

THE WESTERN BALKANS AND THE 2012 NATO SUMMIT

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS SECOND SESSION

JANUARY 18, 2012

Printed for the use of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

[CSCE 112-2-1]



Available via <http://www.csce.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

74-827 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2012

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800
Fax: (202) 512-2250 Mail: Stop SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-0001

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH COMMISSIONERS

HOUSE

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey,
Chairman
JOSEPH R. PITTS, Pennsylvania
ROBERT B. ADERHOLT, Alabama
PHIL GINGREY, Georgia
MICHAEL C. BURGESS, Texas
ALCEE L. HASTINGS, Florida
LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER,
New York
MIKE McINTYRE, North Carolina
STEVE COHEN, Tennessee

SENATE

BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, Maryland,
Co-Chairman
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, Rhode Island
TOM UDALL, New Mexico
JEANNE SHAHEEN, New Hampshire
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, Connecticut
ROBERT F. WICKER, Mississippi
SAXBY CHAMBLISS, Georgia
MARCO RUBIO, Florida
KELLY AYOTTE, New Hampshire

EXECUTIVE BRANCH COMMISSIONERS

MICHAEL H. POSNER, Department of State
MICHAEL C. CAMUÑEZ, Department of Commerce
ALEXANDER VERSHBOW, Department of Defense

THE WESTERN BALKANS AND THE 2012 NATO SUMMIT

JANUARY 18, 2012

COMMISSIONERS

	Page
Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	1

MEMBERS

Hon. Michael R. Turner (R-3) a Member of Congress from the State of Ohio	2
Hon. Eliot L. Engel (D-17) a Member of Congress from the State of New York	6

WITNESSES

Daniel Serwer, Senior Fellow, Center for Transatlantic Relations	4
Nida Gelazis, Senior Associate, European Studies Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars	7
Ivan Vejvoda, Vice President, German Marshall Fund	10

APPENDICES

Prepared statement of Hon. Christopher H. Smith	30
Prepared statement of Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin, Co-Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe .	31
Prepared statement of Daniel Serwer	32
Prepared statement of Nida Gelazis	34
Prepared statement of Ivan Vejvoda	37

THE WESTERN BALKANS AND THE 2012 NATO SUMMIT

January 18, 2012

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC

[The hearing was held at 2 p.m. in room B-318, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; and Hon. Robert B. Aderholt, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Members present: Hon. Michael R. Turner (R-3) a Member of Congress from the State of Ohio; and Hon. Eliot L. Engel (D-17) a Member of Congress from the State of New York.

Witnesses present: Daniel Serwer, Senior Fellow, Center for Transatlantic Relations; Nida Gelazis, Senior Associate, European Studies Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; and Ivan Vejvoda, Vice President, German Marshall Fund.

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. SMITH. The Commission will come to order. And I apologize at the outset for the delay. We did have a series of votes on the floor of the House, which precluded Mr. Turner and I and other members from being here. But thank you for your patience and welcome to everyone.

Today we will review the aspirations and the preparedness of Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo to join or deepen engagement with the NATO alliance, an important step for us and for them and quite timely in the run-up to the next NATO summit which will take place in Chicago from May 20th to 21st.

In the past, I and many other Commission members, including Chairman and Co-Chairman, have been very strong supporters of NATO enlargement. It has been a very good thing for all, for our country and for the new democracies in East-Central Europe that have joined the alliance since 1998.

Not only did enlargement stabilize Central Europe, but countries that formerly threatened us with militaries integrated into the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact have now become some of our closest and most trusted allies. They have shouldered real responsibilities,

and some of their soldiers have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defending liberty, particularly in Afghanistan and in Iraq.

Today I believe further NATO enlargement can do likewise—stabilize the Western Balkans and provide our country with responsible allies. Yet, of course, countries that seek to join NATO have to meet military standards and human rights standards. In these respects, Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo will have different challenges, and they will probably not be ready to join the alliance all at the same time, although they're all proceeding in that direction.

With respect to human rights, many countries of the Western Balkans have made great progress in combating human trafficking, especially given the blatant and widespread trafficking of young women into the sex trade their region experienced just a decade ago. In 2011, Bosnia and Macedonia joined a NATO member, Croatia, in Tier 1 in the State Department's report on trafficking in persons. Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia are in Tier 2, as is NATO member Albania.

As the author of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, which mandates the tier rankings, I want to strongly urge all of these countries to take the actions necessary to reach Tier 1 this year. Nothing less should be expected from friends and possible NATO allies than to protect people from being sold into modern-day slavery.

Other issues before the alliance—Afghanistan, missile defense, Libya, the eurozone crisis—should not cause us to forget the long-term imperative of bringing the countries of the Western Balkans into NATO. American soldiers have done their duty there, including members of my own family—in Bosnia as well as in Kosovo. And we don't want that to happen again, of course. The issue of stability remains, and NATO membership is key to the solution. This means we have to encourage their NATO aspirations and move their applications forward as quickly as humanly possible.

I'd like to now yield to my good friend and colleague Mr. Turner for any comments he might have.

**HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER (R-3) A MEMBER OF CONGRESS
FROM THE STATE OF OHIO**

Mr. TURNER. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I thank you for holding this hearing and certainly picking this as a topic. Both the issue of the enlargement of NATO and, of course, the issue of the Balkans are very important, as we all know that the enlargement of NATO has been seen as a pathway for ensuring the democratization of Eastern Europe, a pathway to E.U. and, of course, as a pathway for the strengthening of ties with the United States.

Looking at this issue with respect to the Balkans I think is very important, and is a topic that I think at times gets neglected. As we look back from to the '90s when the United States and our NATO allies joined together in trying to establish peace that was embodied in the Dayton Peace Accords—a treaty that was negotiated in my home community of Dayton, OH—we certainly have seen stability and peace, but still, I think, difficultly in how to transition the area to some permanency, both in Bosnia and its un-

governable constitutional structure and certainly the issues of Kosovo and Macedonia.

I appreciate you taking the focus. I also want to make a particular thank you to Ivan, from the German Marshall Fund, for your focus on the issue of Bosnia. You'll be participating in a forum in Dayton, OH on this particular issue in the beginning part of February with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and trying, of course, to leverage off of what you're doing here today, Chairman, for looking at ways in which we can ensure that this area can transition and that NATO can be an important instrument in that. So thank you for including me.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much. I just note, for the audience, that Chairman Turner is the head of the U.S. delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and does wonderful work there. And I want to thank him for his leadership on that very, very important assembly, because we—with our Parliamentary Assembly for OSCE know how important it is that the delegations meet and discuss. It's not just the executive branch; it is the legislative branch as well. And Mr. Turner heads that delegation.

I'd like to now introduce our very distinguished witnesses, beginning first with Daniel Serwer, who's a Senior Fellow at the Center for Transatlantic Relations and Professor at the Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies. In the 1990s Dr. Serwer served in the State Department as U.S. special envoy and coordinator for the Bosnian Federation. In the late 1990s and until recently he also served at the U.S. Institute for Peace, encouraging the U.S. Government to promote democracy in Serbia rather than rely on Slobodan Milošević to keep his word as a Dayton signatory.

The Helsinki Commission is pleased to have him return at a hearing as a hearing witness, and especially today for his willingness to participate through Skype from Belgrade at a late hour and after a very long flight. I would note parenthetically that in 1999 I authored a bill that passed the House called the Serbia Democracy Act. And one of the men who really helped us craft that legislation was Dr. Serwer. And I want to thank him for that. It unfortunately failed in the Senate. It was blocked from even coming to a vote, but it nevertheless articulated what the House really believed ought to happen in Serbia. And he helped us write it.

Our second witness is Nida Gelazis, a Senior Associate of the European Studies Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, where she directs the Working Group on the Western Balkans. From 1994 to 1996 she served as managing editor of the journal, "The East European Constitution Review," and in '09 coedited "Cities after the Fall of Communism: Reshaping Cultural Landscapes and the European Identity." Ms. Gelazis has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Chicago and a master's in comparative European international law from the European University Institute in Florence, Italy.

Our third witness is Ivan Vejvoda, a Vice President at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. He previously served as executive director of the German Marshall Fund's Balkan Trust for Democracy, dedicated to strengthening democratic institutions in southeastern Europe. Prior to joining the GMF staff, Mr. Vejvoda

was a Senior Adviser on Foreign Policy and European integration to Serbian Prime Minister Djindjic, who was assassinated in 2003, and his successor Zoran Zivkovic. In the 1990s he was among the ranks of the democratic opposition to Milošević. He holds a diploma from the Institute of Political Studies in Paris.

Dr. Serwer, if you could begin your testimony.

**DANIEL SERWER, SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR
TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS**

Dr. SERWER. Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you on a subject close to both my heart and brain: NATO and the western Balkans. NATO entered the Balkans in 1993 with a no-fly zone over Bosnia. It was an important moment. Until then, Yugoslavia had been considered outside the NATO area, a concept that lost relevance as the alliance moved from thinking of itself as a defensive pact against the Soviet Union to an alliance protecting European and American security from risks anywhere in the world.

Two decades later, the Western Balkans are entering NATO. Slovenia, Croatia and Albania have already made the strategic choice of aligning their defense efforts with the alliance. They also contributed to alliance efforts in Afghanistan and Kosovo, taking on burdens at least proportional to their size and economic weight. They enable us to devote American personnel to other priority missions, both NATO and non-NATO. Slovenia, Croatia and Albania have also benefited from their efforts to reform their security services, professionalize them and reorganize them to meet NATO standards. These are countries that made a profound commitment to democratic norms, even if they still sometimes struggle to meet them.

Five more countries of the Western Balkans remain outside NATO today. It is time to allow two of them to begin to enter—Macedonia and Montenegro. Macedonia has done yeomen's work completing its Membership Action Plan. Just 10 years ago, ethnic war racked the country. The conflict ended with an agreement to reform its state institutions, including the security services. The Macedonians took advantage of the opportunity to professionalize their security services to meet NATO standards.

I spoke Friday with Brigadier General William Roy, whose Vermont National Guard Brigade deployed for 6 months in 2010 to Afghanistan, with Macedonian troops integrated. He reports in an email: "By all accounts they perform their mission to the desired standard. They were involved in a number of tactical engagements with enemy forces while integrated with my companies. Most impressive has been the development of their NCO corps—their non-commissioned officer corps—a key to having a well-trained and disciplined force."

While I might wish that Skopje would spend less money on tributes to Alexander the Great, the only thing keeping Macedonia from NATO membership today is the dispute with Greece over the country's name, which prevented it from receiving an invitation at the Bucharest summit in 2008. Since then, the International Court of Justice has found that Greece violated its interim accord with

the government in Skopje when it blocked membership at Bucharest.

May is the time to correct this injustice. Chicago is the place. The NATO summit should issue an invitation for membership to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or to Macedonia by whatever name Skopje and Athens may agree upon before then. The United States should make it clear to Greece that repeating the mistake of Bucharest is not acceptable, as the ICJ has already said.

Mr. Chairman, with the door open to NATO at Chicago, I would also urge that Montenegro be given a clear signal that it, too, will get an invitation once it completes its Membership Action Plan. We should not close the door to a country that has been willing to join us in Afghanistan and contributes to U.N. operations in Somalia and Liberia.

Three more Western countries would still remain, then, outside NATO: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. None are ready for an invitation. Bosnia has failed to meet the international community requirement that it resolve defense property issues. It should get that done before Chicago, so it can embark on the membership process.

Kosovo, which will want to join NATO as quickly as possible, is just beginning to think about the nature and scope of its future security forces. The United States should help Kosovo establish forces that can meet its legitimate security interests within the NATO context, enabling the eventual withdrawal of NATO's Kosovo force.

Serbia has not indicated it wishes to join NATO due to popular distaste for an alliance that bombed the country in 1999 and played a crucial role in removing Kosovo from Milošević-regime oppression. Nevertheless, Serbia has participated in Partnership for Peace and has deployed troops to Afghanistan. The NATO door should stay open. The choice of joining or not should be Belgrade's. The odds of Belgrade joining NATO would be significantly increased if Macedonia, and especially Montenegro, would make clear progress toward membership in Chicago. NATO members would then eventually surround Serbia, making the decision to join geographically and strategically compelling.

With a decision to join NATO, Belgrade would have to make other difficult decisions about both Bosnia and Kosovo. Good neighborly relations are a prerequisite for NATO, as they are for the E.U. But E.U. membership is still far off. Serbia could, if it wanted, join NATO much faster, but it will need to demonstrate unequivocally respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all its neighbors.

Mr. Chairman, NATO membership is not a panacea. I do not believe allowing Bosnia early entry, as some advocate, would be wise. But real progress on membership for Macedonia and Montenegro at Chicago would impart a sense of momentum to the Western Balkans that is lacking today. With Europe immersed in a financial crisis, only Croatia can hope for E.U. membership within the next few years. The others will have to wait until Europe has its financial house in order.

