent of the entire Senate. I believe that the choices for the United States appear in sharper relief once we understand the role NATO expansion has played in the development of modern Europe so far.

For centuries, the Balkans and Europe's East have deserved their reputations for igniting wider European wars and have given to European history the place names of genocide and mass starvation. In 1949, the creation of NATO secured the post-World War II peace in Western Europe. Since the end of the Cold War, the alliance has played a transformational role in building a second peace — this time in Central and Eastern Europe.

Now NATO has an opportunity to lay the foundation for a third European peace -- this time in the Balkans -- and to open a dialogue that could lead to a fourth: a more constructive relationship between Europe and Russia.

The transatlantic allies will face two critical questions when they gather for their summit in Bucharest in April. The first is whether to invite Albania, Croatia and Macedonia to join NATO, a decision that is the culmination of a 15-year effort to end the wars that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia. The second is what relationship Ukraine and Georgia will have with NATO in the turbulent early years of their development: Will they be set on a course that could lead to eventual NATO membership, or will they be excluded?

Regarding the Balkans, critics say that Albania, Croatia and Macedonia are not ready for NATO membership. Farther east, they worry about the fragility of democratic institutions in Georgia and Ukraine, and they have concerns about the effect that NATO's engagement with those countries would have on relations with Russia and on European publics skittish about further enlargement of the European Union.

These larger questions give rise to a series of interrelated questions which will shape the decisions of the 26 NATO leaders at the Bucharest Summit on April 2-4, 2008.

- (1) How have the two recent expansions of the alliance — in 1999 to include Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, and in 2004 to include Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria — affected US and European security and the integrity and capability of NATO? What does this experience tell us about the prospect of further enlargement?

- (2) What are the qualifications of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia, as measured against NATO standards and relative to previous candidates at the point of entering the alliance?
- (3) Actually, what criteria does NATO use in making these important decisions? Are we moving the bar upward or downward?
- (4) What is the status of the Western Balkans as a whole and how will the entry of three new NATO members affect the stability of Southeast Europe and the security of Europe more generally?
- (5) Assuming that the Alliance takes a major step forward in the Western Balkans, what is being done for the democracies of Europe's East, such as Ukraine and Georgia, which will not be considered for membership at Bucharest? Are they being left behind?
- (6) What about Russia? How will the third expansion of NATO since 1989 and our engagement with Ukraine and Georgia affect Russia's perceptions of the West and its relations with our European allies?
- (7) Finally, what are the implications of the Bucharest Summit for the foundation of the Atlantic Alliance, for how the United States and Europe share burdens, and for our effectiveness working together in global politics?

Although these questions are demanding, we have accumulated a great deal of experience since the fall of the Berlin Wall in the development and integration of newly freed European states. There is extensive empirical evidence informing us of how NATO

expansion has helped build the Europe we see today on which we can base an assessment of the role further expansion will play in Europe's future.

### **Background on NATO Expansion**

The post-Cold War expansions of NATO to the Visegrad countries (named for a 1991 summit in Visegrad, Hungary) of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary and then to the larger and more diverse Vilnius Group (named for a 2000 summit in Vilnius, Lithuania) were actually very different in terms of the process as it unfolded and its significance for Europe. In terms of process, particularly in the United States, an organized examination of the democratic credentials and institutions of the Visegrad countries took a back seat to issues the Senate (and this Committee in particular) might focus on in the course of a ratification debate. The substantive debate turned on how expansion would affect relations with Russia and whether the United States needed to remain in Europe at all. Especially telling was the moral import of the struggle for freedom in the Visegrad states: the Hungarian uprising of 1956, the 1968 Prague spring, the birth of Solidarity in 1980 — and the brutal communist suppression of each.

Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary were invited to join NATO in the first post-Cold War expansion because of the historical and moral claim they had to return to the community of European states from which they had been separated by 20<sup>th</sup> century totalitarianism. In addition to the moral claim, the Visegrad accession was the last step in ending the danger of war on the historically bloody North German plain, which stretches from Moscow through Poland and Germany into Northern France. More than ten years after this decision was taken in July 1997 at the Madrid Summit, the NATO allies have every reason to be proud of their decision.

