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PROTOCOLS TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY OF 1949 ON THE ACCESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA (TREATY DOC. 110–20)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE

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PROTOCOLS TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY OF 1949 ON THE ACCESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA (TREATY DOC. 110–20)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:35 a.m. in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher Dodd, presiding.

Present: Senators Dodd, Cardin, Webb, Lugar, Corker, DeMint, and Isakson.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER DODD, U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

Senator DODD. The committee will come to order.

Let me, first of all, welcome our witnesses and those who are gathered in the room.

As you can see, Senator Biden is not here this morning; he is elsewhere around the country. And for those of us here, I'm sure putting party and politics aside—partisan politics aside, we're excited for Joe Biden to have been selected by Barack Obama to be his running mate in this campaign. In the interim, he's asked me to chair the committee and, at various points along the way, to assist and support the activities of this committee. Senator Biden and Senator Lugar and others have been deeply involved in the subject matter before us today for some time, and, in their absence, any comments that Senator Biden would have, we'll certainly include as part of the record. But, I'm pleased to be stepping in for him temporarily, at least temporarily, until the election, and we'll see what happens after that, down the road.

But, in the meantime, we thank all of you for being with us this morning.

The subject of our hearing this morning are the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). I have some brief opening comments to make, then I'll turn to my colleague and dear friend Senator Richard Lugar, who I've enjoyed immensely serving with on this committee for 28 years. In my first days in this body, I was sitting about four seats down from where Johnny Isakson is sitting right now, and it took 28 years to move up to this particular point this morning.

It's a slow journey here.

[Laughter.]

Senator DODD [continuing]. I'll turn to our colleagues, as well, for any opening comments you may have, as well, before turning to our witnesses.

Nearly 60 years ago, our leaders, in the wake of World War II, devised a security framework to defend Western democracies against the threat of Soviet communism. For almost 60 years, the alliance they forged has endured and expanded. NATO has protected the Euro-Atlantic community and buttressed fledgling democracies. More than a military alliance, NATO has become an agent of peace and an important factor in the prosperity and integration of the nations of Europe.

NATO is an organization that runs on consensus, requiring that every nation in the Alliance approve the addition of each new members. In this manner, NATO has added 10 new members during the past 10 years.

Today we're going to consider the third round of expansion, this time extending the Alliance into the Balkans with the addition of Albania and Croatia to full membership. I'd like to welcome and introduce the administration witnesses who will assist us in coming to our conclusions, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Dan Fried and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Dan Fata.

I'm disappointed, I might point out here, that the Department of Defense—breaking with past practice, I might note, as well—has not made Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General John Craddock available to speak to the important issue before us today. I don't know, frankly, how we can proceed without SACEUR's input. And so, I would like those in the audience to take note—and certainly we'll communicate this very directly to the Department of Defense. It will be important for us to hear from them, as well.

And I don't blame General Craddock in any way. In fact, I suspect, on this own, he would have liked to have been here. There are other issues that are under consideration. But, nonetheless, it's important to have the DOD input in matters as important as the one before us this morning.

We should not forget, I would quickly point out, that NATO went to war in the Balkans 9 years ago. We've made, and continue to make, substantial investments to promote regional peace. Having Albania and Croatia within the Alliance will be a force for stability in the Balkans.

Our aim in this hearing this morning is to determine whether both of these candidate countries have met the criteria for NATO membership. Albania and Croatia deserve our admiration for the extensive political and military reform processes that they've engaged in to reach this point. But, our aim is also to ensure that their accession is in the interest of NATO and, of course, the United States.

In the 1990s, Secretary of Defense William Perry outlined five principles of political reform that each new candidate should meet. These principles, I think, by and large, have been embraced by the successor administrations. These criteria include democratic elections, individual liberty, and the rule of law, demonstrated

commitment to economic reform and market economy, adherence to the norms of the Organization of Security and Cooperation Europe in the treatment of ethnic minorities and social justice, resolution of territorial disputes with neighbors, and the establishment of democratic control of the military. These are the standards that I think we must apply when considering new members to NATO.

Both countries were officially invited to join the Alliance at an important NATO Summit in Bucharest this April. But, their invitation wasn't the only question of NATO enlargement on the agenda that month. The allies also extended an invitation to the country NATO recognizes as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. That invitation will take effect if and when they're able to reach a compromise with Greece over the issue of the name of their country—an issue which has been around for some time, I might add. I hope they can find a mutually acceptable solution. I welcome an update on the status of these negotiations from our witnesses this morning.

At Bucharest, Ukraine and Georgia petitioned for Membership Action Plans and received commitments to membership, without an exact timeline and criteria. Recent events in Georgia obviously have given greater salience to the issue of its eventual membership. Next week, this committee will hold a hearing on Georgia and the implications of the recent conflict. As tensions increase between NATO members and Russia, the geopolitical position of the Ukraine, a country that straddles East and West, also increases the tension about its prospects for membership.

The Foreign Relations Committee has a legislative responsibility to consider these questions of NATO enlargement and to initiate the process of approval in the U.S. Senate. Each NATO state must consider the merits of the candidates and commit to the security of Albania and Croatia through their own constitutional processes and procedures. If these protocols are approved by the U.S. Senate, we'll extend our commitment to the defense of these two nations under article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

As we take this step, it is incumbent upon us to review the full range of implications. We must consider our national interests and the nature of the allies that we are embracing. We must ask, Have there been democratic elections? What is the level of respect for the rights of the individual? Have they successfully established the rule of law? Is there a demonstrated commitment to the economic reform and market economies? How do they treat their minorities? Have they resolved all their territorial disputes with their neighbors? And finally, are their militaries responsible to democratically elected civilian officials?

When we apply these standards, NATO is more than an alliance, it is an agent of change, creating a freer and more peaceful Europe. To undertake a commitment of mutual defense is one of the most serious steps that any government—any government can ever take. It is a solemn commitment. We must consider the readiness of NATO to take on this additional responsibility, as well as the military capability and political institutions of a potential ally. But, we must consider, also, the nature of that ally.

As I stated at the outset, NATO is more than merely a military alliance, it is a partnership of like-minded democracies dedicated to

a vision of Europe whole and free. I look forward to discussing these questions with our witnesses today.

And, with that, let me turn to my friend and former chairman of this committee, Senator Lugar.

OPENINGS STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR, U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

Senator LUGAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I am pleased that we will have a hearing of the committee, on Georgia, next week. I would commend to members of the committee, a statement made by our witness today, Secretary Fried, on Georgia. I found it to be the most comprehensive and useful piece that I've read, thus far. So, as sort of study material, with a week for us to think about it, it might be useful to take a look at that paper, which I am certain the staff can make available to us.

I strongly support the Alliance's decision to invite Albania and Croatia to join NATO. Both countries have clearly stated their desire to join and are working hard to meet the specified requirements for membership. The governments in Tirana and Zagreb have been preparing for membership for more than 8 years.

And I say, parenthetically, as we discuss Membership Action Plans, Membership Action Plans are not necessarily an immediate entry vehicle. Eight years of preparation by these two countries is substantial. Each of them is undergoing a process, a democratic and free-market transformation. They've made important progress toward establishing civilian control of their militaries and toward demonstrating their ability to operate with military forces of NATO nations at alliance standards.

Albania and Croatia continue to contribute to the United Nations mandated International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, operating under NATO leadership to assist the government of Afghanistan. In addition, the candidates have improved their democratic processes, strengthened toleration of ethnic diversity, broadened respect for human rights, worked toward free-market economies, and promoted good regional relations.

On February 18, 2008, the United States and many of our European allies diplomatically recognized the independence of Kosovo. This was an important step in putting the bloody history of the Balkans in the past, but our work in the region is certainly not done. In my view, lasting stability and security in southeastern Europe requires that the emerging democracies there be integrated into the military, economic, and political structures of Europe.

Albania and Croatia occupy critical geostrategic locations and are well situated to help deter efforts to destabilize the region through violence. NATO membership for these countries would extend the zone of peace and security into a region that ignited a world war and numerous regional conflicts that have cost the lives of hundreds of thousands.

If NATO is to continue to be the preeminent security alliance and serve the defense interests of its membership, it must evolve, and that evolution must include enlargement. Potential NATO membership motivates emerging democracies to make advances in areas such as the rule of law and civil society. A closer relationship

with NATO will promote achievement of these goals in Albania and Croatia and contribute to our mutual security.

Unfortunately, the summit at Bucharest failed to extend the Membership Action Plan to Georgia and Ukraine. This decision sent the wrong signal to Moscow and the international community. Last month, I traveled to Georgia and Ukraine, and, during my visit in Georgia, President Saakashvili reiterated his hopes for a Membership Action Plan, arguing this would be a powerful symbol of the West's support for an independent Georgia.

In Ukraine, President Yushchenko, Prime Minister Tymoshenko, and the Speaker of the Parliament have signed a letter to the NATO Secretary General, signifying unity of purpose behind the MAP request, and their signatures remain on that letter.

Ukrainian political unity is critical to its success, and recent reports out of Kiev are not promising in this regard. I am hopeful unity can still be achieved in the near term.

Five years ago, the U.S. Senate unanimously voted to invite seven countries to join NATO. Today, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia are making important contributions to NATO and are among our closest allies in the global war on terrorism. It is time again for the United States to take the lead in urging its allies to support the membership aspirations of Albania and Croatia, and, at the same time, the United States must continue to lead the effort to ensure that Georgia and Ukraine receive Membership Action Plans.

Since the end of the cold war, NATO has been evolving to meet the new security needs of the 21st century. In this era, the threats to NATO members are transnational. NATO's viability as an effective security alliance depends on flexible and creative leadership, as well as the willingness of members to improve capabilities and address common threats.

Moving forward with the membership of Albania and Croatia is an important element in this process and will ensure that NATO continues to serve the national security interests of its members.

I thank the Chair.

Senator DODD. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator Corker—I don't know the order in which people arrived, but do you have any comments you'd like to make?

Senator CORKER. I'd rather move to the witnesses, and I think both your opening comments were outstanding.

Senator DODD. Johnny, any opening comments?