Many current members have found NATO provides relief from the historic baggage of past wars, ethnic conflicts and mass atroc-

ities. It is a good idea to extend an invitation to Macedonia at Chicago and make welcoming noises to Montenegro. Joining an alliance to make the world safer for democratic societies is a noble cause. The door should remain open for others to enter when they are ready and willing. NATO expansion into the Balkans serves U.S. interests, not only in that region but wherever NATO or U.S. forces deploy in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so very much, Dr. Serwer.

We've been joined by Robert Aderholt, a member of the Commission. Any opening comments, Robert?

Mr. ADERHOLT. No. Thank you Mr. Chairman. It's good to be here, and I look forward to hearing the testimonies this afternoon.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Aderholt.

We've also been joined by Eliot Engel, who is a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and a man who is tenacious on issues relative to Kosovo and human rights there. I'd like to yield any time he would like to take.

**HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL (D-17) A MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

Mr. ENGEL. Well, thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me personally thank you for the wonderful work that you have always done for so many years. I've been in Congress now for 23 years. You came before me, and even when I came your name was out there as someone who always stood up for what he believed was right. And I think we've got to have more people who do that. So thank you for your work, and thank you for the opportunity to sit on the dais here at today's very important hearing. I'm not a member of the Commission, but I do appreciate the welcome the Commission has shown me, you in particular, through the years.

As you know, and you mentioned it Mr. Chairman, I've long taken an interest in the Western Balkans. I have an interest in expanding NATO into the Western Balkans and this has been a passion of mine ever since the former Yugoslavia broke up. In 2003, the House passed my resolution commending the U.S.-Adriatic Charter, which set the stage for Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia to join NATO. As we all know today, there's still work to do, as several countries remain outside of NATO.

Until Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosova, and even Serbia enter NATO as their fellow Balkan countries already have, our job is not done, although I have taken a particular interest in Kosova and am anxious for Serbia or other countries not to block Kosova from entering the European Union, as they are doing in the United Nations. I think that's counterproductive. All of the Balkan countries need to enter all of the Euro-Atlantic structures, not only NATO but the E.U. as well. And again, I have no objection to Serbia going into the E.U., as long as Kosova goes into the E.U. at the same time so Serbia cannot block Kosova.

I would just briefly like to talk about one key issue facing Kosova, and that's the future of KFOR, the NATO Kosova Force. I'm a strong supporter of KFOR's continued presence in Kosova. I reject any talk of KFOR leaving. And until we're sure that the se-

curity situation is resolved in Kosova, I believe that we should not remove additional forces. I believe that Camp Bondsteel should stay open and that we should not pull back.

I realize there's been a slow drawdown in national contingents in Kosova, but I think the recent blockades and other events in northern Kosova have shown the world that now is not the time for countries to remove additional forces from Kosova. In fact, I believe that as our country removes forces from Iraq and the rest of Europe, this is a very good time to shift by a moderate amount—a few battalions or so—to the U.S. contingent in Kosova.

We've got a good base at Camp Bondsteel—I was just there 2 months ago—with ample space for our troops. And the Kosovars want us to stay. So I think the choice is simple. And I want to just state very simply, we're not talking thousands and thousands of troops, just over one thousand to guarantee the peace and to ensure that our worthy investment in Kosovo is not in vain. I can hardly think of a place in the world which is more pro-U.S. than in Kosova. So it would be a pity if, just to save a few dollars, we're not present when this region needs us the most.

So I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back, and I'm interested obviously in hearing what the distinguished witnesses have to say.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so much, Mr. Engel. I'd like to now yield to our second witness, Ms. Gelazis. The floor is yours.

NIDA GELAZIS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE, EUROPEAN STUDIES PROGRAM, WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS

Ms. GELAZIS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, members of the Helsinki Commission. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on NATO and the Western Balkans. I'll base my testimony on some of the conclusions from Working Group meetings organized at the Wilson Center which aimed at finding common ground on European and American perspectives on the region's Euro-Atlantic integration.

These discussions were based on three premises: first, that peace and stability in the Western Balkans can only be achieved by shifting domestic politics away from ethnonationalist ambitions and toward building open and democratic institutions that serve the interests of all citizens and will allow the country to actively participate in European institutions; second, the process of becoming a member of European Union and NATO is itself transformative, and that transformation can end abruptly once a country achieves membership; third, given the region's legacy of conflict, it will be more difficult for the Western Balkans to meet the accession criteria for NATO and the E.U. than it was during previous enlargements.

Working from these premises, it's important to recognize that the European Union's enlargement process has a much stronger transformative power than does that of NATO enlargement. NATO's norms focus squarely on military issues, which are relatively easier to implement, given the natural hierarchy within defense institutions. Therefore, though NATO requires that all candidates are democracies, it relies on outside standards and actors to measure and

evaluate democratic consolidation. As in previous enlargements, ensuring that state institutions are effective and democratic is driven by the E.U.

Therefore, NATO enlargement is not a replacement for E.U. enlargement. It is essential, rather, that the United States continue to actively support not only NATO but also E.U. enlargement, as well as the countries in the Western Balkans, to help them achieve the goal of Euro-Atlantic integration.

The distinction between the transformative impact of E.U. and NATO is made clear by the difference between the two countries that became NATO members in 2009: Croatia and Albania. Both countries met the criteria for NATO accession, and today they have active troops participating in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. But where the Croatian Government continued to adopt political and economic reforms that were necessary for E.U. accession, Albania's progress was stalled by a political impasse, allegations of government corruption and election irregularities. The transformation in the former meant that Croatia was invited to join the E.U. last year, while the council postponed offering Albania candidate status.

It's important to keep this limited capacity in mind as we move forward. NATO membership may soon be granted to several countries that have met, or are working to meet, the criteria. But we should be aware that those reforms are limited, compared to the transformation that the E.U. requires. Moreover, once countries become members, the opportunity to resolve internal and external problems diminishes substantially.

Indeed, NATO and the E.U. have run into the same problems in many of the countries in the region. And since NATO has fewer tools at its disposal, the E.U. is seen as the leader in transforming the region, especially when it comes to bilateral issues. The events of the last few months highlight the problems facing the international community.

In Kosovo, NATO returned to its former role as the first responder after barricades were erected in the north. Although NATO had planned to further reduce its troops in Kosovo by the end of 2011, this reduction was postponed due to the violence that broke out. The violent reaction to protests by Kosovar police that took place last weekend does not inspire confidence that local police will be able to take over from NATO anytime soon. Meanwhile, the E.U.-led delegations between Pristina and Belgrade have been slow but relatively fruitful, especially since the E.U. has the power to bring Serbia to the table with the carrot of candidate status.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, it took 14 months to form a government, which stalled the progress toward meeting the final requirement for activating the Membership Action Plan. During this period, NATO officers could do little aside from conducting an audit of the defense property. It remains to be seen how long it will take for the entities to muster the political will to transfer state and defense property to the government. Even if this is done relatively quickly, the country's constitution, as well as the continued presence of the Office of the High Representative, challenges democratic credentials. NATO enlargement, therefore, cannot replace

E.U. enlargement, but both must be elements of a larger, coordinated policy between the American and European partners.

Another observation of the working group is that, because integration into European institutions is an elite-driven process, it is left to politicians in the region to explain the accession process to their constituents. In some cases, politicians have created narratives in which conditionality is seen as blackmail, or that meeting conditions undermines national interests.

This is most notably the case in Macedonia, where Greece is blamed for the lack of progress in both E.U. and NATO accession. The fact that the International Court of Justice recently ruled in Macedonia's favor would seem to be further evidence to support the claim. However, the European Commission's recent progress report identifies a series of worrisome political trends in the country, which require us to question whether the country is moving in the direction of building a consolidated democracy. Albania's admission to NATO might serve as an example here.

If the United States wants to see effective democratic institutions and an effective cooperation between ethnic groups in Macedonia, there may be good reason to wait for an agreement with Greece, since an agreement would offer evidence that Macedonia's leaders have put their undemocratic, ethnonationalist aims behind them. At the same time, the United States ought to put more pressure on Greece to participate in finding a workable solution.

In Serbia, the process of European integration is broadly seen as trading national interests for economic development. The public is, understandably, even less sympathetic toward NATO. It is therefore important for the United States and its partners to engage with civil society organizations in Serbia and throughout the region, as a way to offer a different narrative about the E.U. and NATO accession processes, and in order to support local NGOs that are making demands on their governments which are in line with E.U. and NATO conditions. Direct communication with civil society will help to maintain support for reforms, even with a protracted accession process.

Direct engagement with the public will also diminish another problem that was identified by the working group: that the primacy of the E.U. and NATO accession policy is seen as evidence that America is pulling out from the region. The United States, therefore, should be more visible in public debates about Euro-Atlantic integration. We ought to show that the E.U. and NATO integration are linked, and that we are putting our weight behind this process. Our involvement with civil society should aim at increasing the authenticity of international conditions, showing that the conditions are legitimate and necessary, and that they do not compete with national interests.

With the cooperation of our partners in Europe, we can work on developing policies similar to the successful visa liberalization strategy, which combined conditions with clear and immediate rewards. We might consider what more could be done through the Adriatic Charter or the National Guard State Partnership Program to create additional engagement between the United States and the countries of the region. Adding additional programs will reinforce

the message that the transformative process of the integration is the prize, not just membership. Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. Vejvoda.

IVAN VEJVODA, VICE PRESIDENT, GERMAN MARSHALL FUND

Mr. VEJVODA. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your leadership of this Commission, keeping the Balkans on the agenda of the Commission and on the international agenda. Given the burning issues elsewhere in the world, and given the progressive stabilization and reinforcement of peace in the region, it is easy to forget that we have not come to harbor yet. And thus efforts by both the United States and the European Union are required to help this region achieve its ultimate goal of full peace and stability in a Europe whole, free, and at peace and democratic. So it is most timely that, with the approaching NATO summit in Chicago, you are addressing these issues.

Let me just for a moment go to the wider Balkans, if I can put it that way, and remind ourselves that the story of NATO begins with the accession of Greece and Turkey in 1952. And then with a long gap of the cold war, the accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2004 has been very important—important in the sense that it has encircled positively the region that we’re talking about, the Western Balkans. And I call this region the “inner courtyard” of both the European Union and NATO. And that in itself, I think, has been a stabilizing factor.

The fact that Albania and Croatia have joined recently at the Strasbourg-Kehl summit in 2009 has been very significant for this final part of integration. I would like to remind us that Croatia, in 4 days time, is voting in a referendum on its accession to the European Union. This will be an extremely important signal to all the countries of this region that the merit-based approach on democratic and market reforms, if accomplished, is rewarded by joining these institutions.

And that in itself is very significant for NATO enlargement, because there is a system of communicating vessels here. This is a tightly knit region that used to, for the most part, form the part of former Yugoslavia. There are strong bonds, irrespective of what happened in the ’90s, and there is an effect of the Joneses—what the Joneses do is also followed by the other neighbors.

And so Croatia, being the locomotive of this mini-train moving forward, has a pulling effect. And I would submit to you, Mr. Chairman, that the fact that Bosnia has managed to put a government together just a few weeks ago is the result, in fact, of this accession process moving forward, and of Serbia possibly getting candidacy for the European Union in March. And so it’s very important, as we discuss the individual countries, to look at how the region is progressing as a whole. And I will come back to that a little later.

I would also like to mention that it is important to look at the relations between the European Union and NATO itself. And I think much can be done to advocate a closing of the gap between these two organizations, even though there are contexts—the fact that Turkey does not recognize Cyprus is an impeding element in

the closer relations and the closer joint activities of these two paramount organizations.

But Euro-Atlantic integration also means the steady integration into other institutions that we mention less, and I would like to applaud the entry of Montenegro into the World Trade Organization in December. Serbia has not yet achieved that—Kosovo neither—and I think that we have to look at those other parts of that broader Euro-Atlantic framework, of which, of course, NATO and the E.U. are the spine.

I would like to mention, along with my colleagues, the importance of civil society in these activities. The fact that we have a number of think tanks and NGOs—not only the Atlantic councils or the Atlantic associations—that are endeavoring to pursue this effort has been important for helping these countries move forward. The diversity of relations that exist regionally between the NGOs I think has spurred on also the state military security and other institutional levels.

And in this regard, the Regional Cooperation Council based in Sarajevo has done—and particularly in the past 2 years—very much to bring these institutions together. Most notably, again, over the past 2 months, the intelligence chiefs of the militaries of the region have met. The defense ministers meet regularly within their cooperation process. And at NATO Brussels, the Southeast European countries have their organization, which in fact will be chaired by Serbia's head of delegation during the year 2012.

This is maybe the granular view, but I think it's important to consider how the movement, often slow and sometimes frustrating for those of us who are from the region, nonetheless advances. And thus if we look back to 2000—the year of the demise of the Milošević regime through a peaceful electoral change—and we look where we are today in January 2012, we see this progressive chart that we have witnessed over the years, in spite of the slides, ebbs and flows in some of these developments.