The second phase of expansion began at NATO's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Washington Summit in April 1999, when the so-called Membership Action Plan (MAP) process was established for new aspirants in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The list of such aspirants soon grew to include Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia. The MAP process was a response to unwillingness of the NATO allies to go forward with invitations to Slovenia and Romania at the Madrid Summit in July 1997. While many observers thought these rejections were unfair, NATO leaders believed that inadequate reform and weak democratic institutions, particularly in Romania, made the prospect of NATO accession premature for these countries. They reasoned that the next generation of NATO candidates would need a self-improvement course before invitations could be extended.

With this decision, NATO formally entered the business of democracy support. There were several immediate consequences of the creation of a class of candidate countries in the process of trying to qualify for membership. The class of countries granted a potential avenue toward membership through MAP but no specific date for invitation could be quite large. The process made it possible to sever the question of whether one was legitimately an aspirant for membership from the question of whether a country would actually be invited to join. Ten candidates came in virtually overnight, some with very weak credentials and a limited history as democracies. In addition, through MAP, the class of candidates could be diverse both historically and geographically, since the Vilnius Group was not claiming a single, overarching strategic rationale.

In essence, the Vilnius Group claimed to represent a social and political restoration of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe that would render “whole” a Europe divided in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The unifying character of the second expansion can be seen in the frequent references to the concept of “a Europe that is whole, free and at peace,” as President George W. Bush put it in his speech at Warsaw University in 2001, in which he maintained that Europe must extend “from the Baltic to the Black Sea” to achieve this objective. The Vilnius Group did precisely that, and seven countries from the group, a self-help political club formed during a conference in Lithuania in May 2000, were invited to join NATO at the Prague Summit in June 2002. Although both the process of qualification and the significance for Europe were different from the Visegrad round, the result has clearly strengthened the NATO alliance and Europe itself.

### **Qualifications of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia**

In terms of enlargement, the first question facing the NATO allies as they gear up for the Bucharest summit is whether nine years into the Membership Action Plan, Albania, Croatia and Macedonia are qualified to enter NATO. Critics say that they are not. But the fact is that Albania, Croatia and Macedonia have spent six more years in rigorous preparation for NATO membership than the seven other original members of the Vilnius Group, and it shows.

Today, Croatia has the most impressive all round economic performance of any country in southern Europe. In recent years, Albania has contributed more soldiers to missions in Iraq, Afghanistan and international peacekeeping than most NATO allies. And, since the end of the Balkan wars in 1999, Macedonia has arguably covered more ground in building an integrated, multi-ethnic society in a short time than any other

European nation. We now have a chance to bring Catholic Croatia, secular-Islamic Albania and multi-ethnic, Orthodox Macedonia into the Euro-Atlantic community of democracies. If it remains the case that qualification for NATO is predominantly determined by the “social criteria” of democratic reform as well as military contributions to international peacekeeping, then the three so-called “Adriatic Charter” countries in the Western Balkans are fully qualified.

But since NATO has changed or adjusted its criteria for membership and its rationale for expansion in the recent past, perhaps a third expansion might be driven by different criteria and have unique characteristics.

In addition to democratic criteria, the NATO allies seem to view Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia strategically in terms of Southeast Europe, politically in terms of European integration, and geopolitically in terms of the partnership in the Balkans between the European Union and NATO.

Strategically, invitations to Albania, Croatia and Macedonia bring the NATO security architecture inside the Western Balkans, which remains the last unstable region in Central and Eastern Europe. The Balkan candidates claim to be instituting a system of shared security that will contribute to reducing the political instability of the Western Balkans and thereby strengthening Southeast Europe, in both political and economic terms.

