

Background

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NATO 60th Anniversary Summit: An Agenda for American Leadership

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is one of the world's most successful multilateral alliances and a vital component of the global security architecture. It is important that President Obama assert the need for strong American leadership within the transatlantic alliance when he attends NATO's 60th anniversary summit on April 3 and 4 in Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany.

President Obama's agenda will be crowded with high-profile and complex issues, such as the war in Afghanistan, NATO-EU relations, and negotiations to formulate a new Strategic Concept for the alliance. He will also be faced with ongoing challenges such as NATO enlargement and appointment of a new Secretary General.

The summit will take place during President Obama's first European trip as President, and less than 100 days into his Administration; however, its imprint will likely shape the transatlantic relationship for the remainder of his term. This early test for the transatlantic security alliance will be a critical time for the U.S. and its European allies to work together to address common threats.

As President Obama faces a resurgent Russia, a belligerent Iran, and an increasingly unstable Afghanistan, he must ensure that the NATO alliance maintains transatlantic momentum to confront such pressing global security challenges.

Top Priorities for the Summit

President Obama should concentrate his energies on the alliance's most urgent business, including

Talking Points

- NATO's 60th anniversary summit in April will be a critical time for the transatlantic alliance, and it will likely shape the transatlantic relationship for the remainder of the Obama Administration.
- The war in Afghanistan is America's top priority at the summit and it is vital that President Obama send the message that he intends to win in Afghanistan.
- NATO's Continental European members must recommit to the comprehensive plan for Afghanistan agreed upon at the Bucharest summit in 2008, and provide additional combat troops with fewer national caveats.
- The U.S. should take more time to consider the implications of French reintegration into NATO command structures and withdraw support for the creation of a separate EU defense identity.
- NATO should begin negotiations for a new Strategic Concept by re-analyzing the threats facing the alliance and injecting political energy into stalled projects, such as the development of an alliance-wide missile defense program.

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Afghanistan, the appointment of a new NATO Secretary General, and the negotiations for a new Strategic Concept.

Afghanistan. Afghanistan is the Obama Administration's stated top foreign policy priority, and its 60-day review of the United States' engagement in Afghanistan will be finished in time for the summit. President Obama faces pressure from a number of fronts to redefine U.S. objectives and to retreat from U.S. commitments to Afghanistan's democratic aspirations. Representative John Murtha (D-PA) has likened the mission in Afghanistan to America's protracted engagement in Vietnam.¹ The political left of the Democratic Party, epitomized by groups such as the Progressive Democrats of America, oppose NATO's operations in Afghanistan, claiming the war will be a "quagmire" for the Obama Administration.²

President Obama must use the NATO summit to send the message to his domestic and international audiences that he intends to win in Afghanistan. He must curb the tide of eroding congressional support for military action in Afghanistan, and ensure genuine bipartisan support for the war. It is equally vital that the Afghanistan mission remains a NATO endeavor and that more equitable burden-sharing among the allies is made a priority for the military campaign. General David Petraeus has stated that Afghanistan will be the longest campaign in the long war against Islamist terrorism and, therefore, America will need the support of its closest allies in order to sustain this war effort to success.³

The mission in Afghanistan requires a commitment to root out Islamist terrorists and help the Afghans build a responsive government, create a sustainable economy, and prevent the re-emergence

of a sanctuary state for the global Jihadist movement.⁴ This commitment will likely mean a highly decentralized form of government in the long term, but in the short term, no progress will be made without security and stability. That will mean more combat troops with fewer national caveats and more effective deployment of current resources. Washington has already announced the deployment of an additional 17,000 troops.⁵ It is important that NATO's Continental European members show a similar level of commitment.

That will require additional civilian *and* combat capabilities from Continental Europe. The German and Italian governments should take the lead. They should end the rigid restrictions they place on their troops and, instead, allow NATO commanders to fight the war in the most effective and flexible manner. National caveats that severely limit where and how troops can be deployed undermine NATO's mission by weakening the overall war effort and increasing the burden on other allies.

NATO's current Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR), General John Craddock, has stated that it will be at least three years before the Afghan National Army can fill shortfalls in Afghanistan's security requirements.⁶ If the mission is to succeed, these shortfalls must be plugged by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the interim, which can only be accomplished if participating nations take on their fair shares of the burden.