Senator ISAKSON. Only, Mr. Chairman, to comment that I was in Germany in early August, at the Brandenburg Gate and at Checkpoint Charlie, and to think that—when NATO was started, I think we all thought if it ever exercised article 5, it would be in defense of Germany, and to think that the first time it did that was actually to come to the aid of the United States, post-9/11, in Afghanistan, and, given where these two countries are in the Balkans, and with the problems that have existed there, I think strengthening of NATO and admission of Croatia and Albania will do nothing but good things for that part of the world, help to have the type of stability that now most of Eastern Europe is now enjoying. So, I look forward to the testimony, and I'm very proud of the success of NATO, and our participation in it.

Senator DODD. Thank you very much, Senator.

Oh, Jim, I'm sorry, I didn't see you come in. I apologize.

Jim Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will have some questions, but I'd prefer to wait until the witnesses are done.

Senator DODD. You came in rather quietly, here.

Senator WEBB. I'm actually sitting in Senator Obama's seat, too, so——

[Laughter.]

Senator WEBB [continuing]. I'm a little closer to you than usual.

Senator DODD. And I'm in Senator Biden's seat. There's been no coup in the committee going on. [Laughter.]

I guess it will be with you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary Fried.

STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. FRIED. Thank you, Chairman Dodd.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Lugar, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss NATO and the protocols of accession of Albania and Croatia.

NATO has successfully served the United States and Europe for nearly 60 years as a defensive alliance and an alliance of values. Although created in the context of Soviet threats to European security, NATO is not an alliance directed against any nation. A key purpose was, and remains, to defend its members from attack. But another purpose was to provide a security umbrella under which Western European countries could be reconciled and find peace after two world wars. A third purpose of NATO was to institutionalize the transatlantic link between Europe and the United States.

At NATO's core is article 5. It is a solemn commitment. For many years, we expected that if this collective defense article were ever invoked, it would be in response to a Soviet assault on Germany. No one expected an attack on the United States that originated in Afghanistan. But, that was the cause, on September 12, 2001, of NATO's invocation of article 5 for the first time.

As the threats to NATO's members have changed, NATO has adapted. From the outset, NATO enlargement took place, even during the cold war. After the Soviet Union fell, NATO enlargement took on a more profound role, as newly liberated democracies sought membership in the Alliance. Many of these countries were on unfamiliar ground, nervous about Russia and unsure of themselves. But, thanks in large part to a United States strategy developed under the last three Presidents, NATO enlargement and EU enlargement, which we supported, became the means by which the vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace, started becoming reality.

NATO enlargement became an instrument through which Central and Eastern European countries carried out reforms at home and reconciled with each other. The policy of NATO enlargement, which many here in this room helped shape, is one of America's and Europe's greatest achievements since the end of the cold war.

NATO enlargement was designed in parallel with efforts to reach out to Russia and develop a new NATO-Russia relationship. We wanted a new Europe and a new relationship with Russia. We did not shut the door even to the possibility of Russia becoming a member of NATO one day. For a time, Russia appeared to be moving toward more democracy at home and more cooperation with its neighbors. But, recent developments show a different picture. Russia has turned toward authoritarianism at home and threats toward its neighbors. It has attacked Georgia and attempted to change international borders by force. The Russia that we sought, and still seek as a partner, is not the Russia that exerts a sphere of influence or privileged interests over its neighbors. These actions are particularly unwarranted, because, despite Russia's complaints, NATO enlargement has made the part of Europe to Russia's west the most peaceful and benign it has ever been in all of Russia's history.

Yugoslavia and the countries that emerged from Yugoslavia were a terrible exception to the good progress of Europe after 1989. The violent breakup of that country threw the Balkans into a downward spiral from which that region is only now recovering. But, we believe that NATO enlargement, along with EU enlargement, can do for the Balkans in this decade what it did for Central Europe in the last.

Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia have implemented significant reforms, in part because they wanted to join NATO. Through the Senate's advice and consent for Albania and Croatia's NATO accession, we can promote consolidation of peace and security in the Balkans.

Let me say a few words about the two aspirants whose case is before this committee.

In the 17 years since Albania freed itself from one of the world's most repressive Communist dictatorships, it has made steady—in fact, dramatic—progress in creating stable, democratic institutions, and a free-market economy. Its road has not always been easy, but its desire for NATO membership has shaped and motivated Albania's progress.

Militarily, Albania has used international and American assistance to restructure and strengthen its armed forces to the point where Albania has become a contributing partner on NATO missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Albania has more work to do in the areas of judicial reform, electoral reform, and reducing corruption, but it has made major strides in all of these areas and in democratic progress, generally.

Croatia is a valuable NATO partner. It has pledged about 300 troops in Afghanistan and is one of the only non-NATO members currently training Afghan military units. Croatia has become a stable democracy with strong institutions. As a nonpermanent member of the U.N. Security Council, Croatia has shown itself to be a good regional and global partner on issues of peacekeeping operations, nonproliferation, counterterrorism, and regional peace and stability.

Croatia, too, faces challenges on issues of property, infrastructure development for war refugees, and reform of institutions, including the judiciary. But, its track record gives us considerable confidence.

Macedonia has also made progress in building a free-market democratic system, in strengthening the rule of law, tackling corruption, and introducing economic reforms. It is a steadfast partner in the fight against terrorism, and has contributed troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bosnia, and is committed to fund its defense to support peacekeeping, as well as continued reforms.

The United States supports Macedonia's NATO bid. Its invitation at the Bucharest Summit was delayed because of a dispute over the issue of Macedonia's name. We support efforts to resolve this dispute as soon as possible and believe a mutually acceptable solution is possible.

All three countries have work to do, but, given their progress, we see a historic window of opportunity to bring them into the European mainstream. Their entry into NATO will not only help stabilize a long-turbulent region, but it will show others in the region that there is an alternative to nationalist divisions and violence. NATO enlargement to these countries, now Albania and Croatia, is in the American national interest.

There is another part of Europe still at risk, and this includes the countries of Georgia and Ukraine. The leaders of these nations aspire to NATO membership. Neither nation is ready for NATO membership now, and NATO membership involves solemn commitments, which must be considered carefully.

But, the question before NATO is not an immediate invitation to membership. The immediate question is whether these countries should have the same opportunity to meet NATO's terms for membership as other European nations. We believe they should. NATO leaders at the Bucharest Summit agreed, declaring that Georgia and Ukraine will become members of the Alliance. As we consider the desire of these countries to join the Alliance, we should make clear that they have work still to do, and there are—and these are serious decisions which the administration, the next administration, and the Senate will have to consider.

We should consider it, but what we should not do is give Russia a veto over NATO's decisions. That is why the United States supports giving both countries entry into NATO's Membership Action Plan. MAP is not NATO membership, it is a work program to help countries carry out reforms that are necessary before they become NATO members.

Russia has made it clear that it would regard even a MAP for Georgia or Ukraine with hostility. We regret this position. We seek good relations with Russia, but Russian security cannot be achieved by making its neighbors insecure. These countries and others are entitled to their own aspirations, not simply the aspirations Russia wants them to have.

We must consider the implications of Russia's attack on Georgia. Georgia is not a NATO member, and article 5 does not pertain to it. But, the actions and the rhetoric from some of Russia's leaders have raised concerns of countries that are NATO members, concerns we must take seriously.

I want to thank the committee for the bipartisan support over the years, not only for NATO enlargement, but for helping NATO evolve from its cold-war roots into an institution more prepared for 21st-century challenges. Thanks to NATO enlargement and the

work of this committee during the time of this President and the previous one, over 100 million Europeans in the past decade have found greater security, stability and prosperity—in significant part as a result of being welcomed into the NATO Alliance.

This has benefited the United States and made America's work in the world that much easier, for it is a fundamental of our foreign policy that the spread of freedom and security benefits our Nation, as well as its immediate recipients.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to taking your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fried follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Senator Dodd, Ranking Member Lugar, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss NATO and the critical role it plays in our security and the advance of freedom.

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

NATO'S PURPOSE

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

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

NATO ENLARGEMENT

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

After the fall of the Iron Curtain and end of the Soviet Union, the purpose of defense against attack by Moscow seemed to recede. But NATO enlargement took on a more profound strategic aspect: For the then-raw and apprehensive new democracies that emerged from the wreckage of the Soviet Bloc after the fall of communism, NATO, ahead of the EU, became the institutional expression of their desire to join with Europe and the transatlantic world. For the United States and other NATO members, NATO enlargement, along with EU enlargement, became the means by which the vision of a "Europe whole, free and at peace" started becoming reality.

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

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

NATO ENLARGEMENT AND RUSSIA

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

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

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

Some argue that NATO itself was an aggressive instrument whose enlargement somehow caused Russia's own aggressive actions. This reflects ignorance of history. NATO did not take down the Iron Curtain. NATO did not trigger the collapse of the Soviet Union. NATO did provide the conditions of security and stability under which the people of Eastern Europe—Poland, Hungary, then Czechoslovakia, the Baltic States, and others—could reclaim their own nations. By preventing the expansion of Soviet power, NATO created the conditions under which the internal

weaknesses of that system would themselves bring about its collapse. And NATO enlargement did not produce some massive encirclement of Russia. NATO enlargement created in Central Europe an area of peace, security, and stability. Stable, free market democracies along Russia's border rather than dictatorships are in everyone's best interest, including Russia's. Rather than shun Russia, or foment hostility to Russia, NATO, even as it grew, reached out to Russia to build and expand ties by helping one another as "equal partners" to face common threats and challenges.

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

THE BALKANS

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

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

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

Albania

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

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

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

In summary, NATO's invitation is a sign that Albania has made enormous steps forward. But it also has raised the bar, and more reform is still needed. Fortunately, the history of NATO enlargement in the past suggests that countries continue reforms rather than abandon them, when they join the Alliance.

Croatia

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Macedonia

Macedonia largely escaped the civil wars that destroyed the former Yugoslavia and has made strides in building a free market, democratic system. A multiethnic state, it has chosen the route of compromise rather than nationalist extremism. In 2001, with support from the United States, NATO, and the EU, Macedonia concluded the Ohrid Framework Agreement (FWA) that ended an ethnic Albanian insurgency by enshrining enhanced minority rights. Since then, it adopted the constitutional and legislative changes mandated by the agreement and has worked steadily to implement the agreement. Macedonian governments always have included ethnic-Albanian and Macedonian parties, who have worked to forge political compromises in the overarching interest of the country.