The strategic claim is closely linked with the political understanding of the question. NATO’s early extension of a membership perspective to Albania, Croatia, and

Macedonia and its tenacity in preparing the Adriatic Charter candidates for membership clearly reflects a political understanding of what the European Union decided at the EU Summit in Thessaloniki. In the communiqué from Thessaloniki, the European Union “guaranteed” all the countries of the Western Balkans eventual membership in all of Europe’s institutions. If it is the intention of the European Union to bring the Western Balkans into the political and market institutions of Europe, then it is only common sense for NATO to help strengthen these candidates where it can and to ensure that a security structure will be in place so that EU integration goes forward when its leaders see fit. Since Croatia is already closing in on the final chapters of EU candidacy, NATO invitations are, if anything, somewhat behind schedule.

The complementarity of European Union and NATO objectives is even more pronounced if we look at the qualifications of the candidates in geopolitical terms. Since 1994, the Western Balkans, more than any other place in the world, has taught NATO and the European Union as well as the United States and Europe how to work effectively together across the entire spectrum of human rights, intervention, peacekeeping, reconstruction, capacity building, and integration missions — to name but a few of the tasks that have been undertaken in this defining collaboration to rescue and rebuild the former Yugoslavia.

What NATO and the European Union achieve or fail achieve in the Western Balkans may well define what we will undertake, or fail to address, in the future throughout the Euro-Atlantic. In this analysis, the NATO allies face an obligation to take any and all steps to ensure that the western Balkans has the highest probability of success.

The issuing of invitations to three qualified candidates is one of those steps, but the alliance should not stop there. Bosnia, Montenegro and Serbia need the so-called “Intensified Dialogue” with NATO on membership issues. This is the preliminary dialogue anticipating formal adoption of a Membership Action Plan setting forth a path to membership invitation.

Viewed from the perspective of objective democratic, strategic, political and geopolitical criteria — and viewed comparatively in relation to accessions in the two previous rounds of expansion — the candidates for invitation at the Bucharest Summit have an overwhelming case in their favor. Moreover, a failure to decide exposes the alliance to significant risks and negative effects. Any further delay on the candidacies of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia would diminish regional stability just as Kosovo begins its extended period of supervised independence. Delay would also confuse and undercut the European Union as it takes over chief security responsibilities from the United States and NATO throughout the region. Finally, inability to close the book in the Balkans would also dangerously slow our engagement with Europe's East, to which I now turn.

### **The Remaining Question of Europe’s East**

Assuming that the Balkan accession goes forward at the Bucharest Summit, there remains the question of Europe’s East — which might someday become the territory on which a fourth expansion will take place. Both Ukraine and Georgia have sent letters to the NATO Secretary General formally requesting entry into the Membership Action Plan process.

Both countries have long since completed the Individual Partnership Program, and they have breezed through the Intensified Dialogue on membership. Their senior officials argue, and Western military analysts broadly agree, that Ukraine and Georgia have been in NATO's waiting room for so long that they have completed the majority of the technical military reform tasks usually delineated in the MAP process and are already interoperable with NATO forces. For Ukraine, the Bucharest Summit is the second try for the Membership Action Plan. During the Istanbul Summit in 2004, President Kuchma requested MAP, but the Alliance refused on the grounds that Ukraine had sold radars to Iraq. Although that charge turned out to be false – we did not find Ukrainian radars in Iraq – the NATO allies undoubtedly made the right decision.

As we have seen from Poland to the Adriatic Charter countries, the processes of NATO accession and its purposes evolve over time. Looking at the requests of Ukraine and Georgia, we already know that military criteria play very little role in how we define our interest in the success of the two countries. In fact, these countries are not now asking for NATO membership, although they would be delighted if we treated them as prospective members. They are asking for the tools with which to complete their reforms and ultimately to qualify for membership consideration. In effect, the Membership Action Plan has become a pre-school for countries seeking to improve their credentials for an EU perspective, or more extensive engagement with the European Union. In this respect, the MAP process runs parallel to (while remaining distinct from) the EU's Neighborhood Policy.