At present, the majority of Continental European allies under-resource their commitments to Afghanistan and place national caveats on their deployments to keep them out of harm's way. This has effectively created a two-tiered alliance within NATO. Although many European nations are more inclined

1. Jennifer Bendery, "Obama Must Sell Liberals on Afghanistan," *Roll Call*, February 26, 2009.
2. Thalif Deen, "Afghanistan, the Next U.S. Quagmire?" Progressive Democrats of America, February 20, 2009, at <http://pdamerica.org/articles/news/2009-02-20-12-29-01-news.php> (March 19, 2009).
3. Nathaniel C. Fick and John A. Nagl, "Counterinsurgency Field Manual: Afghanistan Edition," *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2009, at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4587&page=0 (March 19, 2009).
4. Sally McNamara, "The Bucharest Summit: Time to Revitalize the NATO Alliance," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2119, March 26, 2008, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/bg2119.cfm>.
5. Tim Reid and Tom Coghlan, "Barack Obama Will Send 17,000 Extra Troops to Fight in Afghanistan," *The Times*, February 18, 2009, at http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article5756279.ece (March 19, 2009).
6. "NATO Fears European Pull-Out From Afghanistan," *Deutsche Welle*, January 10, 2009, at <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,3933770,00.html?maca=en-rss-en-eu-2092-rdf> (March 19, 2009).

toward reconstruction and humanitarian missions for political reasons, alliance members must not be allowed to opt for one or the other exclusively.

The unwillingness of Europe's major powers, such as Germany, Italy, and Spain, to sustain NATO's combat operations in Afghanistan is ripping the heart out of the alliance. These powers also cannot claim to have undertaken successful reconstruction efforts: Embedded Training Teams, Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams, and Police Mentoring Teams are all understaffed.⁷ Key questions will need to be addressed about civilian operations and reconstruction missions that are essential to Afghanistan's long-term success; but these issues cannot be addressed without first shoring up the necessary support for NATO's military mission.

With dozens of attempted and successful al-Qaeda and other Islamist terrorist attacks, Britain and Europe must ensure that Afghanistan does not once again become a safe haven for terrorists.⁸ The invocation of NATO's Article 5—that an attack on one member constitutes an attack on all members—on September 12, 2001, placed obligations on the entire alliance to confront the asymmetric challenge of Islamist terrorism wherever it may lie.

Europe should consider Afghanistan no more a mission of choice than should America. If NATO withdraws from Afghanistan without having first ensured legitimate and effective governance, the Taliban will re-emerge and recreate pre-9/11 conditions, including safe harbor for terrorists intent on harming U.S. and European interests. In the absence of a non-Islamist state, the Taliban will have outlasted NATO, leaving the allies perpetually weakened and vulnerable to a whole range of Islamist extremists.

The Comprehensive Political–Military Strategic Plan for Afghanistan agreed at the Bucharest summit in 2008

presented 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 people.⁹ However, most European countries did not support the Bucharest plan with enough troops or financing. Not only have national caveats continued to hamper the military mission, but European commitments to train Afghanistan's police force have failed so far as well.

The upcoming NATO summit will provide another opportunity for the alliance to send the message that it intends to complete its mission in Afghanistan. Although there are likely to be some changes to the Bucharest strategy, NATO is not starting from scratch. The ISAF's strategic vision for Afghanistan remains a viable strategy for success in Afghanistan. President Obama's 60-day review must be compatible with this plan.¹⁰ The principal challenge will be for the entire alliance to provide military and civilian resources.

With sky-high approval ratings across Europe, President Obama must use his first NATO summit to restate the case for winning in Afghanistan, and he must demand that European leaders finally provide adequate resources to fulfill that objective. Europe must share the risks, not just enjoy the benefits of NATO membership.