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

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

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

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

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

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

That remains our perspective.

These countries have had their challenges. They know that they have work to do. Their challenges are familiar to us from experience over the past 20 years of post-Communist transformation. Given their progress so far, we see a historic window of opportunity to bring them into the European mainstream. By having these countries join the Alliance, it will not only help stabilize a long-turbulent region, but it will show others in the Balkans that there is an alternative to nationalist or ethnic divisions and violence, and we believe it will inspire people in Montenegro, Bosnia, Kosovo and, we hope, Serbia, to follow the same path.

Georgia and Ukraine

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

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

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

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

What we should not do is give Russia a veto over NATO's decisions or consign these or any countries to some other country's sphere of influence.

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

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

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

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

LOOKING FORWARD

NATO's mission remains the same: The collective defense of its members. Its impact on European security and peace was profound and positive first during the cold war and then in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. The way in which NATO carries out its core tasks has and will continue to evolve to meet the

changing threats. We have seen these in recent years: Terrorism, cyberattacks, and energy security. We have seen that threats may come from far afield.

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

NATO's routine work has always meant participation in collective defense planning, cooperative exercises, and staying alert to new threats and developments. Certainly the events of August have reinforced the importance of such thinking. Article 5 has and will continue to have, meaning for all of NATO's members.

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

Senator DODD. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary Fata.

STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL P. FATA, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EUROPEAN AND NATO POLICY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. FATA. Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, thanks for the opportunity to be here today. I do not have an opening statement. I would like to go on the record, however, to say that myself and the Department concur with Secretary Fried's comments. What I heard today is quite often the same comments—same commentary that I use when I've been overseas talking with allies, partners, and aspirants.

At this point, sir, I'm prepared to answer any questions you or the—or any other members may have.

Senator DODD. Well, thank you very much. And what we'll do is, because there are so few of us here, I'll try and keep my comments and questions down, to about 10 minutes, and we'll just sort of act here on a more informal basis, unless we end up with a large participation, which is always hopeful.

Let me begin. I'll direct my questions to you, Secretary Fried, and then, Secretary Fata, if you want to jump in at any point, back and forth, on this.

The first question, I suppose, is a series of smaller questions about how Albania and Croatia see their role in this Alliance, and how they're likely to structure their militaries within NATO.

By the way—I should point out, and my colleagues may know this, but we're fortunate today, to have with us 10 or 12 members of the Parliament of Croatia. We'd like to recognize them. Are they here, these members of the Croatian Parliament? Why don't they stand up and just be recognized. And we want to welcome you to the Foreign Relations Committee. It's a pleasure to have you with us today. Thank you very much.

I wonder if you could give us a general sense of what Croatia and Albania are thinking about their role in NATO. What do they see

themselves as bringing to the Alliance? And do they see their defense, in European terms, to specialize and develop niche capacities within that Alliance? Or is it, as some would suggest here, maintaining sort of a self-contained forces, viewing their defense purely in national terms, rather than European terms? There's a series of questions there, and I wonder if you might address them.

Mr. FRIED. My colleague from the Defense Department may be able to answer some of the military specifics, but, in general, both countries recognize that, as members of NATO, they will have obligations to contribute to NATO missions; that is, to think of their role in general terms, and even in expeditionary terms, rather than purely local or regional terms.

We made it clear to both countries that NATO had to go where the threats were, that in the 21st century, threats could come from quite far away—Afghanistan. Both countries have contributed forces to the—NATO's mission in ISAF. They have both developed expeditionary capabilities, they have developed niche capabilities enabling them to operate alongside NATO forces. They're quite proud of their contribution. They have made it clear that they look forward to working with us in NATO missions, wherever they may be.

Senator DODD. Secretary, any additional comments you want to make on that?

Mr. FATA. What I would say to that, sir, the—both countries—Croatia and Albania—are transatlantic in mentality. It's not about territorial defense, it's not about even just the defense of Europe. They fully—both countries—I've been pleased, in my time in the department, to get the sense, from numerous different Defense Ministers, that they understand the obligations go far beyond Europe. As Secretary Fried mentioned, both countries are active contributors in Iraq and Afghanistan, have—I've been able to see their forces in both countries when I've visited, and have heard from commanding officers—United States commanding officers, the good performance that——

Senator DODD. Yes.

Mr. FATA [continuing]. Both countries provide. Both are moving to end conscription, both are investing in—as a percentage of GDP toward defense, at 2 percent or above 2 percent.

Senator DODD. That's the general requirement for a nation, is that correct? It was 2 percent?

Mr. FRIED. It is a NATO—it is a NATO guideline.

Senator DODD. How——

Mr. FRIED. Often honored, not always.

Senator DODD. Yes. Well, is there some concern you have about that?

Mr. FRIED. Their militaries—no, their military budgets have grown as their economies have grown. They have developed their forces well. And when I'm in both capitals, I—I sense a certain pride, in both countries, that they are able to participate in NATO operations. I should also say that Croatia, in particular, has been active and helpful in the Balkans, as has Albania, actually, acting as a—I think, a stabilizing force as we've dealt with issues of Kosovo independence. So, their more global vision has not de-

tracted from their ability to play a helpful role in European security closer to home.

Senator DODD. Let me raise the question about cost, because obviously from a U.S. taxpayer standpoint, it's very much in the interest of our country to ask these questions. Do you have any estimates about what the cost of this addition will be to the United States or to the Alliance, financially?

Mr. FRIED. Our contributions to military development in these countries have been modest, and we have made it clear that they are responsible for funding their military operations. That said, the Department of Defense programs on military-to-military cooperation are, in my experience—and I'm saying this as a State Department person—among the best run and most efficient of any government overseas programs I've ever seen. We get a lot of impact for relatively modest budgetary input.

But, that said, these countries are not looking for us to fund their militaries, they're looking at internal resources, and, as their economies grow, their defense budgets are growing with them.

Senator DODD. And so, do you have, specifically, the estimated expenses for upgrading the command-and-control systems or air-defense systems?

Mr. FATA. No, sir; I don't have that.

Senator DODD. This is one of the problems. And I don't blame General Craddock, but this is where having a witness from DOD would have been very helpful this morning in these matters, so we could get some answers to the questions. But, I'll submit that question for the record, and maybe get something in writing back that would give us a sense of what the cost would be.

[The information previously referred to follows:]

Using the last two rounds of enlargement as guide, NATO estimates the total common-funded accession costs for Albania and Croatia at approximately $60M each, which includes estimated costs for C2, air-defense, and facilities.

Given uncertainties regarding the existing condition and capability of command-and-control networks, reception facilities, and air defense systems in Albania and Croatia, it is not possible to provide an accurate cost breakdown of command-and-control systems or air-defense systems at this time. Experience from prior enlargement rounds suggests that the cost of upgrading reception facilities and linking air defense systems will account for largest share of total common-funded accession costs.

Refining the cost estimates will require additional site surveys and more detailed analyses. It will take several years to complete this iterative process

Mr. FRIED. Certainly will.

Senator DODD. And I appreciate your comments, generally——

Mr. FRIED. Certainly will.

Senator DODD. Let me ask, third, regarding Albania, there was, I'm told by those knowledgeable in this, that there's an extraordinary amount of unstable munitions that need to be destroyed in Albania. In March of this year, there was an explosion which took place at a military weapons factory, that killed 26 and injured 300 people. In the administration's unclassified report to Congress, dated May 30, 2008, entitled "Report to Congress on the Future Enlargement of NATO," you note that an investigation has been launched by the prosecutor general. And on page 10, the following appears, "The prosecutor general's ability to conduct a thorough, meticulous, transparent, and independent investigation will prove

crucial to the resolution, and prove a vital test of Albania's judicial and prosecutorial systems."

You also note that "major government players are under immunity from prosecution."

I wonder if you could share with us the status of that investigation, and what does that say about the rule of law, transparency, and political accountability in Albania? And what do you think the Government in Albania has learned, or not learned, from this incident? And what does it say about their qualifications for NATO membership?

Mr. FRIED. There were clearly problems in the handling of those—of that munitions site that led to the explosion. The Government of Albania was deeply embarrassed by it. They have launched an investigation. I don't believe that investigation is complete. And certainly the process of lessons learned is not complete.

We have urged the Government of Albania to follow this investigation, wherever it leads. It is likely to prove embarrassing to the government, because, as in any military problem, there are issues of accountability. Every country has them, and the question is not whether they have problems, but how they deal with them. And we've made it clear that they need to face this squarely, and they're in the process of going through this.

Senator DODD. Do you have any idea when that's going to be completed?

Mr. FRIED. Not specifically, but I can get this to you.

[The information referred to above follows:]

As of September 10, the Prosecutor General's Office is continuing its investigation into the March 15 explosion at the Gerdec munitions site in Albania. We understand that the investigation is nearing completion but cannot give an exact date when it will be completed. We would be happy to brief you further once the investigation is complete.

Senator DODD. I'd appreciate that very much.

Mr. FATA. Mr. Chairman——

Senator DODD. Last—yes, go ahead. I'm sorry.

Mr. FATA. No, I was just—I would just add, the investigation is ongoing. I don't think it is clear when the end date will be; however, our Embassy and others continue to—and EUCOM—continue to press the Albanians to make sure this is as transparent and thorough as possible, because it won't just be the United States that'll be watching, it'll be the other 25——

Senator DODD. Yes.

Mr. FATA [continuing]. Vote-casting members——

Senator DODD. Yea.

Mr. FATA [continuing]. That'll be watching this to see if those commitments to rule of law and transparency are actually being met.

The New Jersey State National Guard went out for, I think it was 30 to 60 days to do some work with the Albanians on future cleanup of these kind of depots. That is not directly related to the investigation.

Senator DODD. Do you agree with that, by the way? I made the statement about this munitions problem that needs to be destroyed. Is that still a legitimately serious issue, in your view, generally speaking? Put aside this particular incident.

Mr. FRIED. It is certainly a legitimate issue. That is, these are depots that are unstable. They have to be disposed of. On the range of issues facing Albania, it is one of the—it is one of the issues; it is not, in my view, an issue of critical national importance. It's an issue of munitions——

Senator DODD. How about within the European community? Is it more of an issue with them?