That is to say that the positive incitement—again, on a merit-based approach—to advance to these countries is extremely important. And thus I would concur with my esteemed colleagues that to pursue NATO's membership in NATO, possibly already at the Chicago summit, would be very important. The fact that Macedonia didn't become a member in 2009 was detrimental to the process of further stabilization of the region. It would have been a very strong signal not only to the country itself, but also to the rest of us who were in that region.

Montenegro also has made significant advances, and I would also project that now that Bosnia has a government—or will have it in a few weeks' time—it will also move to the resolution of the property issue that has been a major obstacle to the implementation of the Membership Action Plan. And thus, this progressive movement indicates the political willingness of the region to move forward.

Serbia, of course, is an outlier, as Dan Serwer said, because of the history of the conflict between NATO and Serbia, then called the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Nonetheless—even though this state of neutrality that was voted in by the Serbian Parliament in 2006 has said, for the moment, no to membership—on all other fronts there have been significant advance, especially with the indi-

vidual plan of Serbia moving forward, and of course of the full mission that is present there.

The relations—and in particular the situation in Kosovo—I think was a wake-up call in July. But I would say that all actors, including Priština and Belgrade and the international actors, have realized that we were all on a razor's edge during the past summer and into the early autumn. And everyone has taken a much more moderate position and followed the dialogue through, and the dialogue between the two will be pursued in the coming days. In fact, Robert Cooper, the E.U. facilitator, will be in the region in the coming days to move it to the next step, and hopefully the actors will find it in themselves to find a compromise on the particular issue of Kosovo's participation in regional meetings.

I would also mention that the role of women in security is an extremely important part of this broader NATO integration framework. And the U.N. Security Council 1325 has spurred a number of countries in the region to develop national action plans, which also contribute to the strengthening of regional cooperation.

I would just like to correct my colleague Dan Serwer; Serbia is not participating in Afghanistan in the ISAF mission. All other countries of the region are participating, although there was an offer under the Prime Minister, Mirko Cvetkovic, for that participation that never materialized.

I would like to end these brief remarks quoting a renowned social scientist, Albert Hirschman, who in a seminal book entitled "The Passions and the Interests", says that if we were to summarize, the region has been moving from ethnonationalist passion to interest without losing passion for Euro-Atlantic integration. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Vejvoda, thank you very much for your testimony. All three of you, thank you. Let me just begin the questioning first. Dr. Serwer mentioned that Macedonia has done yeoman's work and really should be invited to join NATO. I wonder if our two distinguished witnesses here in Washington agree with that.

Ms. GELAZIS. I think that it should definitely be invited, but I think that there is a very large hurdle with its relationship with Greece obviously and that I think after enlargement, the international community will lose some of its leverage over trying to bring about a workable solution. We should keep that in mind.

I personally would not block any country from joining NATO, and I think NATO enlargement is certainly a benefit to everyone. But I think that we should also consider what our abilities to effect change will be after enlargement is granted.

Mr. SMITH. OK.

Mr. VEJVODA. I would like to add that here we see the negative results of keeping a country from moving forward, even in spite of the merits of its reforms. I would like to remind you that Macedonia was given candidate status to the European Union in 2005, and that NATO in Bucharest agreed that Macedonia had met all the requirements. The fact that it did not move forward into negotiations for accession to the European Union, for example in 2006, or did not get membership, has unfortunately used certain populist politics that have not helped the democratic reform process.

And thus anything that can be done to encourage our Macedonian and Greek friends to find that difficult compromise, that difficult middle ground—and of course we all know how difficult symbolic and identity politics are; they're probably the deepest issues—and names in particular—what's in a name, one would say—but we see how detrimental that has been to the region. So I would encourage a decision to move Macedonia forward because it will help the—what is at heart to all of us, and that is to further stability and peace in the region.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Gelazis, you indicated—and you just did it again in your statement—that perhaps after enlargement, after being accepted, the process of reform slows or comes to a halt. On the economic front that has always been the case, at least when it regards human rights, in my opinion. Even when China was accepted into WTO and we granted MFN, not only did human rights or any progress toward human rights cease, they went into a very serious reversal. And the same thing happened most recently with Vietnam. When the bilateral agreement was agreed to, that very day there was a reversal, and Bloc 8406—which was patterned after Charter 77, the great human rights organization founded by Vaclav Havel and others—went into immediate reversal in Vietnam as soon as the economic benefit was gleaned.

But my question is, does that also hold true with the dynamic responsibilities that are inherent in joining a military organization, like NATO, where the military needs to increase its conformity, I would think, to doctrine and to command and control and all the other aspects that are required? Unlike in an economic situation and the human rights linkage, it would seem that the military component here, joining NATO, leads to more progress. And I'm wondering how our other colleagues or witnesses might feel about that.

And I would ask you if you could include in your answer, with Albania and Croatia having joined in 2009, did the rate of progress continue with them once they had achieved NATO membership?

Dan?

Dr. SERWER. I think the progress often slows. Nevertheless, I think that, as Ivan has suggested, to hold people artificially out of the alliance also causes retrograde political movements, which has certainly happened to some degree in Macedonia. But as I indicated, I don't think it's serious enough to continue to block them from NATO membership—in fact, quite to the contrary. I think getting them in now is really very important.

Croatia, as you know, is under pressure to do an enormous array of reforms as part of its E.U. membership process. So I don't think it has slowed much since membership in NATO. Albania is a very difficult political environment. I've never quite understood what makes it quite as difficult as it is, as it doesn't have the kind of ethnic differences that have made for problems in the other Balkan countries. But it is a fact that Albania has struggled to meet democratic norms even after membership in NATO.

Mr. Chairman, I should apologize. I trust Ivan is correct, that Serbia did not deploy in Afghanistan. I'm not sure how that error got into my text, but I'm sorry for it. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Would you like to respond?

Mr. VEJVODA. Yeah, I'd like to add a few words on Albania. I think we must really acknowledge, in answering this question, that Albania had a much more difficult starting point than any other country in the post-Communist world. This was, to coin a phrase, a totally totalitarian country, under Enver Hoxha, for decades.

And simply the institutional basis from which they began was minus-a-hundred compared to all other countries. Former Yugoslavia was very much plugged into the West, had open borders, people working in Europe, constant contacts—academic, institutional—was a member of the IMF, World Bank, et cetera. And thus I think what we're seeing today is in fact part of that negative legacy of the starting point. And there have been Herculean efforts on the part of Albanian democrats to move forward, but simply without wanting to be deterministic or, you know, following Montesquieu-climate and geography, still I think one has to have strategic patience but also encourage Albanian colleagues and democrats to overcome the differences that have created obstacles and actually further developed institutional stability.

Croatia is simply in a different environment, and they have had to address difficult issues. And in fact, the E.U. is still monitoring them in this time up to the actual accession moment, which will be in July 2013, in particular on the issue of the judiciary.

Mr. SMITH. Part of the reason for the question is that things like MFN did not lead to the reforms that we expected, but can we expect that an early or at least a timely acceptance into NATO could actually accelerate those reforms, particularly militarily?

Ms. GELAZIS. I think it's important to look at the policy options before us not simply as a switch between whether or not we give or don't grant NATO accession. I think there are many policy options that are available to us if we think creatively about the associations that we already have with these countries, if we think creatively about the different international institutions that are active on the ground in countries like Macedonia and Albania, and we think of ways that we can work with our partners in Europe to build programs that are parallel on the track toward NATO accession. I think that gives us more leeway in terms of crafting a specific policy that's geared to the very unique issues that each of these countries confronts. So that's something I think we should keep in mind. Whether or not progress slows is, I think, dependent also on how we deal with these countries on a day-to-day basis and the relationships that we create for the long run.

Mr. SMITH. I have some additional questions, but I understand that Chairman Turner needs to leave, so I'd like to yield to him.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, thank you so much, and I want to again thank you for focusing on this issue and this area. The Balkans, as we look to both the written testimony and the great participation of the testimony that we have here, have a number of complex issues that require a very thoughtful approach. And in that I'd like to address part of that in my question.

You know, my concern as we look to what happened after the Dayton peace accords with this area and with Bosnia, I think as we look into the structure of the government in Bosnia, the tri-presidency, the constitution that's there, we're all thankful that they have now been able to form a government after the period—

I think you had indicated 14 months in your testimony—that had been where people were concerned as to if the parties were going to be able to come together. We have Croatia and Serbia and perhaps even Montenegro developing economically and looking elsewhere, with Bosnia at their backyard, but not really being a top priority for either Croatia, Serbia, or other neighbors for resolution.

My concern is that Bosnia-Herzegovina is getting neglected in its resolution. If we look to NATO as an incentive or the E.U. as an incentive, we still might be locked in sort of a stasis with Bosnia. I believe that you referenced in your testimony that the constitution was ungovernable. I believe that even beyond just using NATO as an incentive or a carrot or even a progressive to-do list to assess what the parties in the Balkans need to do to transition toward integration into NATO and Europe, that there needs to be some more active U.S. efforts to try to resolve what really are the collective disintegration of the Yugoslavia issues. I think each of the parties look almost to their neighbor and say, well, when Kosovo's resolved, we'll resolve the Republika Srpska; when Macedonia and its name is resolved, then, you know, perhaps we'll resolve the issue of what we're going to do with other areas of conflict or controversy.

So looking even beyond the issue of Chicago and recognizing that in all your testimony you say Bosnia is not ready to move, what do we need to do? How do we, the United States, need to be more active to ensure that NATO can be a realistic goal, ultimately, for Bosnia, recognizing from all of your testimony that it's clearly not there now?

I think we begin with Ivan.

Mr. VEJVODA. Thank you, Congressman Turner. To put it in a nutshell, I think Bosnia will move, but it will be the last and the slowest. And that's a positive statement. Again, within the former Yugoslavia, Bosnia has probably the most difficult legacy, and it is different than all the other former republics of Yugoslavia in that it was a kind of mini triune country where Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks have, over the decades, under the previous empires, had a complex arrangement of power shareholding and consociationalism. And Dayton and the Dayton constitution of Bosnia was not plucked out of the air. It is based on that very complex history. And of course, that is what makes it very difficult to govern.

But I think that the example that I mention of the government suddenly being formed when nobody really expected it after more than 14 months, or the other example that Bosnia was able to follow the road map to visa-free liberalization after Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia got it more than 2 years ago, suddenly Bosnia realized that it was falling behind, and the politicians had no qualms about kicking their administrations into gear to do what those previous countries had done. This is not such a small example of this pulling effect that the region has on Bosnia. I think it's very important that Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro as neighbors of Bosnia and Herzegovina, irrespective what one may think, but in general are trying to have a constructive approach in that they all repeat the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Could they do more? Yes, of course they could.

And I think with the new government in Zagreb that has just been inducted, and the good relations that they have with Serbia, I think more will be done after we come out of the Serbia, elections.

But the European Union definitely, as the slow-moving juggernaut, should also be doing more with the support of the United States. And I think that there's more than meets the eye. Let me say just one more thing. The trade and the mutual dependency on trade of each of these countries is much bigger than they thought. And these countries, and Bosnia in particular, realized this as the global economic crisis came on. They are completely dependent, and most of the intraregional trade actually goes between the three of them. So without each other, they could not economically survive, even in these adverse circumstances.

Ms. GELAZIS. I agree with Ivan, that we should look to the successful examples in Bosnia for a clue to how to unlock the seemingly impossible political deadlock there. And visa liberalization and in forming the government recently, we see that the politicians were motivated by totally rational motivators. In order to have a budget for this year, they needed to form a government before December 31st. So, you know, people, politicians in the region and especially in Bosnia respond to the incentives that are put before them. So we should think about those incentives as we continue to target specific sectors for our reforms there.

Even though we want to see progress in the region, we should realize that NGOs on the ground, grassroots movements that are fully in support of E.U. and NATO enlargement, have been using NATO and E.U. criteria to hold their representatives to account. So if the international community gives them a free pass, we're undermining the work that is being done to create democracy from the grass roots, and we should keep in that in mind that it's a tradeoff when we give progress to a country without having them actually fulfilled the criteria. We should feel a greater responsibility to the people on the ground in the NGO community, in the grassroots political development, and make sure that those interests are being met too, and not just in the interests of the political elite.

Dr. SERWER. Might I add?

Mr. TURNER. Yes, please do.

Dr. SERWER. I think the heart of the matter in Bosnia is constitutional reform. And I don't think there will be constitutional reform unless the European Union insists on it. The Americans have conducted initiative after initiative in this area, and frankly, we failed. But the E.U. has the leverage to succeed, and we should be working with them to make sure that they use that leverage.

I would add that I think that Serbia in particular could do more to be helpful inside of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The fact of the matter is that Mr. Dodik is part of the problem inside Bosnia. He's taken a very nationalist tack in which he is really trying to dismantle the state institutions as much as he is permitted to do. It really is up to Belgrade to tell him that he has gone too far.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, thank you again for holding this very important hearing.

Mr. SMITH. I thank you, Chairman Turner. Mr. Aderholt?