French Reintegration into NATO Command Structures. French President Nicolas Sarkozy has stated his intention to fully rejoin NATO command structures at the summit and, in return, has received American support to develop a European Union defense identity separate from NATO's. France is also poised to take two senior NATO command positions: the Allied Command Transformation (one of NATO's two supreme commands, based in Norfolk, Virginia) and the Joint Command Lisbon (one of NATO's three main operations headquarters,

7. General David H. Petraeus, "The Future of the Alliance and the Mission in Afghanistan," Munich Security Conference, February 8, 2009, at http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2009=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=264& (March 19, 2009).
8. Sally McNamara "Why NATO Must Win in Afghanistan: A Central Front in the War on Terrorism," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2148, June 23, 2008, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/bg2148.cfm>.
9. Press release, "ISAF Nations Affirm Long-Term Commitment to Afghanistan," NATO, April 3, 2008, at <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2008/04-april/e0403g.html> (March 19, 2009).
10. Press release, "ISAF's Strategic Vision," NATO, April 3, 2008, at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-052e.html> (March 19, 2009).

which includes the U.S. Sixth Fleet and the NATO Rapid Reaction Force).¹¹

It would be a colossal strategic error by the new U.S. Administration and the British government to continue supporting French ambitions to Europeanize NATO policy.¹² French Defense Minister Hervé Morin has already stated that France's reintegration is precisely for the purpose of Europeanizing NATO: "When we made proposals to our European partners, they said, 'The French talk about European defense to weaken the Atlantic alliance.' Through our *démarche*, we want to Europeanise NATO."¹³

Sarkozy has finally managed to square Charles de Gaulle's circle. When General de Gaulle withdrew from the integrated command structure in 1966 and ejected NATO troops from France, he argued that separate European defense arrangements would never be constructed while NATO existed. He also gave birth to the idea that French power could be measured in terms of Paris's opposition to the United States. France's reintegration into the command of NATO's most senior positions will give Paris an extraordinary degree of power and influence in the alliance.

America's explicit endorsement of a separate EU defense identity also allows France to build EU military and security structures that will have access to NATO assets under the Berlin Plus agreement of 2002. It represents a win-win situation for French defense planners who can now reshape Europe's

security arrangements in their own image and counter-balance American influence in Europe. France will be able to Europeanize NATO concurrently with building EU security structures that exclude American influence completely.

Paris's growing power and influence within NATO will be well out of proportion to France's military role in alliance operations. France currently has 2,780 troops in central and eastern Afghanistan, compared to 8,300 British troops based in southern Afghanistan where the majority of combat operations take place¹⁴ and nearly 38,000 American troops, with an additional 17,000 set to arrive this spring.¹⁵ Yet Defense Minister Morin has already ruled out sending additional French troops to Afghanistan in the foreseeable future.¹⁶

France's reintegration into NATO's military command will certainly afford President Obama a short-term PR success. President Sarkozy, faced with a hostile public and political class, has demanded to be seated beside NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer during the televised portions of the ceremonies to send the message that France is now in the driving seat. (He will have to take his alphabetically assigned seat during the private negotiations according to NATO's long-standing protocol.)¹⁷

The fact that Sarkozy threatened to boycott NATO's ceremonial celebrations over something as trivial as seating arrangements should give the Administration pause for thought. Within NATO,

11. Ben Hall and James Blitz, "Command Accord Presages French Return to NATO," *Financial Times*, February 5, 2009, at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/fbc2122a-f323-11dd-abe6-0000779fd2ac.html> (March 20, 2009).

12. For further analysis, see Nile Gardiner and Sally McNamara, "The U.S. and U.K. Must Oppose French Plans to Weaken NATO," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2285, February 10, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/wm2285.cfm>.

13. Lara Marlowe, "France Sees New Opportunities to Promote 'European Defence,'" *The Irish Times*, March 6, 2009, at <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2009/0306/1224242372687.html> (March 20, 2009).

14. "International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Army Strength & Laydown," March 13, 2009, at http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf (March 20, 2009).

15. John J. Kruzal, "Incoming Troops Likely to See Initial Rise in Violence in Afghanistan," Armed Forces Press Service, March 20, 2009, at <http://www.centcom.mil/en/news/incoming-troops-likely-to-see-initial-rise-in-violence-in-afghanistan.html> (March 23, 2009).

16. "Hervé Morin: 'Non à un Référendum sur l'OTAN,'" *Le Monde*, February 9, 2009, at http://www.lemonde.fr/opinions/article/2009/02/09/herve-morin-non-a-un-referendum-sur-l-otan_1152788_3232.html (March 20, 2009).