Mr. FRIED. It is really a national issue and an issue that they have to fix, for their own reasons. But, it's something that is, like any military problem, going to be a learning experience for them. They're going to have to face up to this.

Senator DODD. Last, you've generally addressed this question in your opening statement, but let me ask it more specifically, regarding both Croatia and Albania. Croatia was ranked 64th out of 180 nations surveyed in Transparency International's 2007 Corruption Perceptions Index. Now, that's not bad, globally, I might point out, but it puts Croatia near the bottom in Europe and a number of states that are in the Alliance already. Albania was given an even worse rating, of 105th out of 180 nations. How serious, in your view, is the corruption in Croatia and Albania? What are the implications for their role in NATO? And what are the Croatian and Albanian Governments doing to address this general problem?

Mr. FRIED. Corruption is a serious problem in both countries. In both—since 1989, we've become more experienced in the standard set of problems of post-Communist development, and corruption is particularly a problem. We've found that this takes quite a number of years to fix, and that, in countries that manage to tackle it successfully, progress tends to be uneven; that is, new institutions created from scratch, greenfield institutions, tend to be cleaner than old institutions that are simply rehatted after a change of government. Both countries have made progress. Both countries have committed themselves to deal with the corruption problem. I think that, as our experience in other European countries, including some old members of NATO, this thing—this sort of thing takes time, and we have to keep at it.

Senator DODD. I thank you.

Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to ask, first of all, Secretary Fried: What strategic benefits will Albania and Croatia bring to NATO? Can you be fairly specific as to thoughts about their strategic benefit?

Mr. FRIED. The first benefit is that they will be contributing members to the Alliance. They will—they have already sent their troops abroad to contribute to NATO missions. The second benefit is that their admission to the Alliance, and their eventual admission into the European Union, will stabilize the Balkans and help make it an area of general peace and security, which is certain—which is profoundly in the American interest.

NATO enlargement can help do for these countries what NATO enlargement did for Central Europe in the last decade. This is profoundly in the American interest. We have found that stability in Europe is a core United States interest, and that our interests have been advanced as NATO has expanded.

Senator LUGAR. What progress have the two nations made with regard to EU membership, and how is that process going?

Mr. FRIED. Croatia is, I think, on a reasonably fast track to EU membership. Albania is a little bit further behind. Both of them are clearly on track to join the European Union. The European Union is having something of enlargement fatigue after taking in 10 new members, but European countries recognize that they have a responsibility to take in all of the Balkan countries as these countries qualify for EU membership. So, they are on their way.

NATO enlargement and EU enlargement, in parallel, constitute the institutions of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

Senator LUGAR. Please outline what contribution Albania and Croatia can play in bringing stability to the Balkans, and, more specifically right now, Kosovo.

Mr. FRIED. Albania has already—it has been, and is, playing a very constructive role helping stabilize Kosovo and reaching out to the Albanian communities in Kosovo, in Serbia, in Macedonia, and in Montenegro. Albanian nationalism has taken on increasingly benign forms rather than malignant forms. This is certainly in our interest, as malignant nationalism in the Balkans tends to produce wars and killings. Albania, in the runup to Kosovo independence, was a source of wise counsel, urging patience on the part of the Kosovar leaders, distancing itself from any extremist nationalism, and generally acting exactly as we would want a NATO member to act: Responsibly, carefully, and constructively.

Croatia has reached out to Serbia and to its own Serbian minority within the country. Croatia has demonstrated that Serbia also, like Croatia, can join the European mainstream.

Croatia is also working for stability in Bosnia, reaching out to Macedonia. And, in general, when I go to Zagreb, I find that my Croatian colleagues are eager to work with us and the Europeans to help bring all the countries of the Balkans into Europe, following the path they and Slovenia have taken.

Senator LUGAR. Let me just add my welcome to the members of the Croatian Parliament who are here today for this hearing. Their presence here today to witness our consideration is very helpful. I am thankful to have the benefit of sharing thoughts and views with them.

Let me make a comment and ask a question about Albania. In 2004, in the summer of 2004, our Defense Department received word that—from Albanians, volunteering that nerve gas was in canisters above Tirana, the capital. As a part of my travels that summer, I was privileged to visit Albania for the first time, proceed up into the mountains, and to actually see these canisters lying on the ground. Many had been collected behind a fence, many were still to be found. Ultimately, this amounted to 16 metric tons of nerve gas. We are thankful that the Albanians contacted us with the hopes that we might have a program or a way to help them eliminate the threat. At the same time, they took us to sheds, where there were 90 MANPAD (Man-portable Air-Defense Systems) missiles, which they promptly destroyed.

I mention that because that was then, 2004, a Defense Department in Albania that was only very loosely connected with our Department of Defense. Thankfully, we had the ability to utilize the

Nunn-Lugar Program in Albania. Congress had approved an amendment to the Nunn-Lugar program that allowed $50 million to be spent outside the former Soviet Union. Albania became the first country outside the former Soviet Union where the Nunn-Lugar program undertook its important work. Over a period of 2 years, all of the material was neutralized. In 2007, Senator Nunn joined me in Albania, celebrating Albania as the first nation in the world to get rid of all of its chemical weapons. They took great pride in that, and there were 200 officers of the Albanian Armed Forces, and their defense and foreign secretaries at a wonderful event celebrating this important milestone. Now, that's, you know, the good news.

The bad news is that, from 2004, it was apparent that the corruption problems in the Albanian Goverment were profound. It was very difficult to tell who owned any piece of property, in the capital or elsewhere. The problems of prosecution in the government were completely out of bounds. Throughout this period of time, because of the Membership Action Plan, you and I and others were able to tell Albanian friends that reform will have to occur, that this is the criteria for membership. And I would report that I think very substantial changes have occurred in the prosecution system even in the last 6 months.

Now, the dilemma is the one we've been talking about today: The amount of armament of all sorts in Albania was prodigious. The previous dictatorship stockpiled weapons and equipment all across the country, fearing invasion from every source. And, as a result, the Albanians themselves are still discovering, sadly enough, where all of it is.

This is going to be a problem that plagues them, and now, if they become a member of NATO, the United States too. And it's one which we've got to exercise skill and patience. At the same time, the goodwill that they have to get rid of the stuff in their own country, I think, is critical, but let there be no mistake, it's a huge problem. And it was a sad moment when their Defense Minister resigned at the time of the explosion. I think he was a very able public servant, one of the new people coming up in democracy, but, nevertheless, took responsibility, that it was on his watch that this explosion occurred and some people were killed.

So, it is less a threat right now to the rest of the world than it is to Albanians, but it is a fact of life that won't go away instantly. And the prosecution of criminals and those guilty of corruption, likewise, is going to be a very arduous process for Albanian democracy, with all the fledgling institutions.

But, I mention that, because I think it's an important fact. And when Albania's ranking, in terms of transparency, comes in that low, that still is a fact, too. Changes have been made, and I think will continue to improve. But, membership in NATO will probably have very salutary results if we are able to work closely, as I'm certain we will, with them.

Finally, their contributions, as you say, to demonstrate their expeditionary capabilities are really remarkable. All of us have talked about the very few people in NATO, all together, who are in shape to do expeditionary work. Here are two very new candidates who, with these fledgling systems, have demonstrated that NATO's

problems are not just within the confines of Europe, but sometimes they extend to Afghanistan, out-of-area missions, and they have responded. So, this is a very strong point in their favor, and this is why I feel very strongly that membership is a good idea and will support that in this committee and on the Senate floor.

But, I thank you very much, Secretary Fried and Secretary Fata, for coming this morning for this timely hearing.

Senator DODD. Thank you, Senator, very, very much.

Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Fried, I listened to you yesterday, and I listened to you today. I appreciate your testimony on both days.

I would like to ask you to give your thoughts on something. You've mentioned, both days, your concern about two things with respect to Russia, among others. One is the notion of giving Russia a veto over NATO considerations through its diplomatic actions, and the other, you've mentioned, several times over the past couple of days, the notion of Russia denoting that there are certain spheres of influence, and that these countries, among others, may be a part of that. At the same time, from an American perspective, my concerns—and Senator Warner's comments yesterday affirmed those—are that we are not, principally, in a position of diplomatically having to address this notion that Russia might be giving a veto over NATO, so much as we should be concerned about the idea of mandating United States military involvement to signatories in these types of treaties. And, on the one hand, we might be talking about Russian spheres of influence, but, on the other, as you mentioned in your testimony today, we are expanding a security umbrella, and with that comes the notion of mandatory military involvement.

And, again, as you mentioned in your testimony, the recent activities in Georgia do illuminate this whole issue. You mentioned, yesterday, when asked by Senator Warner, that, if Georgia had been actually a member of NATO when these incidents occurred, that there would have been an expectation of NATO military involvement. Either you or Secretary Edelman mentioned this. I think all four of you, actually, testifying yesterday, did. So, this is obviously a very grave commitment that we are making, in addition to the ideological and market issues that come to play.

So, my first question to you would be, To what extent do you see any of those issues coming to play in the countries that are before us today?

Mr. FRIED. Senator, I profoundly agree with you that an article 5 commitment is a solemn and serious one. It is not to be given lightly. And I recognize that, and I agree with your logic.

I think that, with the case of Croatia and Albania, the contingent liability, as it were, the meaning of the U.S. defense commitment, is well within our means. The external threats to these countries are much less. The post-Yugoslav wars have ended. The relations between these countries and their neighbors are good or excellent. There are not border disputes or hostile relations. Croatia fought for its freedom in the Yugoslav wars. I very much doubt it will have to fight again.

Croatia and Albania both know that NATO membership will mean that the Alliance asks things of them, their commitment to NATO missions abroad. Georgia and Ukraine pose different questions. That's not the subject of this hearing. But, again, I completely agree that these are profoundly serious questions and deserve close examination, as well as the implications of article 5 in the light of what Russia has done, a separate issue than the one we're dealing with today, but an important one, I agree.

Senator WEBB. All right. So, it would be your view that that issue is not meaningfully in play with these countries in the same sense as it——

Mr. FRIED. Well——

Senator WEBB [continuing]. Is in Georgia and Ukraine.

Mr. FRIED [continuing]. Certainly the meaning of article 5 is the same. That is, by bringing these countries into NATO, we would assume responsibilities——

Senator WEBB. I understand that.