Mr. ADERHOLT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to followup on Chairman Smith's question a little bit earlier about Albania and

Croatia and their joining NATO. And as a followup question, has NATO membership in Albania and Croatia influenced their subsequent political development?

Ms. GELAZIS. I think that it was seen as evidence that the international community does want to embrace the Western Balkans, that the idea that the Western Balkans will be part of Europe and take institutions is not just a dream, not just sort of on paper but that it really will happen. I think it was an important signal not only to the Croats and the Albanians but also for the people of the rest of the region, that this sort of merit-based progress is open to all of them. And in that sense, there—that certainly helped. I think because of the historical legacy in Albania, progress was a bit more slow. And in Croatia, they were able to muster support or to make sure that that created a momentum for adopting E.U. reforms as well.

But there is certainly a positive impact that simply being a member can make, but because there aren't democratic processes that are involved with being in NATO, there is a sort of limited impact that actually being a NATO member can make on democratic reforms on a day-to-day basis. But the spirit of it, the spirit of openness, the spirit of membership, it is certainly an important factor.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Just as a followup, can Croatia and Albania have a role in moving other countries forward?

Ms. GELAZIS. They should. I think that through the Adriatic Charter, there is an opportunity to help. I think Croatia has already taken a role in sharing documents with the E.U. and NATO enlargement, helping its neighbors figure out the complex legal structures. And they ought to be encouraged, especially since they are in to help show the path to their neighbors. This sort of spirit of cooperation was certainly alive with the Vilnius group in previous enlargements to NATO, where part of the process of becoming a member state of NATO was showing that in this region, countries were able to cooperate with each other. And so it wouldn't be a burden, they wouldn't just be adding new members that couldn't or didn't know how to cooperate. So that sort of process in the western Balkans would be very welcome, and I think there are current institutions that could be used more readily to achieve those goals.

Mr. VEJVODA. You know, I would concur with that opinion. Definitely it was a very positive signal to the whole region. Again, repeating what I said at the beginning, the European and NATO enlargement truly go hand-in-hand, and NATO accession—again, with the exception of Serbia—is seen as a very significant step in the direction of full completion of democratic reforms.

I would add also that having the militaries and their intelligence services at the table of NATO is a very important stabilizing element not only because it reinforces the mechanisms of democratic control of the military and of the intelligence and security services, but also because it imbues the hearts and minds of those officers who are participating with the ways in which a democratic political military organization such as NATO goes about its business so that there's an osmosis between the international or rather NATO-level and the domestic level. And I think this in itself is a stabilizing element for the domestic political arena. In Croatia, both its previous

and its recent current government have, as Nida has mentioned, been very vocal in saying that they will support all the integration processes of those countries south of them who have not yet joined these institutions.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Dr. Serwer. Go ahead.

Dr. SERWER. I would just add this, that none of the problems with the recent members of NATO have to do with the involvement of the military in politics of being outside civilian control. It is very important to recognize that there is a whole category of problems that might have been imagined to exist, which do not exist for these new NATO members. And I think that's part of the osmosis process that Ivan referred to, that these guys are all learning what the role of the military is in the democratic society, and they are conforming to that norm. And I think that's a very, very important achievement.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Let me just follow up, if I could, with just one more question. What impact should the 2011 decision of the International Court of Justice have on U.S. policy regarding Macedonia's NATO bid?

Mr. VEJVODA. Well, very briefly because we've, I think, discussed this: I think it's a very significant decision by this highest judicial institution of the United Nations. And also the convincing vote of the judges, 15 to 1, I think speaks to the seriousness of the way in which they adjudicated this case. Simply, Greece was in breach of the agreement from the early 1990s and has shown that it has been, in political terms, detrimental to what I think we're all seeking here, namely, the further stability and peace of this region that went through a conflict in the 1990s. And thus, any further delay—and this is for the policy of the United States and the European Union—any further delay would be additionally detrimental and could be negative to the kind of political dynamics that we have in the region and in the particular countries at hand.

Of course, one recognizes the difficulties that Greece has. It is on the front pages of all the international media, and I think we can sympathize with the plight of the Greek people. But nonetheless, leadership is about making difficult decisions, and this one has been around for close to 20 years. And I don't think that in what is, in effect, without disrespecting microregion—and we are all microcountries—Macedonia, 2 million Serbia the biggest in the Western Balkans, 7½ million—that we need to look at the bigger picture. And how does one survive in the world, even at the best of stages, but now especially when there is a lack of foreign direct investments on which all of these countries depend to have their economies produce jobs. The levels of unemployment are very high throughout the region. And anything that could better the image—and, in this case, this would be a very significant signal to investors, let alone policymakers and governments—would be very positive. And thus, hopefully, a sign could be given that would hearten Macedonia and the region to move forward toward membership.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Any other comments?

Ms. GELAZIS. I think that the initial reaction to the ICJ decision from NATO was that—I don't remember exactly the quote—this doesn't mean that it would be automatic, Macedonia wouldn't automatically be granted accession to NATO. I think there have been

many comments from meetings that I participated in that say that—or people have said that many European countries and the E.U. Commission have sort been hiding behind Greece's blocking the progress of Macedonia for and—for other reasons, that there are concerns about the democratic consolidation in Macedonia. There are concerns about the handling of the ethnic minorities and vulnerable persons that—and I think with the ICJ decision, we may see some of these other concerns coming out as well. This is a good thing because then we can address those concerns head-on.

We can end this idea that there is simply Greece as the only factor blocking Macedonia. I think there are other things that the NGO community in Macedonia is aware of, that human rights organizations have been tracking, that democracy promotion organizations have been looking at that have to do with freedom of the media, that have to do with judiciary, that have to do with the corruption. And I think these are issues that need to be addressed. I think that, for the U.S. Government, this is an—the ICJ decision is an invitation to—for us to engage even more strongly with Greece to work on a solution, to make sure that this isn't seen as the only—you know, the only issue that's hampering progress for Macedonia.

Dr. SERWER. Mr. Chairman, let me be blunt. If there's no change at all as a result of the ICJ decision, you're going to see bad things happening in Macedonia. It's a country in which both ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians want to see progress toward NATO, for which they have both taken political risks. And they are both going to turn inward to their own ethnic constituencies and toward more ethnic politics if nothing happens in Chicago. It would be a big mistake, it seems to me. We've already seen the negative impact of what happened at Bucharest. We shouldn't repeat the same mistake in Chicago. The United States has a strong role to play here in urging Athens and Skopje either to come to a solution of the name before Chicago, or agree to proceed with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as the name of the country for NATO purposes. Thank you.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Engel?

Mr. ENGEL. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank all three witnesses, for excellent testimony, and I virtually agree with everything they've said. And it's very, very important that we focus on this region.

In my opening statement, I mentioned KFOR, the NATO Kosova force, and I said that I am opposed to the further reduction of troops because there have been provocations and some violence in the northern part of Kosova. And I even think, again, that as our country removes forces from Iraq and the rest of Europe, this would be a good time for the United States to shift to—by a moderate amount, a few battalions—to the U.S. contingent in Kosova.

The NATO peacekeeping mission, the KFOR, has had to respond to provocations in violence in north Mitrovica, in the northern part of Kosova. I'm wondering if our witnesses could assess KFOR's response. I happen to believe that we cannot allow these things to fester and keep kicking the can down the road because violence on both sides is just festering, and until we handle the problem, I just

think we run the risk of more violence. I strongly believe in the territorial integrity of Kosova. I know there are some in Belgrade that would like to partition Kosova and have the north be part of Belgrade, of Serbia. But I don't think that that's something you can do or should be doing in the Balkans. And I think that we need to very forcefully defend the territory of Kosova and not allow these Serbian parallel institutions or other such things to happen, or we're going to continue, I fear, to see more violence as we did this past weekend. So I'm wondering if our panelists could tell us how they would assess KFOR's response so far with the difficulties in the north of Kosova.

Dr. SERWER. I think it's quite clear, Mr. Engel, that KFOR is close if not beyond the limits of its capabilities in handling this situation in the north right now. It appears that the situation south of the Ibar, as well, was not well-handled over the weekend by the Kosovo police service. There are now investigations that will be launched of the excessive use of force in that situation. People use excessive force when they're not well-trained and when they're not well-equipped and when they're not—when they don't have adequate capability.

We are at the very limits of what KFOR can be reasonably expected to do. It should not be drawn down any further. It needs to stay, if not be strengthened a bit. And we need to work very hard with the European Union—this is I know what our diplomats are doing—to resolve the question of the north. I believe it can be resolved within the context of the Ahtisaari Plan, with any further clarifications of the Ahtisaari Plan that are needed codified into new implementation agreements. The diplomatic effort has to be a strong and vigorous one. I know that the State Department and European Union agree with that. But until it's over, we have to keep KFOR at least at its present strength. Thanks.

Ms. GELAZIS. In my testimony, I displayed a bit of disappointment that KFOR wasn't needed, and that the drawdown for KFOR was halted because of the violence that we experienced—that we witnessed in the last few months. I'm disappointed and I think a lot of European member states of NATO and the E.U. are disappointed as well because it seems to indicate a tradeoff. If we have KFOR there, there's a tradeoff with our perception of the country's readiness to participate or to build institutions that can deal with conflict in a nonviolent way. If the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo were going better—if it were more inclusive or if there were judicial institutions on the ground that could handle these differences, we wouldn't need a military presence.

And I think that's the disappointment that I feel. It's too bad that we still need a KFOR there. But hopefully, with continued KFOR troops, with continued engagement with both Serbia and with Kosovo, we can see a day, you know, not too far in the future when conflicts between ethnic groups can be resolved in other institutions.

Mr. VEJVODA. Yeah, I can add that I think maintaining the level of KFOR presence at the current number is—I think, is desirable. I think that the expected drawdown from 5,000 to 2,000 would have been possible had we not had the unwanted events that occurred in July. And I would say, again, looking at the longer term,

from 2000 onwards, that we have, in fact, progressed and the—if I can put it in European historical terms, the fact that Pristina and Belgrade have “sat down at a table,” if I can say so in quotations marks, only 3 years after the declaration of independence is great European speed, when you compare it to Northern Ireland or other places where it took 9 years after the Good Friday Agreement for a provisional government to be formed. And if you remember well, Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness didn’t even shake hands after 9 years.

So I think that the Albanians and Serbs are doing quite well here, in these European terms. And I think what we need to do and what the European Union is doing, with the backing of the United States, is to facilitate that dialogue and to try and move to the margins those who are impatient, on either side, to see something that is undesirable. So I would say that the dialogue is extremely important, and that KFOR needs to be there to secure and see that this is moved forward. KFOR has played an incredibly important role to remind us of the unfortunate March 2004 events, where it defended the Serbs against attempts to expel them. It’s important in protecting the monasteries there.

But also, I would say, the fact that, in past 6 months, President Tadic has clearly indicated that partition is not a solution, that he and the Serbian Government understand this and that they are seeking a solution within what are the recognized boundaries of Kosovo, even though Serbia clearly does not recognize the independence of Kosovo, are heartening signals. His plan of four elements of such a solution that was positively remarked on by the British government just recently—the fact that the President Tadic has also talked to other leaders, again, is a sign of the political will, I would say, of both sides.

And the fact that we have avoided major violence, not to say that there hasn’t been violence, but that something that could have actually turned into something much bigger is, again, a demonstration of restraint of both sides and of KFOR itself and of EULEX—and positive because I think there’s been a realization that all the good work that has brought us to this point, after all these years, could have rolled back in 1 day. And I think that awareness, given the European context, given the fact—and I would like to remind us that NATO in Bosnia, that came in with thousands of troops, and in Kosovo, KFOR, compared to in Iraq or in Afghanistan, has suffered next to no. And I would say, this mere fact of the positive acceptance of an interposition force that was asked for in Bosnia or E.U. for now in Bosnia or KFOR is an indication that these people and these societies want to move forward. So KFOR, I think, is an integral element of that facilitation to move forward.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, thank you. I want to add that I think the sooner that the powers that be in Belgrade understand that partition is not a possibility, the sooner we’ll have peace. Ultimately, if all countries are in the E.U., borders are not that significant. And I hope that Mr. Tadic—you know, many of us had high hopes for him when he first came in, and we’ve been disappointed that he hasn’t—I realize it’s a difficult position, but that—I think that the, in my estimation, the Serbian politicians ought to be talking truth to their people. They do them a disservice by fudging the issue of

Kosovo. I think Kosova's here to stay. Many countries are recognizing them.

And in fact, I just wanted to also mentioned that I helped to secure the release of James Berisha, who has been flying around in a plane to different countries to get them to recognize Kosova. He was held in prison in Eritrea, and we've just gotten his release. So I just hope that can be done.

I wanted to ask a Macedonia question, because I wanted to ask our panelists to assess the degree to which the Ohrid Agreement, which ended the 2001 conflict in Macedonia, is being implemented. In your opinion, have ethnic Albanians been integrated adequately into the government, military, and police forces? Does this also benefit the integration of the Roma and other minorities or make their situation more challenging? Are ethnic divisions—Ms. Gelazis, you referred to that—a reason to worry about Macedonia's future development? Do we think a Macedonian accession to NATO might help some progress in this regard?