17. "Nicolas Sarkozy 'Threatened to Boycott' NATO Party Over Seating Plan," *The Daily Telegraph*, February 16, 2009, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/4642456/Nicolas-Sarkozy-threatened-to-boycott-Nato-party-over-seating-plan.html> (March 20, 2009).

France has repeatedly engaged in deliberately obstructionist behavior, such as in 2003 when it led a Franco–Belgian–German coalition to deny America’s request to provide NATO defensive systems to Turkey in the event of an attack during the liberation of Iraq—a request that is specifically provisioned under Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty. It is unlikely that France’s reintegration into NATO will ward off instances similar to this in the future or result in greater cooperation by Paris.

The Administration must ask itself what the U.S. gains from France’s reintegration and the development of an EU defense identity. The vast majority of European countries will not reach NATO’s benchmark of spending 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) on defense in the immediate coming years and, therefore, the competition for limited defense resources will become fiercer.

Paris has made no commitment to avoid duplicating NATO’s roles and structures within the EU, and has already reneged on the spirit of the Berlin Plus agreement by creating a separate and unnecessary operations center to headquarter its military missions. The European Union now has delegations that advise third countries on security reform—something that is traditionally a NATO role and a driving element of NATO’s Membership Action Plan (MAP). It is difficult to see how a greater EU defense identity will strengthen European security or NATO. Indeed, encouraging a larger military role for the EU can only make NATO’s task more complicated as it is confronted with further duplication and fewer resources.

Neither the U.S. Administration nor Congress has had enough time to consider the full implications of this move. Providing France with such influence would weaken the Anglo–American Special Relationship, shifting power from Washington and London toward Continental Europe, while paving the way for the development of duplicate security arrangements within the European Union—all of which will undermine NATO.

It is vital that President Obama revisit this French proposal for reintegration, which is predi-

cated on American support for an independent European defense organization. Paris should be welcomed back into NATO’s leadership club only on terms that are acceptable to all NATO members, including Turkey, which continues to have a difficult relationship with France in part due to Paris’s reluctance to support Ankara’s bid for EU membership. Paris must also make a commitment to close the NATO-duplicating EU operations center in Brussels, and pledge to invest in military equipment that is interoperable with NATO’s before its reintegration is considered by Washington.

A New Strategic Concept. NATO reform will be high on the summit’s agenda as the alliance seeks to adapt its role and missions to the constantly changing security environment of the 21st century.

The Strasbourg–Kehl summit will produce a “Declaration on Alliance Security” outlining NATO’s *raison d’être*, and will pave the way for a new Strategic Concept in 2010 or 2011, depending on the pace of negotiations within the alliance.¹⁸ Refashioning the very purpose and role of the transatlantic alliance in the post-9/11 world is likely to be a bruising endeavor, as many countries have already shown incredible reluctance to follow NATO’s new and necessary expeditionary direction. Ironically, it is often the most equivocal countries—including Germany and Spain—that are among the most threatened by Islamist terrorists, having both home-grown terrorist threats as well as porous borders with other Islamist-threatened nations.

The Declaration on Alliance Security is, therefore, likely to be a broad-brush statement, but it is important that the United States drives this process from the beginning. The Declaration on Alliance Security will be a critical starting point for reshaping the alliance to address members’ security threats for at least the next decade, and if America wishes to see NATO flourish, it must take advantage of the opportunity to lead this process, not follow it.

The declaration, as a precursor to the new Strategic Concept should address the threats NATO faces as it enters its seventh decade, as well as threats it is likely to face in the future. As a truly

18. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Secretary General, NATO, speech at a seminar on relations between the EU and NATO, Paris, July 7, 2008, at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2008/s080707b.html> (March 20, 2009).

strategic alliance, NATO must deal with both existing and emerging issues. These security challenges include terrorism, cyberterrorism, ballistic missile attacks, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Declaration should address these threats, as well as reaffirming NATO's commitment to winning in Afghanistan. This process gives the United States a vehicle through which to address the alliance's shortcomings in Afghanistan and to focus efforts on revitalizing the ISAF mission. It also gives Europe a chance to demonstrate once and for all that it is serious about taking on missions of necessity like Afghanistan.