Mr. FRIED [continuing]. That is, the Alliance would assume responsibilities for their collective defense. So, certainly there is—that meaning is clear. But, if I understood your question correctly, I think the answer is that the actual military threat to these countries is orders-of-magnitude less, and that the requirement to defend them can be much more easily met. This is a much more benign security environment than others we might talk about, if I understood your——

Senator WEBB. Right.

Mr. FRIED [continuing]. Question.

Senator WEBB. That's really where I was trying to——

Mr. FRIED. Yes, sir.

Senator WEBB [continuing]. To go with the question. I think that if you look at the changing character of NATO with these new countries coming in—I mentioned, yesterday, my personal view that, in many instances, we have moved from allies to protectorates. And there are people who could disagree with that, but I think, in historical terms, you could make that point. We need to, on a cost—potential cost-benefit ratio, examine that. Secretary Gates recently had mentioned it in NATO now, there were countries who—that were going to fight, and there were countries that were going to be protected, essentially.

I know that France and Germany have expressed hesitations with respect to Ukraine and Georgia. What are their positions? Are France and Germany supportive of NATO membership of the countries before us today?

Mr. FRIED. My French and German colleagues would be amused if I tried to answer on behalf of their governments, but I'll do my best anyway, and I'll take the complaints when they phone me up this afternoon. [Laughter.]

Mr. FRIED. The French——

Senator WEBB. Just to insulate you a little bit, when I was in the Pentagon years ago and I would go to the NATO conferences when France was not an official member. The French representative was very likely to stand up and give about a 10-minute diatribe and just say, "But, we are only observers." [Laughter.]

Mr. FRIED. The French—Chancellor Merkel and President Sarkozy were present at Bucharest, where NATO's leaders declared that Georgia and Ukraine will be members of the Alliance someday. The chancellor—Chancellor Merkel was active in forging that compromise. This was not a bureaucrat-driven process, this was leaders at the table. It was remarkable.

They have—both governments have expressed caution and the need for prudence in extending article 5 commitments to these countries. They have also pointed out that neither country is ready now for NATO membership.

Those views have weight and are serious. The question before NATO is not the membership—a membership invitation to these countries, the question is whether or not we will extend a Membership Action Plan to these countries, allowing them to do the work, over what will be many years, to become ready for NATO membership.

Senator WEBB. But, the point being, since my time is running out, is that France and Germany do not, today, support NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine. But, do they, with the countries before us today?

Mr. FRIED. They support an invitation to Croatia and Albania now. NATO has extended that invitation. They supported it. No country supports an invitation to Georgia or Ukraine now, including the U.S. administration. So, our positions are not all that far apart.

But, to answer your question plainly, yes, they're behind Albania and Croatia.

Senator WEBB. And it would be fair to say that they are more hesitant than the United States when it comes to the other two countries.

Mr. FRIED. They have——

Senator WEBB. Or show——

Mr. FRIED. They—to be straightforward, they had more reservations about MAP than we did, yes, sir.

Senator WEBB. OK. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator DODD. Thank you very much.

Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

And thank you for your testimony.

I was in Georgia, also, a couple of weeks ago, and met with President Saakashvili, and went up into Gori, where the bombings had taken place. And I know that this hearing is primarily about Croatia and Albania, who appear to have been, just, outstanding in their movement toward the ideals of NATO. And so, the questions I'm going to ask really relate to just overall NATO expansion, not necessarily these countries. And I realize they're a little bit outside the sphere that Russia would be most concerned about, that Georgia and Ukraine are not. And so, the questions really relate more to them.

But, as I look at—as I watch what's happened with NATO, and I watch, sometimes, caveats, if you will, that are put in place as it relates to us working together in places like Afghanistan and other places, I wonder, militarily—I know that we want to address

the democratization of these countries and then moving ahead economically, with free enterprise and all that, but let's just focus strictly on the military component.

We—is it universally agreed within the Pentagon and within the State Department that this does not, in some ways, weaken our country, when you look at expanding NATO so considerably? Does it create conflicts in which we might otherwise not be involved unnecessarily? Does it, in some way, spread us thin and cause us to be involved in things that we might not otherwise be involved in, unnecessarily?

Mr. FRIED. Sir, the experience of NATO expansion allows me to answer your question and say, happily, no, it has not involved us in conflicts; no, it has not spread us thin. We have found that NATO enlargement helped end conflicts, or attenuate conflicts, in Central Europe. And the countries that join NATO, far from dragging us into other conflicts, have become contributing nations to NATO's missions abroad. In the case of some of them, particularly Poland, whose military is both large and capable, active contributors, they've gone—they, the Romanians, smaller countries, like Estonia, have gone where the fighting is in Afghanistan, to tough places.

But, I'm happy to be able to report to you that NATO enlargement, in practice, has turned out very well for us, and some of the fears that were expressed when this issue was first debated, starting 10 years ago, have not been realized.

Senator CORKER. We read lots of accounts about Russia, in essence, saying that Georgia is their line in the sand. And I think about how Americans would react if Georgia, for instance, was playing a role in Mexico or in Canada, right on our border, and you—you know, a lot will be written about what actually happened in Georgia and what actually caused, you know, some of the conflicts to get to the height that they got to there, but talk to us a little bit, if you will, about, from your position, the dynamics that are in play as it relates to Georgia and Ukraine. And is, in fact, this something—is this something that there should be some degree of U.S. empathy with as it relates to us being right there—NATO being right on their border in a country that was formerly part of the Soviet bloc?

Mr. FRIED. The administration—this administration and the previous administration gave this question a lot of thought. The Russians do regard NATO as a hostile military alliance, and, by coming closer to Russia's borders, Russia regards NATO as a threat. Our view is radically different. We think that NATO has brought stability and security to Europe. It has helped countries of the former Soviet bloc reconcile their differences, stabilize their democracies, and become benign.

The area of Europe to Russia's west, the part that used to be the Soviet bloc and is now in NATO, is more peaceful and more secure, and is, therefore, a better neighbor to Russia, than this region has been in all of Russia's history. NATO enlargement, in our view, has benefited Russia. Now, I don't expect them to thank us. But, actually, they probably should, because invasions of Russia came, not from democracies to Russia's west, but from aggressive dictators to Russia's west. And now, thanks to NATO, the countries in Europe

are democratic and peacefulminded. They don't have disputes with themselves, they don't like war. This is a good thing for everyone.

Senator CORKER. OK. As it relates to NATO itself, I think we are seeing the future as a world, looking at the way energy is going to play a role, geopolitically in the world, I think we all understand the leverage that those countries that have energy have over those countries that need energy. But, going back to NATO, specifically, if Russia decided that—you know, to be really low-level, they just were going to turn the energy pipeline off, if you will, that fed into Europe, over some political issue, if you will, that NATO was grappling with, is that one of those areas—and it literally created tremendous burdens on those countries, economically, politically, civilly, and every other way—how would that—would that, in any way, involve NATO, or is it strictly as it relates to military action?

Mr. FRIED. This is an important question, and it is not wholly hypothetical because, in recent years, we've seen Russia actually use energy apparently to exert political pressure. NATO has started to debate, internally, exactly the question you raised, Senator, which is, Is energy security an area of NATO's interest? And, if so, what is—can NATO's value-added be in energy security? Protecting pipelines and infrastructure from terrorists? Protecting undersea pipelines from attack? Helping countries develop alternative energy routes, so that they're not as dependent upon Russia? These are all things NATO is debating.

The European Union has a role, also, in energy, and many of—many NATO members are now looking at ways to diversify their sources of energy so that they avoid exactly the kind of dependence that you talked about.

This is an active issue——

Senator CORKER. So, it's a—the whole issue of energy and, potentially, a country like Russia doing something that adversely affected one of our NATO allies, could, in fact, involve military forces. It's—you're saying it's a gray area that's being hashed out at this moment. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. FRIED. Well, I have to be careful about the use of "military forces." NATO has discussed, occasionally, a role in protecting energy infrastructure. But, generally, these issues are regarded to be as economic and financial.

Senator CORKER. OK. Let me ask—let me ask—I know you're not going to really get into the meat of that, and shouldn't, probably. I understand. Let me—the—one last question.

Many of these—and I want to—I know this is being translated to our Croatian friends, and we thank you for your friendship, and I hope these questions aren't heard the wrong way. But, many of these countries, these democracies, are new democracies. And we're glad that they're moving along and, certainly, embracing free enterprise. And I have to tell you, I was actually stunned to meet many of the Georgian leaders and to see how, in many ways, they're doing things in a better way than we are, okay, in our own country. In many ways, obviously they are not. But, these countries are young democracies, and, therefore, in some cases, there's only one party that really is in power. OK? And sometimes that enables countries to do very unintelligent things. OK? Things happen far more quickly than they might in a full-fledged democracy. In the

event one of these NATO allies, one of these new friends of ours—and this is just hypothetical—were to do something really crazy, like could happen with one of the bordering countries to Russia—do something really crazy, that wasn't very thoughtful, and it did involve them being encroached upon in a heavy way by Russia, is NATO automatically obliged to come to the defense, if the country itself acted in a very unintelligent manner?

Mr. FRIED. One of the criteria for NATO membership—and it was among the original Perry criteria from 1995—is good relations with neighbors. And we want to make sure that the countries we bring into NATO have sufficient democratic experience that they've had a peaceful change of government, not a one-party government, and that they are past that stage of being tempted to do, as you put it, really stupid things. We want to make sure that NATO countries—that NATO members are sufficiently mature that our confidence level is very high that this question won't come about.

Our confidence level in Croatia and Albania is high. We saw, during the Kosovo independence issue, that Albania played an extraordinarily responsible, careful role, thinking of itself as a NATO—a future NATO member. Likewise, Croatia.

So, this—the question that you raised, we need to preempt by making sure that the countries we invite to join our alliance are not countries that are going to do—take these kinds of steps to which you referred. That's why we have to be careful and press these countries very hard during the Membership Action Plan process.

NATO standards have to be very high standards.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I realize the preemptive efforts that need to take place, sometimes things change, and I consider that, not unfairly, to be an unanswered question that—your response, just then.

But, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the—having these hearings, thank our witnesses, and certainly thank our friends in Croatia for being here.