Ms. GELAZIS. I'd like to answer by tying this together with the visa liberalization reform that the E.U. instituted. In a recent report, the commission noted that there were some irregularities in the visas that were given to—or the use of the visas in—from people coming from Macedonia and from Serbia. And it was decided by the commission that the proper response would be to use this opportunity to make sure that vulnerable people in those countries are adequately protected, that they are integrated into their societies. So that indicates, to me, that there is—they are not quite meeting the standard that the E.U. would like them to have, that people who are in vulnerable groups in that region—in Macedonia feel compelled to seek redress from outside of the country. And I think that's a problem.

The European Union and the NATO countries have had a lot of experience with that. And I think none of the European countries that are in the E.U. or NATO have completely homogeneous populations. That's the place to look for answers. That's the place to look for solutions that can accommodate minorities living in Macedonia. And I think that through the integration process, the Belgrade Agreement will be implemented over time. But I think we can't ignore some problems that are coming up.

Mr. VEJVODA. I think, as someone mentioned earlier, the very difficult decisions of the leaderships of the two communities in Macedonia—ethnic Macedonians and Albanians—after the 2001 conflict were extremely important as a signaling to a willingness to not only continue to live together, but to integrate more firmly—obviously easier said than done. And over the years I think there's been a significant accomplishment, especially due to the fact that coalition governments since then have always had parties of both the majority and the minority ethnic group, and that places in the administration have been fulfilled by ethnic Albanians. Surely more could have been done but, again, this is a process and one needs to give time so this is fully accomplished. Again, here the fact that Macedonia didn't begin negotiations with the European Union, didn't get membership, hasn't been helpful to the implementation of that agreement.

On the Roma, I think it's a much broader issue. The Roma are probably the most down-trodden minority throughout Europe. This is also the case in countries who are members of the European Union further north, whether we're talking about the Czech Republic, Slovakia—I mean Serbia, all of these countries have Roma minorities where much needs to be done. Obviously in dire economic straits, they are the ones who then suffer most because there are the least number of possibilities for a variety of social programs and inclusion.

But again, I think each of these countries, including Macedonia, is not only aware but realizes that the European Union and the United States are looking very carefully at exactly the treatment of that minority which is suffering the most. And that's why it's important that we always remember and remind ourselves, as you did, Congressman Engle, of the Roma.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Serwer?

Dr. SERWER. Mr. Chairman, I was in Macedonia last summer, and I found an odd situation with respect to the Ohrid Agreement. I don't think it would be correct to say that it has been implemented in every one of its details. There are shortcomings. And those shortcomings affect the Albanian community a little bit more obviously than the Macedonian community. Nevertheless, the Albanian community has enormous enthusiasm for the Ohrid Agreement, and the Macedonian community has significantly less enthusiasm for it. They see it as taking something away from them.

That kind of negative nationalist reaction would be greatly amplified if Macedonia fails to make real progress toward NATO this year. The Macedonians will feel a profound sense of disappointment and we've seen in the past how they react to that. And then the ethnic Albanians react to the profound sense of disappointment of the Macedonians by augmenting their ethnic nationalism. We could head down a very negative spiral here.

The Ohrid Agreement has been a terrific step forward for Macedonia. It's not one hundred percent implemented, but it points in the right direction, and that's a direction we should keep Macedonia moving in.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I have one last question, and it involves Albania. And I thought Mr. Vejvoda hit the nail on the head when he said that Albania had the longest way to go given their history of 50 years of oppression under the Hoxha regime. I was a big supporter of Albania being in NATO. And I'm wondering if our panelists can comment on—do you think that Albania's being in NATO—their NATO membership helped limit the political difficulties that we saw there?

Mr. VEJVODA. Absolutely. I think Dan Serwer mentioned that earlier, that we sometimes fail to do—ask the “if” question. What if Albania had not been a member of NATO? And I agree with him that probably we would have seen more adverse dynamics politically in Albania.

The fact that it came within the NATO framework was extremely important to limit undesirable political developments. And the fact that the military of Albania is part of NATO and its security services as well have been a positive limiting factor to these possible negative dynamics that sometimes politicians and political parties

are prone to when they are confronted with difficult economic situations, such as this one.

Ms. GELAZIS. I agree that NATO—being in NATO has a positive impact. Clearly, if NATO only accepts democracies and Albania is in NATO, then it has to be a democracy. If the opposition in Albania—if NGOs are criticizing the government for being undemocratic, for not holding open and fair elections, the Albanian government is forced to prove its democratic credentials. And in that sense it is helpful that it has to have that label.

I think it also provides an opportunity for NATO and other member states within NATO to ask those questions to the Albanian leadership as well. So being part of a community can have that positive impact—as long as we all take advantage of it.

Mr. ENGEL. Dr. Serwer?

Dr. SERWER. I have nothing to add at this point.

Mr. ENGEL. OK. I just—thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that—my opinion is that things are moving in the right direction in Albania. And as a member of NATO, I think that's been a very positive effect on the country. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Engel.

Let me just ask a few final questions. First, you know, again, following that same line of reasoning that the NATO framework limits potentially negative outcomes and a negative future, as you just pointed out with Albania, what is a way forward for Bosnia? I'm very concerned.

You know, I've been working the Bosnia issue, if you will, for most of my time in Congress, especially during the war there. We went there many times, held hearings, we heard from people, you know, including the man that did the translation when Milosevic and the Dutch peacekeepers met. He was there. He lost his entire family.

You know, I mean, for this Commission, the Balkans has been a very serious and almost a prime concern for years. And I am concerned that an opportunity could evaporate or at least diminish with regards to Bosnia. In 2006, the Partnership for Peace was offered. In April 2010, NATO invited Bosnia to join the Membership Action Plan. And we know that the one hindrance, according to Secretary General Rasmussen, is the issue of the military assets.

And maybe you could offer some insights as to how that might be furthered, especially—and whether or not Republic of Srpska and all the different entities are really on the same page with regard to joining NATO, publicly as well as, more importantly, privately. Do they really want this all? And is there still a way forward? If all of you could speak to that.

Mr. VEJVODA. Well, I had a chance, Mr. Chairman—

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Mr. VEJVODA [continuing]. To speak to the Deputy Foreign Minister of Bosnia Herzegovina, Ms. Ana Triši-Babi, who is also the Chairman of—or Chairperson of their national coordination NATO council, recently at a conference in Berlin in December. And she is from Republic of Srpska. She reassured me about the overall intention of the country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and of the two entities, and thus of Republic of Srpska, to move forward because it was in the interest, along the lines that we have just been men-

tioning on Albania and Macedonia, that this would be a factor of stabilization overall of the polity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Also, when the early mentions of NATO membership was there, it was endorsed also by Milorad Dodik from Republic of Srpska. We know that in some subsequent declarations he has, you know, made his position more vague, but I go by someone from his political environment, Ms. Trisi, when she says this a month ago. And I know that there's a possibility that she will remain the Deputy Foreign Minister. And if that's anything to go by, I think we will see a development on this outstanding condition of the military property.

Now, again, it's easy for us to say. We'll see how the new government at the central level will go about this. But if that visa process is anything to go by, if the formation of this government, as Nida rightly alluded to, is based on rational decisionmaking, and is in the interests of those politicians who are incumbents and have been elected, possibly this positive move toward the beginning of implementation of a Membership Action Plan can help them for their own particular political interests, let alone the public good, which would benefit from that.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Ms. GELAZIS. I agree with Ivan. I would also add that the international community's work on—in Bosnia is, I hope, slowly cornering the leaders of this nation to sort of do the right thing and adopt institutions that are truly democratic, that will truly, you know, fit into Euro-Atlantic structures. For instance, the European Court of Human Rights has had the ruling on the Sejdic-Finci case which deems that the constitution is in fact undemocratic, doesn't follow human rights to the European standard.

And those—that decision, the Venice Commission assessment of the constitution and other chapters of the constitution, the E.U. accession process, the NATO accession process—all of these institutions and actors, including the United States, ought to sort of continue to corner the leaders of this country, show where their interests are in line with making these—adopting these changes.

And then engaging with civil society is an important factor as well, because I think you'll get much more support for international efforts—for international efforts toward NATO accession by creating a government that respond to the interest of the citizens. And that's our—they should be our partner in this initiative—in this challenge.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Dr. Serwer?

Dr. SERWER. Mr. Chairman, I'm more pessimistic than my colleagues are. I think that the Milorad Dodik has made very clear his intention not to allow the government in Sarajevo to have the kind of powers and authority that are required of a NATO and E.U. member. He has talked about the possibility of independence. He has made it absolutely clear that the courts of Republic of Srpska should not be in any way beholden to the courts of the country as a whole. He has really put forward a program which is one of maximum autonomy, and that program is not consistent with NATO and E.U. membership. Until we solve that problem—and that problem has to be solved, it seems to me, in revisions to

the constitution—until we solve the basic political framework, I'm afraid that Bosnia is going to lag farther and farther behind everybody else. Solving it is going to require a joint E.U.-U.S. effort, with the E.U. ready to use serious leverage in order to get what we need to get for E.U. and NATO membership. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Are we doing that now, the United States and the European Union? Are we using any serious leverage vis-a-vis Bosnia?

Dr. SERWER. The short answer is "no." I don't think we're using the kind of leverage that is needed to get real results. And that's a result of a very different attitude in Europe toward the use of leverage than the one in the United States. You know, it's very hard to borrow somebody else's leverage, but that's what's really needed here.

Mr. SMITH. Let me ask you just a couple of final questions. In 2001, I asked the U.S. Department of Defense inspector general—his name was Joseph Schmitz at the time—to undertake a global assessment of the United States military's complicity in human trafficking.

We had gotten reports—particularly out of South Korea—of U.S. service members abusing Russian, Moldovan, Philippine, and other women who were at brothels, as well as indigenous South Koreans. And this situation in the Balkans had manifested itself repeatedly with U.N. peacekeepers, UNMIK. We held hearings; I chaired hearings where we talked about DynCorp and some of its police who were complicit in trafficking.

To make a long story short, the report that the IG put together was devastating. In response, George Bush issued a zero-tolerance policy. The next year I traveled to—first to Athens and then to Brussels and met with NATO leaders, top command leadership, and pushed a zero-tolerance policy. Most were very open.

One particular admiral said: What will my sailors do when they offload in Athens and want a good time? And it was a—not only was that very, I think, foolish of him to say that; I had just been in two trafficking safe houses in Athens and had met a number of women who had been rescued. And I asked him—invited him in very strong terms to go visit those shelters and see what it is that these individuals were doing to these women and exploiting them.

To make a long story short, as we all know, NATO does have a zero-tolerance policy, just like the United Nations. But I'm wondering, you know—zero tolerance sounds good but what does it mean in actual training? What does it mean in terms of integration into NATO?

And my question to all three of you: Are the countries and their militaries being—is there an effort being made to comport and conform with a very high standard of zero tolerance for the exploitation, particularly of women and children, by way of human trafficking? Is that actually happening with this process?

Mr. VEJVODA. I think that, again, here NATO and the E.U. have very strict requirements for the visa liberalization road map. This was one of the requirements that a number of action plans not only be voted in, but that there be implementation. This is concurrent, I would say, within the larger framework of fighting organized crime.

And again, without painting a rosy picture, the level of coordination between, for example, the countries of the region and their police forces, and, for example, the DEA here on drug abuse, or the British serious organized crime unit—has produced a number of results over the past 2 years, with important capture not only of drugs but also of the criminals who are engaged in this.

And this of course is applied also to human trafficking and to women in particular. And I know—and this is simply by following the news from the region—that every now and then you do read about arrests of people who have been engaged in all of these countries. And I think it's obvious to say but needs to be repeated: This can only be tackled at a transborder, regional level with international institutions involved. Whichever they are, in their—this is not something that a country by itself—a Montenegro or a Serbia or a Kosovo—can deal with itself.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Ms. GELAZIS. I commend you for your efforts on this very important issue. I think that it's one thing to have a country adopt a resolution, to have a military, you know, add to its organization issues that protect vulnerable people. But it's a very, very different thing that we make sure people implement these, and that these rules are being used.

In that regard, we need to make sure that there is adequate judicial reform, that institutions in these countries offer victims remedies when these rules get violated, which inevitably they do. In that sense we should continue our focus on E.U. accession, which is hoping to push the negotiations on judicial reform up in all of the future invitations for E.U. accession, so that there's a longer timespan to view and witness and to experience what the judiciary is doing in each of these member states. I think that's a vital element of any human rights policy, to make sure that the institutions that provide remedies for victims are there and are used well.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Dr. SERWER. Mr. Chairman, you asked a very specific question, whether zero tolerance is being implemented adequately in these countries. And I confess that I don't know the answer to that question. So your asking it will prompt me to be asking it, and I think that's a good thing, and I hope you continue asking it. I thank you for the question.