Re-analyzing the threats facing NATO presents the alliance with an opportunity to inject political energy into current missions, as well to move on from past political differences on issues such as missile defense. As NATO reconstitutes its Strategic Concept, it can finally place resources and political will against its stalled development of an alliance-wide missile defense program. At both the Bucharest summit in April 2008 and the Foreign Ministerial summit in Brussels in December 2008, the final communiqués recognized the value of missile defenses in countering ballistic missile proliferation. They also specifically recognized the U.S. deployment of missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic as a “substantial contribution to the protection of Allies from long-range ballistic missiles.”¹⁹

But inconsistent actions among the allies, particularly shifting French objections to America's planned European missile defense deployments, have prevented progress on this issue.²⁰ This sense of disunity and after-the-fact questioning of the alli-

ance does a tremendous disservice to NATO and jeopardizes its long-term cohesiveness.

Since the Obama Administration is still in the process of confirming appointees, it may be tempted to negotiate a vague and meaningless declaration and use the next 12 to 24 months to decide on its position vis-à-vis NATO. However, the Administration must engage in this preliminary work with a clear and bold vision or this process will likely result in an EU-style negotiation of the lowest common denominator. Rather, this process should reflect the successful and holistic approach to NATO reform that the alliance took in 1984 and 1985 after Europe was faced with the prospect of U.S. disengagement from Europe.²¹

Like the Strategic Concept, the declaration should be readable and clear. A key factor in drafting the declaration should be the public-diplomacy value of the statement. NATO has successfully adjusted its core objectives and courses of action to the changing strategic situations in which it has found itself previously, but it has been less successful in explaining itself to the public. The declaration should avoid overly technical language and clearly state NATO's purpose and why it still matters to global security. Both the declaration and the Strategic Concept should send a message to the public that NATO remains an institution necessary to its security. NATO should not underestimate the public-diplomacy aspect of refashioning the alliance's purpose as it works through this process. It must capture the imagination of publics, leaders, analysts, and journalists, and ensure that it builds the political and public will that is necessary to sustain NATO into the future.

19. Bucharest Summit Declaration, issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on April 3, 2008, at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html> (March 20, 2009); Press release, “Final Communiqué of the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the Level of Foreign Ministers,” NATO, December 3, 2008, at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-153e.html> (March 20, 2009).

20. In November 2008, EU President Nicolas Sarkozy called for a temporary moratorium on the planned U.S. missile defense deployments in Poland and the Czech Republic. See Marc Champion, “Sarkozy Urges U.S., Russia to Delay Missile Plans,” *The Wall Street Journal*, November 15, 2008, at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122671339527430157.html> (March 20, 2009). Speaking to the European Parliament immediately before the NATO Summit in December, French defense minister Hervé Morin also questioned the need for the “third site.” See Julian Hale, “French DM Casts Doubt on Need for Missile Defense,” *Defense News*, December 2, 2008, at <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=3846066> (March 20, 2009).

21. Former U.S. Ambassador to NATO David Abshire outlines how the threat of American troop withdrawal resulted in a revitalization of the NATO alliance in 1984 and 1985. See David M. Abshire, *Preventing World War III: A Realistic Grand Strategy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), Chapter 5.

The core mission of NATO will always remain the same—to protect its members. Therefore, NATO's credibility is called into question every time the validity of Article 5 is questioned. The process of creating a new Strategic Concept for the alliance allows NATO to answer these questions and recreate the team concept within the alliance once again. Europe's engagement in this process, therefore, should be buttressed by a new commitment to providing enough military and civilian resources to win in Afghanistan.

NATO has always managed to reform itself successfully, and it has every chance to do so again. In terms of building and maintaining members' security through deterrence and reliability, NATO remains vital to both Europe and North America.

NATO's Ongoing Agenda

Enlargement: The Adriatic-3. At present, Albania could be the only new member of the alliance sitting at the table in Strasbourg, and the strong tradition of NATO enlargement now appears severely stalled.

At the Bucharest summit, the Adriatic-3 countries—Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia—were judged to have successfully completed their Membership Action Plans, and enlargement seemed firmly on NATO's agenda as the alliance debated offering full membership to all three countries. However, NATO was able to offer full membership only to Albania and Croatia, after Greece refused to withdraw its objection to Macedonia's accession over a bilateral name dispute.