Senator DODD. And also to compliment the Secretary in a very artful answer.

[Laughter.]

Senator DODD [continuing]. To a very different question.

Senator Cardin, welcome.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Chairman Dodd. Thank you very much for conducting these hearings. And I thank our witnesses for being here.

Earlier this year, the Helsinki Commission held hearings on NATO expansion, and, at that time, I expressed my support for both Croatia and Albania. I think it's in our interest for NATO expansion in these two countries.

But, I want to follow in a little bit different line from Senator Corker's inquiries, in that these are young democracies, and there are concerns as to how rapidly they are adhering to international commitments, whether they are NATO commitments, OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) commitments, or commitments that we expect from a democratic state.

In Croatia's case, their record has been really remarkable. They have moved very, very quickly to establish open, free elections, and to do what we would expect of a more mature democracy.

I want to talk, a few minutes, about Albania. And, again, I preface this by saying I support the course that we're following in Albania on NATO expansion. But, Albania has serious concerns—at least I believe they do—in regards to corruption, including within their Department of Defense. There is a concern as to whether they will meet OSCE commitments as it relates to next year's elections. So, I would like to get your take as to what progress we expect in Albania prior to NATO expansion and whether we can expect continued reform in that country so that, when the elections are held next year, we have confidence that the OSCE commitments for fair and open elections will be adhered to in Albania.

Mr. FRIED. It is a very—it is very fair to expect that the administration will continue to press Albania to meet all of its commitments, to strengthen and deepen its democratic institutions and practices, to continue to fight against corruption, and to build the elements of a modern state. This is a fair request, and I can report to you that that is exactly the intention of this administration. I believe it will be the intention of the next administration. And our experience in NATO enlargement suggests that countries, once admitted to the Alliance, do continue their reforms. They don't stop, breathe a sigh of relief, and say, "Well, we're done." They continue, especially because EU enlargement comes next, and it has a whole other set of criteria.

I can tell you that Ambassador Withers, the U.S. Ambassador in Tirana, is making this issue—that is, the deepening of democratic institutions, the fight against corruption—his principal issue. That is his issue. As important as other things are, he believes that Albania has work to do, and he is pressing very hard, with the full support of the State Department and the rest of the United States Government.

That said, what we expect from the Albanians is really to continue their current pace of reforms. They've been moving in the right direction, they've been taking some tough, necessary calls on anticorruption, they've had elections and smooth transitions between one party and another. American influence in Albania is pretty high right now, our credibility is high, and, frankly, we intend to use it to keep advancing this agenda, working with the government, working with the opposition and all the different players there.

Senator CARDIN. Well, I thank you for that answer. That's very, very encouraging, and the answer I had hoped for. The U.S. Helsinki Commission has placed a very high priority on fighting corruption, and we find that to be a common theme in the emerging democracies, that they have serious issues of dealing with the remnants of corruption. In some cases, it's been extremely difficult. I mention Ukraine in that regard. They've had a major problem in wiping out the type of corruption that was so systematic in their government.

Albania has this issue, and it's continuing. And I am pleased with progress that has been made, so I agree with your assessment. And I am pleased that you will continue to work with the

Albanian Government to make it clear that higher expectations are desired.

And I think you're right about Europe. I think, with the Europe expansions, this is an issue that is becoming a front-and-center issue, and I think Albania understands that we're not doing away with our expectations just because they reach the plateau of NATO membership. And I think that's an important point for us to underscore.

I want to ask you a second question, which has been a—some of—our theme of some of our questions, which go beyond just the expansion of Albania and Croatia. Looking at Russia's influence, looking at the impact they had on the Bucharest Summit—and you can say that we all agree that there will be future expansion in regards to Georgia and Ukraine, but the plain facts were that, in Bucharest, the way that that played out was different than the United States desired. And Russia had an influence in the decisions made at that summit. We now have Russia using its military might in Georgia.

So, I guess my question to you is: Are we reevaluating our strategies as it relates to NATO? Are we looking at the realities of Russia's influence and are trying to develop strategies that are consistent with the purpose of NATO, but recognizing the fact that Russia is exercising a different role today than they were just a few years ago?

Mr. FRIED. NATO countries are, indeed, consulting about the implications of Russia's attack on Georgia. NATO held an emergency foreign ministerial meeting in the middle of August devoted to exactly this question. Many NATO countries, particularly the ones with, let us say, deep and personal experience of Russian pressure, are concerned by what Russia's attack on Georgia means for them. This is something the Alliance is going to have to think about and grapple with for some time. We're working very closely with our allies, both through NATO and the European Union, in devising responses, both tactical and strategic.

With respect to Bucharest, Chancellor Merkel made clear—and I believe her—that her concerns about Georgia and a Membership Action Plan had to do with concerns about Georgia, not some sort of cave to Russia. I believe that. She knows the Russians very well, and she was helpful in forging the compromise at the Bucharest Summit.

But, that said, the premise of your question is right. That is, NATO has to think about Russia and our long-term relations with Russia, and that is now a work in progress. We want to do that thoughtfully, rather than in haste, but we have to do it.

Senator CARDIN. Well, I thank you. I really appreciate your answers. I would just hope that we could work closely together, the executive department's activities here, along with Congress, because I do think we need to rethink how we can engage Russia, in a constructive way, but very firm, about our standards in which military intervention in Georgia is just wrong. And we cannot allow that type of activity to take place, but we have to figure out ways to have a more effective engagement with Russia. And it seems to me NATO could play a very important role in that strategy.

Mr. FRIED. I look forward to working with this committee and with you, sir.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I'll yield back the balance of my time.

Senator DODD. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator DeMint.

Senator DEMINT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I learned about everything I need to know about Albania and Croatia from the excellent questions from Senator Lugar and yourself, and so, I'll ask just a couple of questions related to NATO, overall, and more theoretical questions for you, Mr. Fried.

There have been some concerns that if Georgia had been a member of NATO, that we would have had the responsibility, obviously, to defend them in that situation. What would be your perspective or opinion? If Georgia had been a member of NATO, would Russia have even attacked them?

Mr. FRIED. There are two parts to a proper answer to that question.

The first part is: For a country to be invited to NATO, we would have to have confidence that that country, according to the Perry principles when we started out this process in the 1990s, had good relations with its neighbors and a responsible foreign policy.

The second part of that answer is: Once we were satisfied and made the solemn commitment to extend NATO membership and an article 5 commitment to a given country, that commitment means something. And, yes, Russia would have to take it into account. But, it is not a commitment to be given lightly, and this committee has made clear, through every round of NATO enlargement, that that commitment is most solemn and serious.

So, I think that Russia would have to take that into account, but it's—an article 5 commitment is nothing you simply write down and send through the mail. It follows years of building confidence, of hard work that these countries—that aspirant countries have to do.

Senator DEMINT. Just—the question of enlargement, you've expressed an opinion that this has been—has generally strengthened NATO and created more peaceful partners, which I think is altogether true. One concern I have about enlargement, it's important that NATO have—the member countries have common interests, common threats, in order to keep that cohesiveness and, I guess, sense of urgency. My concern, as I think has already been expressed, is, as we get a more diverse group of members of NATO, some countries that still have serious problems with corruption, do you believe that the ability of NATO to act in unison to honor the article 5—my concern is—like with the United Nations, is, the interests are so varied and diverse that they can no longer develop a consensus on what to do. Could that be happening with NATO as we expand into many countries with many different cultures and politics, in effect?

Mr. FRIED. I remember that we had to deal with just this question when we debated and thought about earlier rounds of enlargement. And I'm happy to report to you, sir, that the addition of the seven new members after 2002 did not complicate NATO's work. In fact, the United States found them to be excellent allies who saw

the world very much as we did; that is, they understood that their freedom and ours was of a whole. And, how shall I put this, when NATO has trouble reaching consensus, it is usually not the new members who have complicated it. [Laughter.]

And I'm sure other NATO members would say the same about the United States. NATO does work, though. It has worked, in practice, as a larger alliance, and we have found that we have done—made hard decisions and done difficult things together. The experience of a larger alliance has been a good one. So, your question, sir, is a fair one. The answer can be one, thankfully, based on good experience rather than bad.

Senator DEMINT. Would you say, generally, that the mission of NATO is seen as more important to its member nations now than 10 years ago? My sense was, as the Soviet Union broke up and—that there seemed to be a declining threat, that the importance of NATO seemed to decline. But, recently, with Russia's activities and obviously what's going on in Afghanistan and Asia, the sense—my sense is that the importance of NATO may have increased significantly with its member nations. Is that true?

Mr. FRIED. I would not want to suggest, because I don't—I think it's not true that NATO needs an external threat to be coherent. We have found, contemplating 21st-century threats, that NATO has a role and has found a role in ways far afield from where we thought the original article 5 threat would come. NATO is the principal security arm of the transatlantic community of democracies. NATO invoked article 5 to counter an attack on the United States that originated in Afghanistan. No one thought that, in their wildest scenario.

So, NATO is adapting to threats of the 21st century. Its core mission remains exactly the same, which is the collective defense of its members. The way in which it carries out this mission will change.

Now, we want to think through the implications of Russia's attack on Georgia, but NATO is not looking for monsters to destroy, it's looking for ways to secure peace and freedom of its members, and work in cooperation with other nations around the world.

Senator DEMINT. Do you believe that the NATO nations are solidly committed to the NATO mission in Afghanistan? And do you believe, if that mission fails or falters, that that could have a long-term impact on NATO itself?

Mr. FRIED. There are 25,000 non-U.S. NATO troops in Afghanistan now. Some of them are in the hottest places—the Dutch, the Canadians, the Estonians—the Poles have joined us in the east, and the Germans are doing a good job in the north; the Italians and Spanish, a good job in the west. You're quite right that a successful mission in Afghanistan will be good for NATO, a failed mission would be terrible. There are challenges in Afghanistan, to be sure. This is a tough mission, and we're learning. But, we've made progress, and we've got to—we've got to learn the lessons and succeed.

Senator DEMINT. Yes. I very much appreciate your answers, and would add my thank you to the folks from Croatia who are here today.

And, Mr. Chairman, I'll yield back the balance of my time.

Senator DODD. Thank you very much, Senator. I appreciate it very much.