Mr. SMITH. Well thank you, and I look forward to your response to it as soon as you get some information, because it seems to me it's a matter of prioritization. If I have tried and failed—as a matter of fact, even when we did the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, we had a section that would have established an Assistant-Secretary-level person at the Department of Defense to work trafficking, and have a real core of people to work military-to-military, as well as within our own military, to try to mitigate and hopefully end this barbaric activity known as human trafficking. And we failed.

I have a bill pending right now that would do it again, because it seems to me, military-to-military and, you know, that the generals and the colonels and everybody else—the whole chain of command—will be much more apt to listen when those best practices

are shared among themselves rather than a lawmaker or politician bringing it.

And again, I'll never forget that meeting at NATO headquarters when, in a very dismissive tone, some of the female officers were absolutely angered by this man saying this. I was amazed that he had the imprudence to say what he was thinking, but he did. But it showed a level of contempt for the sacredness of those women's lives, that they were just seen as someone—people that could be exploited by his sailors.

Let me just ask you, my friend, a final question—and anything else you would like to, any of you, add as we go to closure. Slavko Curuvija, the great journalist who sat right where both of you sit in the 1990s and testified, in the opening days of the bombing campaign by the United States and by NATO, he was gunned down by Milošević's henchmen—at least we believe that. I know you follow Serbia very, very closely. Has anybody been brought forward to trial, or may be brought to trial yet, with regards to his assassination?

Mr. VEJVODA. Thank you for asking that question, Mr. Chairman. I had the honor of knowing Mr. Slavko Curuvija very well, and, in fact, I was then working for the Open Society Institute when he went and embarked on the independent newspaper. And we supported him financially at that moment. I was in Belgrade also during the bombing—not a pleasant moment to be there, with my family. And I was there and went to the scene where he was assassinated. So it's a very tragic story.

The unfortunate answer to your question is that no one has been brought to justice, although we practically know the story inside out. It has been leaked from the police, from security sources, of who the possible assassins were. It is alleged with great certainty that this was ordered from the tops of the regime by Milošević and his wife, as a kind of revenge for the fact that Curuvija, who was close to them, then departed from them and embarked on a more liberal, democratic approach to his newspaper.

I am sorry to say that I do not understand why this is the case, it is—if everything is more or less known, and the former partner of Mr. Curuvija, who lives in Belgrade today, has been alerted to these facts. I'm at a loss to answer this question, and I'll be as happy as you to find out when—apparently the exact assassin has himself been assassinated, but it is very important that this get closure through due process in a trial in Belgrade.

Mr. SMITH. I appreciate that so very much. Would any of you like to conclude or make any final comments before we conclude?

Mr. VEJVODA. I would just like to add an obvious addition to your former question, and that is that the role of civil society, NGOs and women's organizations is extremely important in this combating of human trafficking—women and children in particular. And I know from a number of examples in the countries of the region that their cooperation with the police has been improving over the past 10 years—because, again, the coordination there is very important for sources of information for tracking individual women and others as a way to reach those who are actually organizing this despicable activity.

Mr. SMITH. Well said.

Dr. SERWER. Mr. Chairman, maybe I can just add that, since I sat at that table with Slavko Curuvija at the time of that testimony, I think the failure to resolve that particular case is part of a broader failure of institutional reform in the secret services in Serbia. I think that reform has progressed much more in the military than it has in some of the shadowy-er services. And I'm here in Belgrade today for a conference on dealing with the past, and I will raise that question about Curuvija at that conference and try to press the issue. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so very much. And again, as on the other question, if you find anything, please let us know, because this Commission has had two witnesses over the years killed after testimony, one from Northern Ireland and one from Belgrade. And, I know all of us, staff and members, feel a great sense of concern, whether or not we actually put any further spotlight on that individual that led to their killing. So we, too, want closure, and for the person or persons who have committed these crimes to be held to account.

So thank you so much, all of you, for your exemplary work on behalf of human rights and democracy and the rule of law, and for sharing those insights with us today. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:48 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDICES

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Welcome and good afternoon to everyone. Today we will review the aspirations and preparedness of Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo to join or deepen engagement with the NATO alliance—an important step for us and for them, and quite timely in the run-up to the next NATO summit, which will take place in Chicago on May 20–21.

In the past I, and other Commission Chairmen and Co-Chairmen, have been strong supporters of NATO enlargement. It has been a very good thing, for our country and for the new democracies in East-Central Europe that have joined the alliance since 1998. Not only did enlargement stabilize Central Europe, but countries that formerly threatened us, with militaries were integrated into the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact, have become some of our closest allies. They have shouldered real responsibilities, and some of their soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice in defending liberty, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Today I believe further NATO engagement or enlargement can do likewise—stabilize the western Balkans, and provide our country with responsible allies.

Yet of course countries that seek to join NATO have to meet military standards, and human rights standards. In these respects Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo will have different challenges, and they will probably not be ready to join the alliance at the same time.

In respect of human rights, many countries in the Western Balkans have made great progress in combating human trafficking, especially given the blatant and widespread trafficking of young women into the sex trade the region experienced only a decade ago. In 2011, Bosnia and Macedonia joined NATO-member Croatia on Tier 1 in the State Department's report on Trafficking in Persons. Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia are at Tier 2, as is NATO-member Albania. As the author of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which mandates the tier rankings, I want to strongly urge all these countries take the action necessary to reach Tier 1 this year; nothing less should be expected from friends and possible NATO allies than to protect people from being sold into modern-day slavery.

Other issues before the alliance—Afghanistan, missile defense, Libya, the Eurozone crisis—should not cause us to forget the long-term imperative of bringing the countries of the Western Balkans into NATO. American soldiers have done duty there in Bosnia and Kosovo—we don't want that to happen again—the issue of stability remains—and NATO membership is key to the solution. This means we have to encourage their NATO aspirations, and move their applications forward.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, CO-CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

I welcome today's hearing which will review the relationship between the NATO and the non-NATO countries of the Western Balkans, examining both their aspirations regarding membership in the Alliance as well as NATO's presence in the region.

The United States and its 28 NATO Allies will have a lot to discuss at their summit in Chicago in May, but they should not leave business in the Balkans unfinished. Since the mid-1990s, when NATO first operated "out-of-area" to make and then to keep the peace in Bosnia, the Alliance has understood that it has a vested interest in the region. Through the Partnership for Peace, Membership Action Plans and other initiatives, NATO has moved generally from intervention to engagement, to the mutual benefit of the Alliance and the countries of the region. The fact that Albania and Croatia are now NATO allies contributing to collective security demonstrates the benefits of NATO's Open Door to the region, and what can be accomplished if there is the political will.

The five countries of interest today deserve the same opportunity to realize their aspirations and to join NATO if they so desire. If some countries—such as Serbia—decide not to join, that is their choice, and the development of ties between NATO and these countries should nevertheless continue.

I have visited many of the countries of the region in recent years, including Serbia last July, and have generally been impressed with the progress made in recent years. Montenegro stood out; in particular, for the progress it has made to be ready for both NATO and the EU.

The three issues that stand out as needing considerably more work are—

- 1) The role of ethnicity in Bosnian politics which hinders obviously needed reform;
- 2) Belgrade's unwillingness to let go of Kosovo, which is, in fact, an independent state; and
- 3) The ongoing name dispute between Greece and Macedonia.

I hope to hear more on these three issues and how to resolve them from our excellent panel of experts today.

Finally, I want to indicate as a Senator and member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the importance I attach to the Senate's approval of proposed enlargements of NATO. No matter how much we support enlargement in principle, we want each prospective member to be ready to contribute to collective security and to be a stable, reliable partner. NATO membership cannot be a one-way street, and I hope the political leaders in each country will embrace the reforms asked of them in return for membership. As Co-Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I am aware that these reforms will actually be beneficial to the strengthening of democracy. NATO enlargement and engagement is a "win" for everybody who takes security seriously and does their part.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF PROFESSOR DANIEL SERWER,
JOHNS HOPKINS SCHOOL OF ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES**

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you on a subject close to my heart and brain: NATO and the Western Balkans.

NATO entered the Balkans in 1993, with the no-fly zone over Bosnia. It was an important moment. Until then, Yugoslavia had been considered outside the NATO area, a concept that lost relevance as the Alliance moved from thinking of itself as a defensive pact against the Soviet Union to an alliance protecting European and American security from risks arising anywhere in the world.

Two decades later, the Western Balkans are entering NATO. Slovenia (2004), Croatia (2009) and Albania (2009) have already made the strategic choice of aligning their defense efforts with NATO. They also contribute to Alliance efforts in Afghanistan and Kosovo, taking on burdens at least proportional to their size and economic weight. They enable us to devote American personnel to other priority missions, both NATO and non-NATO.

Slovenia, Croatia and Albania have also benefited from their efforts to reform their security services, professionalize and reorganize them to meet NATO standards. These are countries that have made a profound commitment to democratic norms, even if they still sometimes struggle to meet them.

Five more countries of the Western Balkans remain outside NATO. It is time to open the door and allow two of them to begin to enter: Macedonia and Montenegro.

Macedonia has done yeoman's work completing its membership action plan. Just ten years ago, ethnic war racked the country. The conflict ended with agreement to reform its state institutions, including the security services. The Macedonians took advantage of the opportunity to professionalize their security forces to meet NATO standards.

I spoke Friday with Brigadier General William Roy, whose Vermont National Guard brigade deployed for six months in 2010 to Afghanistan with Macedonian troops. He reports in an email: "By all accounts they performed their mission to the desired standard. They were involved in a number of tactical engagements with enemy forces while integrated with my companies. Most impressive has been the development of their NCO Corps; a key to having a well trained and disciplined force."

While I might wish Skopje would spend less money on tributes to Alexander the Great, the only thing keeping Macedonia from NATO membership today is the dispute with Greece over the country's name, which prevented it from receiving an invitation at the Bucharest Summit in 2008. Since then, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has found that Greece violated its interim accord with the government in Skopje when it blocked membership at Bucharest.

May is the time to correct the injustice done at Bucharest. Chicago is the place. The NATO Summit should issue an invitation for membership to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, or to Macedonia by whatever name Skopje and Athens may agree on. The United States should make it clear to Greece that repeating

the mistake of Bucharest is not acceptable, as the ICJ has already said.

With the door to NATO open at Chicago, I would also urge that Montenegro be given a clear signal that it, too, will get an invitation once it completes its Membership Action Plan. We should not close the door to a country that has been willing to join us in Afghanistan and contributes to UN operations in Somalia and Liberia.

Three more Western Balkans countries would still remain outside NATO: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. None is ready for an invitation. Bosnia has failed to meet the international community requirement that it resolve defense property issues. It should get that done before Chicago so it can embark on the membership process. Kosovo, which will want to join NATO as quickly as possible, is just beginning to think about the nature and shape of its future security forces. The United States should help Kosovo establish forces that can meet its legitimate security interests within the NATO context, enabling the eventual withdrawal of NATO's Kosovo force (KFOR).

Serbia has not indicated it wishes to join NATO, due to popular distaste for an Alliance that bombed the country in 1999 and played a crucial role in removing Kosovo from Milosevic regime oppression. Nevertheless, Serbia has participated in Partnership for Peace and has deployed troops to Afghanistan. The NATO door should stay open. The choice of joining or not should be Belgrade's.

The odds of Serbia joining NATO would be significantly increased if Macedonia and especially Montenegro were to make clear progress toward membership in Chicago. NATO members would then eventually surround Serbia, making the decision to join geographically and strategically compelling.

With a decision to join NATO, Belgrade would have to make other difficult decisions: about both Bosnia and Kosovo. Good neighborly relations are a prerequisite for NATO, as they are for the EU. But EU membership is still far off. Serbia could, if it wanted, join NATO much faster, but it will need to demonstrate unequivocally respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all its neighbors.

NATO membership is not a panacea. I do not believe allowing Bosnia early entry, as some advocate, would be wise. But real progress on membership for Macedonia and Montenegro at Chicago would impart a sense of momentum to the Western Balkans that is lacking today. With Europe immersed in a financial crisis, only Croatia can hope for EU membership within the next few years. The others will have to wait until Europe has its financial house in order.

Many current members have found NATO provides relief from the historic baggage of past wars, ethnic conflicts and mass atrocities. Joining an alliance to make the world safer for democratic societies is a noble cause. It is a good idea to extend an invitation to Macedonia at Chicago and make welcoming noises to Montenegro. The door should remain open for the others to enter when they are ready and willing. NATO expansion into the Balkans serves U.S. interests not only in that region but wherever NATO or U.S. forces deploy in the future.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NIDA GELAZIS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE OF THE EUROPEAN PROGRAM, WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS

Chairman and Members of the Helsinki Commission: Thank you for this opportunity to testify on NATO and the Western Balkans. I will base my testimony on some of the conclusions from working group meetings organized at the Wilson Center which aimed at finding common ground on European and American perspectives on the region's Euro-Atlantic integration.