Now, Croatia's accession is also in jeopardy. Although all 26 NATO members have ratified Croatia's protocol of accession, Slovenian nationalist

groups have filed an application to hold a national referendum on the issue in protest of an unresolved bilateral sea border dispute with Zagreb.²² These groups have until March 26 to gather 40,000 signatures from Slovenian citizens, although each member of the alliance must deposit its ratification documents in NATO's Washington depository by March 23 if Croatia is to accede at the Strasbourg summit.

Macedonia has also been unable to make progress with Greece over the past year to secure an invitation to full membership in NATO. Like Croatia and Albania, Macedonia has completed all the cycles of its Membership Action Plan, but Athens continues to refuse to support Macedonia's full invitation to the alliance. Under Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty all decisions on NATO enlargement must be made by unanimous consent, so Greek opposition alone is enough to block Macedonia's entry to NATO.²³ This is all the more galling considering that Macedonia currently has more troops serving under NATO in Afghanistan than does Greece.²⁴

Georgia and Ukraine. During her recent European tour, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that Russia will not gain veto power over NATO membership.²⁵ During his tenure in the U.S. Senate, Barack Obama declared that the United States should “oppose any efforts by the Russian government to intimidate its neighbors or control their foreign policies,” and stated repeatedly that Georgia and Ukraine should receive accelerated MAPs for entry into NATO.²⁶ The accession of Georgia and Ukraine to MAPs provides the Obama Administration with a key test case for Russian–American relations. Unable to overcome German and French

22. “Slovenia Groups Try to Block Croatia NATO Membership,” *International Herald Tribune*, February 16, 2009, at <http://www.iht.com/articles/reuters/2009/02/16/europe/OUKWD-UK-SLOVENIA-CROATIA-NATO.php> (March 20, 2009).

23. Article 10 states: “The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America. The Government of the United States of America will inform each of the Parties.” See the North Atlantic Treaty, Washington D.C., April 4, 1949, at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty.htm> (March 20, 2009).

24. “International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Army Strength & Laydown.”

25. “U.S. and Russia Seek 2009 Arms Deal,” BBC News, March 7, 2009, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7927922.stm> (March 20, 2009).

26. Press release, “Obama Statement on NATO Summit in Romania,” Office of U.S. Senator Barack Obama, March 3, 2008.

hostility, President George W. Bush failed to garner the alliance's support for granting MAP to Georgia and Ukraine at the Bucharest summit last year. The Obama Administration should build a consensus around Georgian and Ukrainian accession to MAP at the Strasbourg summit without fear of Russian retribution.

NATO enlargement will stand as a major test of whether Moscow is genuinely interested in resetting U.S.–Russian relations on a positive footing, or if it is merely interested in accumulating policy gains from Washington. By inviting Tbilisi and Kiev into MAP, the alliance will send Moscow the message that it will not tolerate Russia's "zone of privileged interest" policy, which Moscow believes entitles it to interfere, militarily and politically, in the affairs of its border states.²⁷

Open-Door Policy. NATO enlargement has traditionally enjoyed strong bipartisan support in the United States, and the Obama Administration should champion enlargement. Secretary Clinton should be President Obama's standard-bearer for enlargement, especially in the case of Macedonia, which she visited more than once as First Lady.²⁸ Through the Administration's diplomatic channels in Athens and Brussels, the United States should convey to the Greek government in no uncertain terms the long-standing NATO position that members not bring bilateral issues into the alliance in attempts to block another country's accession. It is also essential that Macedonia receive an official invitation to attend the Strasbourg summit as an observer. It would represent a collective insult to Macedonia for the alliance to block any attendance by Skopje.

It is critically 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 solidified newly democratizing countries' Euro–Atlantic aspirations and has also garnered military contributions to NATO missions such as Kosovo and Afghanistan. Withdrawing the prospect of NATO accession from aspiring countries will jeopardize the West's post–Cold War gains and betray the founding principles of NATO.

A New Secretary General. After more than five years in office, Secretary General Scheffer will depart NATO's top civilian post on July 31, 2009. Although NATO's Secretary General usually has a four-year term, Scheffer was requested to stay on and guide NATO through its 60th-anniversary summit.