First of all, I should have recognized the two ambassadors. We have the ambassadors from Croatia and Albania with us in the audience, as well, today. We appreciate your presence here with us. Thank you very much for coming, both of you.

Let me raise a couple of additional questions. This has been very worthwhile, and I appreciate your answers.

NATO's Secretary General Scheffer has set a target date of admitting Croatia and Albania, I think, for April of next year, April 7, if I'm correct. One, is that a realistic timeline, Secretary Fried? And two, share with us—if you can—and again, I appreciate your trying to describe both French and German reactions to certain things, but since you started that line, please share with the committee what, if any, European concerns there are regarding either the Croatian or Albanian accession.

Mr. FRIED. Support for the NATO invitation to Croatia and Albania was overwhelming at the Bucharest Summit. I would say that there was enthusiasm, there was no opposition, there was some regret that Macedonia, because of the name issue, was not invited. But, I would say that this was a decision that NATO took with enthusiasm, having had quite a bit of experience with both countries.

As to the timeline, I would never presume to discuss the timelines of the U.S. Senate or this committee. Past experience suggests that having it all done by April is tight, but doable. The last time we went through this, the invitations were extended in November 2002. Senate ratification came in May of 2003. So, that's—past precedent may mean something, but it's not for me to say.

Senator DODD. Yes. Senator DeMint and Senator Corker raised the question, and Senator Cardin did, as well, about the issue of the growing number of NATO members—I guess I'm influenced by being a member of this body because when I started thinking about the growing number of members trying to get decisions on anything, how hard it can be to make those decisions. As you watch the size of NATO increase, in very different countries—of course there is a commonality in these countries, that we've talked about here, as part of the accession process, and embracing the Perry principles, and critically important is that process that nations are going through, before reaching that point of actually becoming member states. Now, hypothetical questions are really impossible to address, obviously. But, with the growing number of members, as you increase the numbers, that the scenarios also increase, the possibilities for disagreement increase. While all nations are embracing the same principles, obviously there are different interests. Given all of this, is there any thought at all as to any different trigger mechanisms within NATO to respond in an article 5 fashion. I'm just curious whether or not there's been any thought given to this issue. What would be the reaction of member states if all of a sudden they were to be considered something less of an absolutely coequal partner of this relationship?

Mr. FRIED. We have always insisted that NATO is a one-tier alliance. That meant that article 5 meant the same thing to everyone. It also meant that countries had to shoulder their responsibilities.

As Secretary Gates has said, you can't have a two-tier alliance of fighters and watchers. Neither can you have a two-tier alliance of article 5 and not quite article 5. So, we do, as a regular practice, urge allies to abandon caveats and to contribute to where the fighting is hot.

From time to time, we've thought about NATO's internal machinery and how to make it more efficient. But, the consensus principle has worked. And, in particular, with respect to article 5, we want to keep that clean.

People have talked about the growth of NATO and the theoretical issue of, How large can it be and still function? But, the number of aspirant nations is not infinite. There are a finite number of countries that are interested in NATO membership. Georgia and Ukraine are interested. There may be countries in the Balkans. Macedonia certainly is, and we regard them as a viable aspirant. Eventually Montenegro, maybe Bosnia, Serbia. But, it's a limited number. And we can see when they're ready, and take this, based on the individual merits and our views at the time.

Senator DODD. I apologize, maybe I should know this—but is there a default mechanism if a Member State decided, in its own interests, that it did not want to agree with an article 5 request, and decided, in a democratic fashion—for example, maybe their parliament votes and says, "You know, we're not going to Iraq," or, "We're not going to Afghanistan," or someplace where that decision's already been made—what is NATO's ability to respond to a nation-state that makes that decision?

Mr. FRIED. If a country opts out of a NATO mission, we don't have a means to force them to opt in. This isn't the Warsaw Pact. Countries will make their own decisions. The experience in Afghanistan suggests that countries are serious about NATO missions. That's why we've got 25,000 troops. And when we asked countries to contribute, the new members were at the head of the line. Poland came in and said, "We're in with a combat battalion in the east, and combat helicopters." So, that's a fighting new ally. Others have gone within their means to where the fighting was hot. So, the experience has been a pretty good one. And it's also important that we work the politics. That is, we work with Europe so that Europe and the United States, in NATO, believe that we are part of a common community, that we're in this together, and that kind of tending the garden and sense of solidarity and common purpose is important.

Senator DODD. Well, I hope that's the case. Not to draw the analogies too tightly, but new members of clubs are always more willing to volunteer, it seems to me, than those who have been in the clubs for some length of time.

Mr. FRIED. Although, to be fair, the Dutch took on a very tough——

Senator DODD. Yes; they did.

Mr. FRIED [continuing]. Role in Uruzgan. They knew it was hard, and they did it anyway.

Senator DODD. Tell me about Serbia and as we look down the road, given the fact that these former members of Yugoslavia are coming together here, and the possibility of Bosnia coming in, is it our hope down the road, that this effort, in addition to the things

you've otherwise described here, would also result in Serbia becoming a member of NATO?

Mr. FRIED. Certainly. We hope that Serbia sees the prospect of NATO membership and EU membership as its future. Now, Serbia has a long way to go. They basically have a strategic choice to make between a nationalist past and a European future. They don't have to want to join NATO to achieve this European future. That's up to them. But, as they see Slovenia in NATO and the European Union, as they see Croatia on its way to both institutions, there are a lot of Serbs—some people—some of them, I've known for 25, 30 years—who are asking themselves, "Well, why not us? And if Croatia—why should we opt out of this European future?"—which is exactly what we want to inspire.

Senator DODD. Yes.

Mr. FRIED. We want them to see that this future is real, it isn't a mirage. And that can help change the politics.

President Tadic of Serbia has said he's opting for a European future. And we want to help him go that route, as he makes it possible for us to do so.

Senator DODD. Let me come back to Croatia, just briefly for a minute, because all of us here, particularly Senator Lugar and myself and others who are members of this committee, recall the terrible hardship the Croatians were under with that terrible war, and how many people suffered terribly. And we want to convey to the members of the Croatian Parliament to convey, universally from this committee and our colleagues in the Senate, our deepest sympathies to what the Croatian people went through as a result of that conflict. But, I'd like to ask just a couple of legacy questions about this issue.

What is the status of ethnic Serbs, who have returned to Croatia, and how have they been treated? How cooperative has Croatia been in investigating and prosecuting war criminals in The Hague? And, finally, what is your assessment of the relationship between Croatia and Serbia today?

Mr. FRIED. Croatia has done, in general, a commendable job of dealing with the issues of nationalism and the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. I believe that the current Croatian Government now includes, as a coalition partner, the party of the minority Serb community in that country. It's a good thing. I think that resettlement has taken place, and certainly, how shall I put it, the feel of Croatian politics is that nationalism has just sort of dissipated and the party that was once a nationalist party has become a center-right party and embraced a European identity and political culture, all to the good.

These are laudable things, and it means that countries coming out of a nationalist past in the Balkans can successfully make that transition to a European future. And nationalist politics in Croatia tends to be fringe politics, not mainstream politics. A great success for that country.

Senator DODD. Yes. Hague tribunal?

Mr. FRIED. As I recall, the last serious—the last major war criminal was apprehended. And I can't remember the status of the trial, but the cooperation has been good. That was an—a tough arrest. It's always hard for these countries to face up to the fact that some

people who claim to be national heroes weren't really heroes, and I think Croatia has done a good job dealing these kinds of issues.

Senator DODD. Ethnic Serbs returning to Croatia?

Mr. FRIED. They've come back. I don't—I'm not aware of a lot of problems. There are property issues that always have to be dealt with. Generally, the experience has been a good one. And the fact that the Serbian party is part of government shows how far they've come, how much progress they've made.

Senator DODD. The last question I have for you is the issue of Macedonia. You've indicated that Montenegro and Macedonia could possibly end up within the NATO family, as well. And obviously there's the ongoing concern about the name, from a NATO member state. And you recall, going back a number of years ago, Dick, that this was an issue that hasn't just emerged recently, but it goes back some time.

Mr. FRIED. Right.

Senator DODD. Enlighten us as to where that is and how serious it is. It's a serious issue, obviously, from the Greek standpoint. But, is there any ongoing effort to resolve that matter?

Mr. FRIED. It certainly is a serious issue. It was this issue that prevented NATO from extending an invitation to Macedonia. There is a negotiation process now very much underway in an intensive phase to resolve the name issue. It's led by Matt Nimitz under U.N. auspices. The United States supports that process very much. We believe that a compromise solution is possible. We encourage it. We're working closely with the Macedonian and Greek Government. There is no American plan. There is the efforts of Matt Nimitz, which we support. And we hope for a quick resolution so that an invitation could be extended to—so this issue can be resolved and we can extend an issue to Macedonia as soon as possible.

Senator DODD. Thank you.

Senator Lugar, do you have any additional——

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just one additional comment, because I think the you have raised an important issue about the unanimity and when article 5 can be invoked, and so forth.

The current predicament with Georgia is not one that involves NATO, but the response of the European Union members is, I think, helpful in trying to gauge a situation that might occur if there was a call for article 5. Or, for example, in trying to gain consensus of all the EU members in behalf of President Sarkozy's mission, just of a couple of days ago. This is quite apart from the visits by heads-of-state which has brought together many people who have different views on the relationship of their countries with Russia, or Europe with Russia, for that matter. And, in your testimony before the House from yesterday, you've gone down through at least five potential interpretations of where Russia might be heading. And these are all being debated by the Europeans.

But, at the end of the day, it's remarkable that there could be any consensus. Even under the stress of this situation, Europe took a strong position with President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin, as the case may be, at trying to deal with this.

And this is the first time Europeans have been faced with this kind of an issue for a long time, and, as you know from your recent

visit to Brussels, there are some nations who are asking, "What does article 5 mean? Would it be there if we need it?" They're really raising questions now of what NATO means to them. It's not that we were all quiescent and thought that, conceivably, all NATO meant was the occasional expeditionary mission of people to Afghanistan. We are back, really, to the integrity of Europe, how well European countries are cooperating with each other, and all kinds of issues on energy policy there, the lack of a grid system, the lack of cooperation on basic economic issues.