These discussions were based on three premises: first—that peace and stability in the Western Balkans can only be achieved by shifting domestic politics away from ethno-nationalist ambitions and toward building open and democratic institutions that serve the interests of all citizens and will allow a country to actively participate in European institutions. Second, the process of becoming a member of the European Union and NATO is itself transformative, and that transformation can end abruptly once a country achieves membership. Third, given the region's legacy of conflict, it will be more difficult for the Western Balkans to meet the accession criteria to NATO and the EU than it was during previous enlargements.

Working from these premises, it is important to recognize that the European Union's enlargement process has a much stronger transformative power than NATO enlargement. NATO's norms focus squarely on military issues, which are relatively easier to implement given the natural hierarchy within defense institutions. Therefore, even though NATO requires that all candidates are democratic, it relies on outside standards and actors to measure and evaluate democratic consolidation. As in previous enlargements, ensuring that state institutions are effective and democratic is driven by the EU. Therefore, NATO enlargement is not a replacement for EU enlargement. It is essential, rather, that the United States continue to actively support not only NATO but also EU enlargement as well as the countries of the Western Balkans to achieve the goal of Euro-Atlantic integration.

This distinction between the transformative impact of the EU and NATO is made clear by the difference between the two countries that became NATO members in 2009: Croatia and Albania. Both countries met the criteria for NATO accession and today they have active troops participating in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (currently, there are 286 troops from Albania and 317 troops from Croatia, <http://www.isaf.nato.int/troop-numbers-and-contributions/index.php>). But where the Croatian government continued to adopt political and economic reforms that were necessary for EU accession, Albania's progress has been stalled by a political impasse, allegations of government corruption and election irregularities. The transformation in the former meant that Croatia was invited to join the EU last year, while the Council postponed offering Albania candidate status. It is important to keep this limited capacity in mind as we move forward: NATO membership may soon be granted to several countries that have met or are working to meet the criteria, but we should be aware that those reforms are limited, compared to the transformation that the EU requires. Moreover, once countries become

members, the opportunity to resolve internal or external problems diminishes substantially.

Indeed, NATO and the EU have run into the same problems in many countries in the region, and since NATO has fewer tools at its disposal, the EU is seen as a leader in transforming the region, especially when it comes to bilateral issues. The events of the last few months highlight the problems facing the international community:

In Kosovo, NATO returned to its former role as the first responder after barricades were erected in the North. Although NATO had planned to further reduce its troops in Kosovo by the end of 2011, this reduction was postponed due to the violence that broke out. The violent reaction to protests by Kosovar police that took place last weekend does not inspire confidence that local police will be able to take over from NATO any time soon. Meanwhile, the EU led negotiations between Pristina and Belgrade have been slow but relatively fruitful, especially since it has the power to bring Serbia to the table with the carrot of Candidate status.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, it took 14 months to form a government, which stalled the progress toward meeting the final requirement for activating the Membership Action Plan. During this period, NATO officers could do little aside from conducting an audit of defense property. It remains to be seen how long it will take for the Entities to muster the political will to transfer state and defense property to the government. Even if this is done relatively quickly, the country's constitution as well as the continued presence of the Office of the High Representative challenge its democratic credentials. NATO enlargement therefore, cannot replace EU enlargement, but both must be elements of a larger, coordinated policy between American and European partners.

Another observation of the Working Group meetings is that because integration into European institutions is an elite-driven process, it is left to politicians in the region to explain the accession process to their constituents. In some cases, politicians have created narratives in which conditionality is seen as blackmail or that meeting conditions undermines national interests.

This is most notably the case in Macedonia, where Greece is blamed for the lack of progress in both EU and NATO accession. The fact that the International Court of Justice recently ruled in Macedonia's favor would seem to be further evidence to support that claim. However, the European Commission's recent progress report identifies a series of worrisome political trends in the country, which require us to question whether the country is moving in the direction of building a consolidated democracy.

Albania's admission to NATO might serve as an example here—if the United States wants to see effective, democratic institutions and an effective cooperation between ethnic groups in Macedonia, there may be good reason to wait for an agreement with Greece, since an agreement would offer evidence that Macedonia's leaders have put their undemocratic ethno-nationalist aims behind them. At the same time, the United States ought to put more pressure on Greece to participate in finding a workable solution.

In Serbia, the process of European integration is broadly seen as trading national interests for economic development. The public is

understandably even less sympathetic toward NATO. It is therefore important for the United States and its partners to engage with civil society organizations in Serbia and throughout the region, as a way to offer a different narrative about the NATO and EU accession processes, and in order to support local NGOs that are making demands on their governments which are in line with EU and NATO conditions. Direct communication with civil society will help to maintain support for reforms, even with a protracted accession process.

Direct engagement with the public will also diminish another problem that was identified by the Working Group: that the primacy of the EU and NATO accession policy is seen as evidence that America is pulling out from the region. The U.S., therefore, should be more visible in public debates about Euro-Atlantic integration: we ought to show that EU and NATO integration are linked and that we are putting our weight behind this process.

Our involvement with civil society should aim at increasing the authenticity of international conditions, showing that the conditions are legitimate and necessary and that they do not compete with national interests. With the cooperation of our partners in Europe, we can work on developing policies similar to the successful visa liberalization strategy, which combined conditions with clear and immediate rewards. We might consider what more could be done through the Adriatic Charter or the National Guard's State Partnership Program to create additional engagement between the United States and the countries of the region. Adding additional programs will reinforce the message that the transformative process of integration is the prize, not just membership.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF IVAN VEJVODA, VICE PRESIDENT/
PROGRAMS, THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND OF THE UNITED
STATES**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the invitation to come and testify before you today as the Western Balkans advance toward a stable and peaceful future in the Euro-Atlantic community. It is a true honor to be here. I am here to offer my personal views on the current issues regarding the region as well as the opportunities and challenges that present themselves for the region in the future.

INTRODUCTION: THE BALKANS

The “return to Europe” was the clarion call in all those countries in which communist regimes reigned until the 9 November 1989 fall of the Berlin wall. A rush to join the democratic Europe that had been denied them by the Cold War division of the continent in the aftermath of World War II.

Soon the term Euroatlantic integration became synonymous with integrating both the European Union and NATO through a process of democratic and market reforms.

One country chose a different path: the former Yugoslavia. After the violent breakdown of the country during the 1990s the countries that emerged engaged, with a notable time lag, on the same Euroatlantic path as their predecessors.

There was one notable exception: Serbia, even though from 2000 through 2003 it had also declared full Euroatlantic integration as its goal. It was subject to NATO’s military operation: the bombing in 1999 of what was then still the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (composed of Serbia and Montenegro). Then under the government elected in 2004 Serbia through a parliamentary resolution Serbia declared itself a “neutral state” and decided not to pursue full NATO membership but only Partnership for Peace which it got in November 2006.

The story of NATO in the Balkans though begins with the membership of Greece and Turkey, who signed the North Atlantic Treaty on 18 February 1952. These two countries have been key contributors for the past 60 years in promoting the security of the Euroatlantic area, and more specifically, NATO’s Southern Flank.

After the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the end of communist regimes throughout Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe the process of NATO enlargement encompassed Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovenia in March 2004. Finally, and most recently, in April 2009 Albania and Croatia became full members. Macedonia, fully qualified, was supposed to join as a full member at that same moment but was blocked by a veto from Greece.

The countries that remain aspiring and/or non-members are to date all members of the Partnership for Peace Program and are at various stages of a dynamic of NATO integration. They are all geographically within the inner courtyard of a Euroatlantic framework. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo (not recognized as independent by Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Serbia are surrounded by EU and NATO member states.

Integration into the European Union (EU) has been a paramount goal of Euroatlantic integration. It has been a rule until now that countries have joined NATO prior to joining the European Union. It seems that this will continue to be the case, with the possible/probable exception of Serbia.

EU AND NATO ENLARGEMENT—THE NEED TO PROCEED

The Balkans, as the Central and East European countries, have undergone or are still undergoing a process of joining a series of other European and global institutions: the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organization, but to mention two among many. All these processes entailed deep-seated democratic and market reforms that were often overlapping. Joining the EU with full membership was/is undoubtedly the most demanding and lengthy process. NATO enlargement regards reforms in the military, security, and intelligence sectors, although it also closely observes and requires and follows reforms in the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of power.

Fulfilling demands for one integration process often fulfills at least parts of requirements for integration into other international institutions. Thus these processes are mutually reinforcing.

The global economic crisis of 2008 caught the Balkan region at a moment of steady and forceful economic growth with significant growth rates and increasing foreign direct investments. A post-conflict region that the Balkans was, was clearly emerging towards forms of consolidated democratic and market economy practices. Foreign direct investments were steadily increasing every year, and integration processes were advancing at a steady pace.

The challenges were many but the promise of a Europe whole, free and at peace, the attraction of joining a European Union of half a billion people and 27 member states helped motivate states and societies to push forward. Joining one of the most successful political peace projects that the European Union represents in post-World War II history was, for a war-torn region that emerged from the catastrophe of the 1990s, a proposition that not only could not be refused, but one that harbored the possibility of once and for all settling the contentious issues within a democratic framework based on the rule of law and human rights: plurality, legality, publicity (an free and open public space). Post-conflict reconciliation and confronting the wrong-doings of the past was an integral part of this democratic effort.

The economic crisis as elsewhere has created levels of unemployment and diminishing standards of living that have in turn created public discontent and a sense of loss of certainty. The key interest of public opinion is about job certainty or lack thereof: the question of whether citizens will be able to fend for themselves in a dignified manner with a job and a salary.

Enlargement has been one of the greatest success stories of the European Union since its inception in 1957. At the June 2003 EU Summit in Thessaloniki, Greece, a solemn promise was made that the countries of the Western Balkans would become member states when they met the required Copenhagen criteria of the EU.

NATO has been crucial in providing the security environment, a common framework that is not imposed from above or the outside

but one in which these countries of the Western Balkans were/are for the first time choosing freely with whom they wished to be allied with.

It is of crucial importance that the Euroatlantic enlargement backed wholeheartedly by both the EU and successive United States administrations continue to be conducted in fairness and with mutual trust in the workings of the process, while realizing the complexities of the domestic politics in all countries concerned, both aspiring and existing member states.

It is important to underscore that the commitment of the governments of the region and of the publics to join the Euroatlantic community is still present: both for the EU and for NATO (with the exception of Serbia).

In spite of the significant economic and social challenges, and a certain decline in the numbers of support for enlargement, from previous very high numbers, there are still clear majorities in each country whose desire to join the EU and NATO (again with the exception of Serbia for NATO) is overarching. One has to look beyond the individual polls and observe the longer term trends as well as similar dynamics in countries that have already undergone this process. In particular it has been seen that the closer a country gets to the entry point the greater the decline in public support for entry into the EU. Croatia is a case in point.

That power of attraction of the Euroatlantic framework in the region of the Western Balkans is still firmly present. Undoubtedly, chinks in its armor have appeared, but publics still see a safer haven there than remaining outside this framework and thus outside of the enlargement process.

That is why keeping the process open and fair, in the face of those who wish to close the door to further enlargement, helps those others who are pursuing the herculean task of deep-seated democratic state and societal transformation, modernization and democratization. There is a bond of mutual responsibility in finishing the construction and unification of Europe and of Euroatlantic enlargement. However adverse the circumstances may be, whatever the huge challenges that the world is facing, there is a larger framework that has not dissipated and the gaze must be lifted from the navel to broader horizons.

THE MAIN BURDEN OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORM AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE LIES WITH ASPIRING MEMBER STATES

The European Union, the United States, individual countries, and public and private donors have contributed and are contributing substantive amounts of financial and other resources in helping these countries rebuild themselves and strengthen their institutions, governance, and economies. The fact of the matter is that in these countries there are no internal similar financial or other resources to kick start and help pursue economic growth. The countries are dependent on foreign direct investments, loans from international financial institutions, donations from the above-mentioned actors. This reinforces the bond of mutual responsibility and obligation.

It thus behooves the countries of the region to carry the main burden of responsibility for democratic and market reforms, for

strengthening rule of law, deepening judicial reforms, combating corruption and organized crime, creating favorable investment climates so as to attract the necessary resources from abroad. No one can do this hard work of change in their stead. This Sisyphean task is all the more difficult when standards of living are stagnant or falling, or unemployment is rising. This is additionally painful because it is amongst the youth of these countries as elsewhere in Europe and the world, that unemployment is much higher. This in turn leads to a dangerous real and potentially disastrous brain-drain of those who are supposed to be the future human capital that should contribute most of all to the growth of these economies and to moving these societies forward.

So as these countries and their governments, parliaments, judiciaries, militaries, security institutions, societies, and economies struggle to change, they are helped enormously by friendly hands and resources from outside—and maybe in the most relevant way by keeping the promise of enlargement tangibly present.

NATO AND THE WESTERN BALKANS

NATO is in the Western Balkans and certain Western Balkan countries are now also within NATO or on the path to membership.