It is expected that the alliance will announce Scheffer's successor at the Strasbourg summit. Scheffer's replacement is currently the topic of hot debate and two early front runners have emerged—Poland's foreign minister, Radek Sikorski, and Denmark's prime minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Other names being touted include Norway's foreign minister, Jonas Gahr Store, Bulgaria's former foreign minister, Solomon Passy, and Canada's defense minister, Peter MacKay.²⁹

The emergence of a strong Central and Eastern European presence within the alliance could tip the balance in favor of Sikorski. However, it is reported that Britain, France, and Germany have strongly backed Rasmussen for some weeks,³⁰ and that Washington has recently endorsed his candidacy as well.³¹ The Danish prime minister has been a long-standing supporter of NATO's mission in Afghanistan and has sent troops to the region without national caveats. Denmark has also strongly supported and heavily resourced NATO's public

27. Douglas Birch, "Russia's Medvedev Adopts Tough Tone, Echoing Putin," *USA Today*, September 4, 2008, at http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2008-09-04-1981123384_x.htm (March 20, 2009).

28. Karen Tumulty, Michael Duffy, and Massimo Calabresi, "Assessing Clinton's 'Experience,'" *Time*, March 13, 2008, at <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1721966-2,00.html> (March 20, 2009).

29. Mary Sibierski, "Poland Lobbies for FM Sikorski as Next NATO Chief," *France 24*, February 20, 2009, at <http://www.france24.com/en/20090220-poland-lobbies-fm-sikorski-next-nato-chief> (March 20, 2009).

30. "Europeans Back Rasmussen for Next NATO Head: Report," Reuters, March 7, 2009, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE5261PW20090307?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&rpc=22&sp=true> (March 20, 2009).

31. "US 'Backs Danish PM as NATO Head,'" BBC News, March 21, 2009, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7957427.stm> (March 23, 2009).

diplomacy mission, which will be vital to better communicating the alliance's role and purpose in the future.

As NATO moves toward a new Strategic Concept, and examines wide-ranging reform of its staff structures, decision-making processes, and burden-sharing arrangements, it is important that the candidate Washington supports be someone who has the experience and dedication to revitalize the alliance. As NATO enters its sixth year of operation in Afghanistan, the alliance needs not only a strong manager to guide its reforms, but a dynamic personality who can command the entire alliance's respect and commitment. The alliance needs at its helm more than just a ceremonial figure and a competent manager. NATO is in need of leadership, strength, and united resolve as it enters its seventh decade.

What the U.S. Should Do

In order to revitalize one of America's most successful multilateral alliances the Administration and Congress should:

- **Reaffirm the comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan that was concluded at the Bucharest summit.** The Administration should ask Continental Europeans to recommit to the mission in Afghanistan with increased troop numbers, fewer national caveats, more efficient use of existing resources, and quicker action on reconstruction and development.
- **Hold congressional hearings on the issue of French reintegration into NATO's military command structures as well as the development of a separate EU defense identity.** The Administration and Congress should take sufficient time to consider the full implications of this measure—which means the issue should be delayed for discussion in the alliance until after hearings have been held in the United States.
- **Work with America's closest allies in the alliance to identify a preferred candidate for Secretary General of NATO** for whom it can voice support before the summit.
- **Work closely with the new Secretary General and other NATO allies to fashion a new Strategic Concept in time for the 2010 summit** based on NATO's Declaration on Alliance Security which is expected to be agreed in Strasbourg.
- **Become a champion for NATO enlargement by:**
 - Working diplomatically before the summit to resolve outstanding conflicts blocking Croatia's accession to NATO;
 - Ensuring that Macedonia is formally invited to attend the summit with observer status; and
 - Building on the Bucharest declaration by offering MAP status to Georgia and Ukraine.
- **Conclude the third site missile defense deal with Prague and Warsaw** and challenge NATO to form a comprehensive, layered missile defense system for the entire alliance.

Conclusion

It is vital that President Obama continue to support America's commitment to NATO and that he emerge as a strong leader within the 60-year-old alliance at the NATO summit in April. The United States will need its strongest and most enduring allies in order to confront the many dangers of global instability—and it will also need a President who is confident of America's role in the world, and of the validity and purpose of American global leadership.

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