During my recent trip to Europe and in my meetings and question-and-answer sessions there appeared to be a building consensus. They managed to come together, ambassadors, from both situations, talking, really, about the same issues. And I thought this was both instructive and encouraging. It's not that we would have wished the horrors that have occurred in South Ossetia to bring some sense of reality and debate and consensus in NATO. But, I think it's gone a long way to achieve that effect.

And I just make this as an editorial comment, appropriate, I think, to our hearing today, because we are now discussing a very serious issue: Are two more countries going to strengthen the Alliance, weaken it, make any difference? Do they share the ethos? Do they take up their own strategic posture? And your answer has been yes, they do. They've taken expeditionary steps already. They've prepared themselves for that kind of duty. And that's important to know. And that's why our colleagues, I'm sure, will ask as we get in a markup session or on our Senate floor debate, which I'm hopeful will occur soon.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much for——

Senator DODD. No——

Senator LUGAR [continuing]. Chairing this meeting.

Senator DODD [continuing]. It's a very good point. I was thinking, here, Senator Lugar, as you were talking, and I don't know whether Secretary Fried would agree with this or not, but I was thinking, back some 10 or 12 years ago, when the conflicts broke out in the Balkans, and please correct me if I'm wrong, but I remember, a the loud silence from the European community. That's how it seemed to be at the time. There didn't seem to be much participation. One of the concerns expressed here is: Where is the European community stepping in, in a matter that clearly is within their immediate sphere of influence? And it seemed to me that this reaction was very slow, to put it mildly. Others may use more dramatic language to describe the European response at the time.

Senator DODD. Yes. Which is opposed to what you just described here, a very different——

Senator LUGAR. Yes.

Senator DODD [continuing]. Situation here, which I think has some value and relevancy in this debate and discussion, so it's important.

This has been a very good hearing, and I'll end where I began. We need to hear from the Department of Defense, as well. There are questions I would expect you to address. But, clearly, as we all think about these matters, a DOD answer—and I don't blame General Craddock at all; he's got a role, and he doesn't need to be drawn before every Parliament in the world. And I know about the

concern over the precedent-setting nature of that. But, clearly, he wears another hat, as well, which would have allowed him to be here to answer some questions. And so, I appreciate the message I've received regarding certain questions I've raised, and we'll try to get those addressed, but, at some point, we may need to hear from that point of view, as well.

But, with that, I'll leave the record open for members who were not able to participate today, but have questions, or those who were here and have some additional questions.

Senator DODD. But, we thank you both very, very much, and the committee will stand adjourned.

We'd like to invite our colleagues from the Croatian Parliament to come up and say hello to Senator Lugar and myself here at the dais.

So, thank you both very much.

The committee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, U.S. SENATOR FROM OHIO

Mr. Chairman, today's hearing on the expansion of the Transatlantic Alliance marks a historic step forward for the people of Croatia and Albania.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my personal and deep congratulations to Croatia and Albania on their respective invitations to join NATO.

Croatia and Albania have come a long and successful way from their first public expression to join the Alliance in 1994, through their completion of the Partnership for Peace program, and their respective achievements in the Membership Action Plan.

This invitation signifies NATO's confidence that Croatia and Albania will be strong partners for collective security in the world. These two democracies have consistently demonstrated their genuine desire for peace and security in both Southeast Europe and beyond, and their maturity in undertaking the necessary political, military, and security reforms required by the Alliance. In short, their active cooperation with NATO since 2002 has finally earned the reward it deserves.

Croatia has proven itself to be a valued friend and partner of the United States. It is a leader in the cause of freedom. Several hundred Croatian soldiers, diplomats, and military police officers have worked within the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Croatia has also provided vital logistical support for NATO-led operations in Kosovo, and for the training and equipment provided to help achieve peace and security in Iraq.

We are also grateful for Albania's support of our joint efforts toward peace and stability throughout the world. Albania has proven itself to be a trusted ally for our country as seen with the establishment of its logistics support command center in Tirana, its peacekeeping operations in Kosovo, and its military and medical personnel deployed in Afghanistan.

NATO enlargement is essential toward advancing freedom, stability, and democratic values throughout Europe. Croatia and Albania serve as two more examples of countries motivated by the prospect of NATO membership to advance significant and difficult political, economic, and military reforms. Their efforts and success demonstrate to other countries in the Balkans and beyond that NATO's door remains open to nations willing to shoulder the responsibilities of membership.

It is my dream to see all of the countries of Southeast Europe in NATO and the European Union. Working together to achieve this vision, we can bring about a new and hopeful history for all of Europe.

Mr. Chairman, I urge the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to report favorably—and for the Senate to expeditiously approve—the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Croatia.

Thank you.

RESPONSES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAN FRIED TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. NATO has several prescribed conditions required for countries to be given consideration as candidates to NATO. These conditions are meant to ensure that the country will be a stable contributor to NATO's overall mission rather than a detriment. Countries must be stable democracies, enjoying good relations with all other nations they neighbor, and not contain any disputed territories. At this time, it would appear that Georgia, though a strong ally of the NATO Alliance, is unable of meeting these conditions. Given continuing poor relations between Georgia and Russia, would Georgia be eligible for NATO membership? Do you believe that Georgia and Russia may be capable of quickly resolving the dispute? How do NATO members propose to deal with Georgia's disputed territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as an obstacle to NATO membership?

Answer. NATO allies agreed at the NATO Bucharest Summit in April 2008 that Georgia will one day be a member of the Alliance. Both the Alliance and Georgia's leaders understand that it is not ready for NATO membership at this time. The administration supports Georgia's request to enter NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP). MAP is not a guarantee of membership; it is a work program designed to help aspirants achieve the progress they must make in order to qualify for eventual membership, which sometimes stretches over several years. We believe that working through MAP would allow Georgia to realize progress on reforms that would make it more stable and democratic, which would in turn benefit the entire region.

It will take time to reverse the effects of Russia's invasion and restore neighborly relations between Georgia and Russia. As a first step, we are working to ensure full implementation by Russia of its cease-fire commitments, while adhering to the territorial integrity of Georgia as agreed in multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Ultimately, allies will have to determine for themselves whether Georgia has met the Alliance's performance-based standards and can contribute to Alliance security before reaching consensus on extending a membership invitation.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF EDWARD A. ANDRUS, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CROATIAN AMERICANS, WASHINGTON, DC

The National Federation of Croatian Americans (NFCA)—on behalf of all the grateful Croatian Americans across our Nation—appreciates that Chairman Joseph Biden, Ranking Member Richard Lugar, and Acting Chair Christopher Dodd of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have provided time during this very busy month for this important hearing. Consideration of early ratification for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) protocols developed for the accession of the Republic of Croatia is greatly appreciated by the NFCA.

Croatia earned the invitation received at the Bucharest Summit from the NATO Alliance on April 3, 2008, by its long and persevering work in implementing democratic reforms and the rule of law, in transforming its military to comply with NATO standards, and through active military participation with the United States and NATO forces in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan. In only 16 years Croatia has converted herself from a "receiver" nation-state to one of a "provider" of security assistance. Moreover, she currently occupies a seat as a nonpermanent member of the Security Council at the United Nations.

The United States has long supported and guided the expansion of NATO to provide membership for those democratic nation-states who wish to be free and are willing to contribute to the defense of the entire Alliance. The United States has led the effort for Croatia's membership through strong bipartisan political support in both houses of the Congress, at the State and Defense Departments together with the creation of the Adriatic Charter, and with our allies in NATO. The United States can now continue to show leadership among her NATO allies by being the first NATO member to ratify the protocols for the accession of the Republic of Croatia.

Croatia's full membership in NATO will benefit the United States by improving the stability and security of Southeast Europe. One has but to consider the recent military actions in the new nation-state of Georgia to appreciate the fragility of peace in that part of the world. In nearby Bosnia and Herzegovina, the political situation remains unresolved with respect to equal rights for all of the ethnic and political constituencies there. In Serbia, a pro-Western government has a shaky hold on power in a country where, apparently, Russia continues to have interest. Croatia has worked diligently to build peace partnerships with all of her neighbors including some who were former enemies. In so doing she has shown great leadership and

become a model for all freedom loving nations in the region who aspire to someday belong to the great organization of NATO. Croatia has shown the way, and this good partner of the United States deserves to finally become a full member of NATO. The NFCA humbly requests that this committee move this ratification process forward to the Senate floor for a full vote at the earliest possible date.

The NFCA, on behalf of the Croatian American community, has worked tirelessly with the U.S. Government, particularly the Departments of State and Defense, to help ensure that no obstacles of concern would stand in the way of this treaty ratification. Along the way, the NFCA participated in the formation of the Congressional Croatian Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives and assisted in the development and promotion of congressional resolutions that commended Croatia's progress toward satisfying the many requirements necessary to join the NATO organization. There are many that the NFCA would like to recognize for significant contributions made toward the achievement of this important goal for the Republic of Croatia. Special thanks must go to U.S. Ambassador Robert A. Bradtke for the guidance he has provided Croatia in helping her position for this membership. The progressive and accomplished diplomatic team under recent Croatian Ambassadors to the United States, in particular current Ambassador Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic, are deserving of the Croatian American community's appreciation for their tireless and successful efforts to date.

Our thanks also go to our consistent and supportive NFCA national membership and the cochairs of the Congressional Croatian Caucus, Congressmen George Radanovich (R–CA) and Peter Visclosky (D–IN), for their leadership and support for Croatia in the U.S. House of Representatives. We also thank U.S. Senators Joseph Biden (D–DE), Richard Lugar (R–IN), and George Voinovich (R–OH)—as well as U.S. Representatives Elton Gallegly (R–CA) and Robert Wexler (D–FL) on the House side—and their expert staffs for their bold legislative statements, creative resolutions, and other initiatives supportive of Croatia. The NFCA acknowledges President Bush for keeping his promise "to lead the charge for Croatia at the 2008 NATO Summit." The President and his Bucharest Summit team did just that.

The NFCA is the national umbrella organization of Croatian American groups that collectively represents approximately 130,000 members. For additional public affairs information, please contact Mr. Joe Foley, NFCA Government and Public Affairs Director, or the NFCA Headquarters, or by e-mail at NFCAhdq@verizon.net. For recent NFCA newsletters, important NFCA membership and chapter information, and other Croatian American news please visit the NFCA's Web site at www.nfcaonline.com.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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