What NATO must decide is how NATO should engage with Ukraine and Georgia in the course of an extended process of strengthening democratic institutions, resolving so-called “frozen conflicts,” and establishing their political orientation toward the West. To the degree that political and democratic criteria will determine the speed and extent of their integration into the EU and NATO, Ukraine and Georgia closely resemble Albania, Croatia and Macedonia at the time the three entered the Membership Action Plan

Many NATO allies note that despite the astounding pace of reform since the Rose Revolution in 2003, Georgia stumbled in November 2007 when it cracked down on an opposition demonstration. Likewise, despite the vibrant political pluralism of Ukraine and its repeated free and fair elections, it seems that the country cannot maintain a governing coalition or reach a political decision without a fistfight in parliament and a collapse of the government. But these are the familiar juvenile delinquencies of young democracies finding their way in the post-Soviet world. Helping them past this early fragility is an important reason for them to be offered a collaborative relationship with NATO.

As important as it is to understand that NATO’s criteria on expansion are constantly changing, it is also important to understand what NATO’s engagement and pre-accession programs are not. A Membership Action Plan offers no guarantee of future membership in NATO, let alone in the European Union. To be precise, MAP would initiate an open-ended process that anticipates that Georgia and Ukraine will spend many years resolving critical national questions of stability, territorial integrity, institutional capacity and the resolution of frozen conflicts before either NATO or the candidate

country can make an informed political decision on NATO membership. In this sense, the first phase of engagement in Europe's East will be a process of discovery wherein Europe learns more about the character, capability and political intentions of Ukraine and Georgia—and these countries understand the evolving requirements of both NATO and the European Union.

### **The Implications of the Bucharest Summit for The Relationship with Russia**

Critics of NATO often cite past expansions as a decisive factor in the deterioration of Russia's relationship with NATO, the United States and Europe. Although NATO has an influence on the security, integration, and engagement of Europe in the East and, therefore, an influence on Europe's relationship with Russia, it can be argued that NATO has exerted a positive influence on Russia over the longer term.

To the extent that NATO and the European Union succeed in the stabilization and integration of the Western Balkans, Serbian insecurities and historical anxieties may cease to be a neuralgic issue in Russia's relations with the international community. Similarly, closer relations with Ukraine and Georgia will remove the security concerns that make addressing "frozen conflicts" extremely difficult and will serve to further demilitarize the unstable regions of what Russia once regarded as its "Near Abroad."

Over time, Ukraine and Georgia will become more stable and undoubtedly more prosperous. Invariably, countries in the process of building closer relations with NATO find they can safely demilitarize and devote more of their energies to multilateral resolution of conflicts with neighbors. Ultimately, closer relations between Europe and

Ukraine and Georgia would bring Russia closer to Europe and would make the needed dialogues with Russia on democracy and energy that much easier.

As a historical rule, the persistence of political vacuums between Europe and Russia and the isolation of the fearful, fragile states trapped within this belt of political instability are a danger to and a barrier to cooperation between Europe and Russia. Since the mid-1990s, NATO has done more than any institution to remove the physical insecurity and end the isolation of Europe's East and Russia. As a result of NATO's success in these areas, it is now possible to envision new kinds of relationships with Russia, of which the Russia-NATO Founding Act and the Russia-NATO Council are distant, cave-dwelling ancestors.

If the Bucharest Summit succeeds, both in the completion of a South East European security system in the Balkans and a decisive, long-term engagement with Ukraine and Georgia, it is not too early to speculate about a new Russian relationship.

In the short term, the military dimension of the relationship between Russia and the West is likely to continue to decline. We are unlikely to find ourselves embarking on interminable negotiations on the levels of nuclear and conventional forces reminiscent of the late 1970's and 1980's. These issues are no longer central. The pretense of the last few years that Russia and the United States had found common cause in areas such as North Korea, Iran, and counter-proliferation generally has generally proven false. Not only is the Russian Government reluctant to help Europe and the United States on problems of the potential development of an Iranian nuclear program, Russia seems to have even less influence with North Korea than does the United States. As a result, the

Russia-NATO Council remains little more than a vehicle to allow the Russian President to appear at NATO Summits.

By the same token, it is clear that Russia and the rest of the Euro-Atlantic community are not going to reach a common understanding on the nature of democracy, the standards of human rights, the protection of the press, the limitations on state power, and many other political values that are the foundation of NATO and EU member states.

However, the decisions at the Bucharest Summit may set the stage for recognition that Russia and Europe have common economic interests and should begin to discuss the terms of trade. Already, the European Union is about to open free trade discussions with Ukraine, and NATO has put Europe's energy security on its agenda. While it is more likely that the European Union will take the leading role in whatever relationship develops on energy supply and related issues in trade and development, it may fairly be said that NATO created the conditions that made closer relations between Russia and Europe on economic matters possible — primarily by means of three expansions and a new engagement in Europe's East

### **The Implications of the Summit for NATO**

When the NATO allies met at Riga, Latvia in November 2006, they described their next meeting in Bucharest as “an expansion Summit.” Since then, equally consequential issues concerning the success of NATO operations in Afghanistan and how missile defenses will work in the overall security architecture of Europe have been added

to the agenda. Success or failure on any of these questions will affect the strength and integrity of NATO for years to come.

Still, it was the question of NATO membership that first signaled that the Bucharest Summit is likely to be an historic event in the NATO alliance and in the development of modern Europe more generally. If the Bucharest Summit does invite Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia to join NATO, if the alliance formally invites Bosnia, Montenegro and Serbia to start on the path to NATO and European integration, and if NATO invites Georgia and Ukraine to enter the Membership Action Plan, thus beginning a serious and sustained relationship with Europe's East, what affect will NATO have had on modern Europe? Mr. Chairman, in my view:

- NATO membership for Albania, Croatia and Macedonia would be a major step towards the complete integration of Southeast Europe into Euro-Atlantic institutions and would provide the security foundations for an enduring peace in the Western Balkans.
- Invitations to Bosnia, Montenegro and Serbia to begin a dialogue on NATO would formally parallel the policies of the European Union towards the countries of the Central Balkans. This would be an important signal that NATO and Europe's Security and Defense Policy are equal partners in future challenges.
- Invitations to Georgia and Ukraine to enter NATO's Membership Action Plan would signal a breakthrough engagement with Europe's East which would strengthen the democratic and economic development of both countries and may, ultimately, set the stage for closer relations with Russia.

- Finally, the decisions at the Bucharest Summit, taken as a whole, would announce that there is a new balance in burden-sharing between the European Union and NATO. In each affirmative decision at Bucharest, NATO will be either anticipating an EU decision (for Croatia, NATO membership would precede EU Membership) or following appropriately on the lead of EU policy (Ukraine's MAP would follow the EU's Neighborhood Policy by two years.)

In conclusion, NATO's adaptability to the changing needs and various objectives of Visegrad, Vilnius, the Adriatic Charter, the Western Balkan, and now the post-Soviet democracies in Europe's East is nothing short of extraordinary. The NATO allies seem quite agile in changing their mission from ending insecurity in the North German plain, to completing Central and Eastern Europe, to stabilizing and helping to integrate the Western Balkans, to strengthening democratic institutions where it can, and in providing the relationships with Ukraine and Georgia that may bring them to a political decision on NATO membership and an EU perspective. NATO's Open Door policy has clearly played a critical role in the development of modern Europe after 1989 and stands as one of the most clearheaded decisions made by the alliance since the Marshall Plan. Looking back on the history of NATO's initial engagements and expansions, there is no positive decision which the allies have had cause to subsequently regret. Each NATO dialogue, membership action plan and NATO invitation has made the trans-Atlantic alliance more effective and has served to unite and strengthen the political order of modern Europe.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.