NATO in the Western Balkans

NATO came into the Balkans, into Bosnia and Herzegovina as the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in January 1996 after the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords of 1995. A massive force that after nine years passed its mission to the European Union led EUFOR in December 2005. This was the Alliance's first peace-keeping mission. NATO maintains to date a small headquarters in Sarajevo to assist the country with defense reform. The EUFOR went from an initial 7,000 to 2,000 soldiers today. The EUFOR mission is supported by NATO under the so-called 'Berlin Plus' arrangements that provide the framework for NATO-EU cooperation. It should be noted that the United Nations Security Council 1575 (2004) adopted on 23 November 2004 makes patently clear that the EU operation ALTHEA and NATO HQ Sarajevo are legal successors to the SFOR mission. As such, EUFOR and NATO HQ Sarajevo enjoy the full authorities under Annexes 1A and 2 of the General Framework Agreement.

It is most significant to underscore that in all the 16 years of NATO and EU troop presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina there was not one attack or casualty through violence against these missions. This is testimony, in spite of the lag and often great difficulties in reform processes, of the desire of Bosnia and Herzegovina to move beyond the devastating consequences of the conflict of the 1990s.

NATO is in the Western Balkans in Kosovo in the guise of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) that was deployed after the 78 day-long NATO bombing campaign that ended with the Kumanovo Agreement on 10 June 1999 (signed between Milosevic's representatives and NATO) and the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of Resolution 1244. On 12 June, the first elements of the NATO-led Kosovo Force, or KFOR, entered Kosovo. By 20 June, the withdrawal of Serbian forces was complete.

KFOR was initially composed of some 50,000 from NATO member countries, Partner countries and non-NATO countries. By early 2002, KFOR was reduced to around 39,000 troops, then to 26,000 by June 2003 and to 17,500 by the end of 2003. Today it is at about 5,000 troops of which about 750 are U.S. soldiers.

After the unilateral declaration of independence on 17 February 2008, NATO reaffirmed that KFOR shall remain in Kosovo on the basis of UN Resolution 1244. NATO in June 2008 decided to take on new tasks in Kosovo to support the development of professional, democratic and multi-ethnic security structures. These new tasks were not affected by the ruling of the International Court of Justice on 22 July 2010: the Advisory Opinion of the Court on the legality of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence is that it did not violate international law, nor UNSC Resolution 1244.

When in March 2004 there was renewed violence in Kosovo, NATO played a significant role in providing protection in particular for the Serbian population that was being targeted. In the eyes of the Serbian population in Kosovo the perception is somewhat different after the July 2011 events, even though the protection of the Serbian Christian Orthodox monasteries by NATO troops is seen in a most positive light.

The Western Balkans in NATO

albania and croatia: full members of nato

The Strasbourg-Kehl NATO summit in April 2009 accepted Albania and Croatia to full membership. This enlargement was a significant incitement to those who were following in their footsteps.

In addition, the fact that Croatia recently accomplished its EU membership requirements and will become the 28th member-state of the EU in July 2013 gives motivation to all those working in the engine-rooms of democratization and modernization of their respective countries.

Whereas Croatia has fared well and accomplished significant progress in all fields and has indicated clearly, and especially with the recent victory of the Social Democratic Party and its three coalition partners that it will help its neighbors in their Euroatlantic enlargement pursuits, Albania has had significant problems with its democratic institutional procedures regarding the contested nature of elections.

macedonia

Macedonia was slated to become a full member at the same April 2009 summit but was blocked by Greece. This has been a most unexpected and undesirable development. Accepting Macedonia into NATO in 2009 would have been a decision of great relevance for Europe, the Balkan region and of course for Macedonia itself: a further reinforcement of stability, peace, and security in the region.

Macedonia has also been a candidate to the EU for the past six years yet cannot move forward because of the unresolved issue with Greece over its name. This is a highly detrimental situation not only for Macedonia but also for the whole region and for the enlargement process. Greece's enormous economic problems unfortunately do not bode well for a resolution of this now 19 year-old

stand-off and in spite of the fact that since last year the EU Commission is recommending that it begin EU accession negotiations.

Macedonia was admitted to the UN in 1993 under a provisional name, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The UN Security Council (Resolution 817) then noted that a difference had arisen over the name that needed to be resolved in the interest of the maintenance of peaceful and good-neighbourly relations in the region (UNSC Resolution 817 of 1993). The Security Council further called on Greece and Macedonia (Security Council Resolution 845 of 1993) to enter into negotiations on a definitive solution to the problem. The obligation undertaken by both parties to negotiate an agreement on the name issue was set down in the Interim Accord signed by Greece and Macedonia in 1995, establishing, at the same time, diplomatic relations and a code of conduct between the parties. Since then a majority of more than 130 UN member states have recognized Macedonia under its constitutional name of Republic of Macedonia including the United States.

Following the 1995 Interim Accord negotiations began and are still being conducted by UN envoy Mathew Nimetz.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) on a case filed by the Republic of Macedonia determined in a 15-1 vote on 5 December 2011 that Greece had violated the Interim Accord by objecting to its neighbor's entry into NATO. This ruling possibly opens the avenue to a positive outcome, although no one is at this point optimistic given Greece's enormous economic and social problems.

Most recently on January 16 and 17, 2012, the Macedonian Ambassador Zoran Jolevski met with United Nations envoy Mathew Nimetz for talks to seek progress in resolving differences with Greece over the Republic of Macedonia's official name.

It behooves the leaders of Macedonia and Greece to find that middle ground, that difficult space of compromise that will allow for the greater public good to emerge: the general public interest of furthering stability, peace and security in the region and in the country itself. There is of course nothing easy in what is a deeply symbolic and identity politics issue.

Macedonia clearly does not pose a realistic threat to Greece in any way, apart from a self-perceived symbolic one.

It will be of relevance to follow whether the NATO Summit in May in Chicago, in the interest of greater stability will invite Macedonia to join NATO as a full member.

montenegro

Montenegro became a member of Partnership for Peace (PfP) at the Riga NATO summit in November 2006, went through a successful Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) process and was granted on 4 December 2009 a Membership Action Plan (MAP). It is currently in its second MAP cycle. Montenegro has strongly advocated receiving an invitation for NATO membership at the Chicago May NATO Summit. In spite of the strong will and advocates underlining the need to continue forcefully the NATO enlargement process, it does seem at this stage likely that apart from strong encouraging words to further pursue necessary reforms there will be any additional more decisive pursuits.

Montenegro, with regards to EU accession already in the status of candidate country since December 2010, and recently in December 2011 was suggested by the EU Council of Ministers to get a date to begin negotiations for membership during the current year. It was positively assessed for voting in an important electoral reform.

Montenegro has done much in its security and defense reform sector and will with great likelihood follow Macedonia as the next most likely country to join NATO.

Continued democratic reforms and the fight against corruption and organized crime are as in the other states of the region paramount requirements.

bosnia and herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina also became a PfP member in Riga in 2006. It entered the Membership Action Plan in April 2010 at a NATO Foreign ministers' meeting in Tallinn, but the implementation would only begin fully when 61 identified defense properties were formally transferred from the entity level to the Ministry of Defense. To date this has not yet occurred, even though there has been recognition that Bosnia-Herzegovina had made certain progress.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, or rather the leaders of the ruling parties, more than 14 months after parliamentary elections in October 2010 (not quite as long as Belgium) unexpectedly on 29 December 2011 managed to find an agreement on the formation of a new government. This is probably the most positive development in a long time.

The deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ana Trisic Babic, who is also the president of the NATO Coordination Team within the BiH Council of Ministers, has been a strong advocate and leader in the process of NATO accession, developing reform activities while waiting for the issue of military property to be resolved.

The EU in the meantime is diminishing its EUFOR military mission (currently around 1,300 soldiers) and its police mission. There are tensions and heightened nationalist rhetoric by political and religious actors is to put it mildly not helpful, but from there to say that there is an immediate or intermediate danger of renewed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina is overstating the threat. The real threat is of too slow a process of reforms and Euroatlantic integration. The region of the Western Balkans and its path towards integration is most relevant for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The accession of Croatia and the possible candidacy to the EU of Serbia will have a clear pulling effect for BiH's forward movement. In fact, the announcement on 29 December of the formation of the government is already a result of these regional developments.

The EU has also sent its first EU Special representative (EUSR now decoupled from the OHR, Office of the High Representative and its Chief Valentin Inzko) who is at the same time the Chief of Mission of the European Union, the experienced Danish diplomat Peter Sorensen. This is also an important signal about the EU's more robust intentions in spurring BiH along. But the EU must continue, while in the lead to work hand in hand with the

United States and other international actors to see that furthering of BiH's Euroatlantic future.

Whatever the heated debates over issues pertaining to Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitutional challenges it seems, taking the longer view, that NATO accession is an agreed policy position, notwithstanding the occasional critical pronouncements of certain politicians from Republika Srpska entity. They also understand that pursuing this path is in their interest and in the interest of stability and peace. NATO's bombing campaign in August and September 1995 still remains present in the minds of citizens of that entity from the days of conflict.

serbia

Serbia joined the PfP program along with BiH and Montenegro at the Riga 2009 NATO Summit. This was an important decision for the region at large because the prolonged delay for membership in the PfP program was not conducive to speedier reforms. The United States and certain European countries' defense institutions in the meantime, awaiting PfP, developed significant levels of bilateral relationships with Serbia which helped defense and security reforms advance in Serbia most notably after the first democratic Minister of Defense of Serbia, Boris Tadic, was voted in March 2003.

Serbia had under the Prime Ministership of Zoran Djindjic and then after his tragic assassination of Zoran Zivkovic pursued a full policy of Euroatlantic integration. The resolution on "state neutrality" that was voted by the Serbian Parliament under the Premiership of Vojislav Kostunica, suspended the pursuit of full NATO membership and retained the goal of PfP membership.

Since 2006 Serbia has opened in September 2010 a representation at NATO headquarters in Brussels with a diplomatic and military mission and in July 2011 has adopted an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP). Under the Planning and Review Process (PARP) it has pursued the accomplishment of numerous goals of partnership. Among the priorities is the sending of members of the Serbian Army to positions in the Partnership Staff Element (PSE) and sending an officer to the Naples NATO command which depends on Serbia acceding to a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Serbia has also participated and plans participation in a number of NATO exercises. Also the Serbia-NATO Group for the Reform of Armed Forces has renewed its activities.

Serbia has fully professionalized its military at the end of 2010 and has been pursuing NATO standards so as to achieve full interoperability and cooperates on a number of other levels. Regular meetings with KFOR commanders ensure stability in the southern parts of the Western Balkans.

Serbia has suspended its pursuit of full NATO membership. It is thus an exception to the rule of Euroatlantic enlargement following which NATO accession comes before EU accession. It has focused on strong bilateral military ties with the Pentagon through the Ohio National Guard, and with a number of EU and NATO member states.

The public opinion is preponderantly opposed to NATO membership although there is a steady quarter of public opinion that sup-

ports NATO integration. The NATO bombing of 1999 remains an obstacle in parts of Serbian public opinion and among part of the political elite to further pursue at this moment full NATO membership. The goal is rather to develop as extensive relations with NATO within the parameters of PpP, and bilaterally with United States and other European allies.

There is an ongoing debate in the public space on all these issues. The first Belgrade Security Forum took place in September 2011. Organized by three NGO/think tanks and with the participation of actors from the whole region it demonstrated the strength of civil society in launching and pursuing debates relevant to but also broader than the region itself. The vibrancy of civil society is of immense importance throughout.

Serbia during the course of 2010 finally accomplished the long-standing goal of arresting and extraditing the last two indictees to the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY): Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic. Serbia is now investigating the networks that allowed the ICTY indictees to remain in hiding for such a long period of time.

In addition Serbia has taken a significant decision to embark on the hardest of reforms in an early stage of the EU integration process: the reform of the judiciary. Important steps have been made but further serious efforts need to be pursued in the domain of the rule of law and anti-corruption.

The dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina begun in March 2010 has been highlighted as an important step in the soothing of tensions and the search for viable solutions between the two which has already yielded certain results.

Recently Serbia's President Tadic has come out with a four-point plan for the resolution of the Kosovo dispute. He has informed international leaders and seems to be willing to move on the issue rather sooner than later, understanding that Serbia is burdened in its forward movement until it takes a determined and committed practical step to resolve this outstanding issue. He has underlined that any solutions must satisfy Serbs, Albanians, and the international community, or rather its main actors.

Time has allowed for a maturing of the awareness that resolving the challenge rather sooner than later is in everyone's interest—of the citizens in particular. The need to move more rapidly in the existing dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina in a challenging global environment can help the region establish itself as an example. But there is nothing easy or simple or that can be done without the respect for both sides' interests. One is looking at least bad solutions as always in similar historical distant and recent cases.

kosovo

NATO has 5,000 troops stationed in Kosovo. Since the declaration of independence of Kosovo 85 countries have recognized its independence. Among them the United States and 22 EU member states. Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain are the five EU non-recognizing states, while in the region all have recognized Kosovo's independence except Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

KFOR has been a source of stability in Kosovo since its arrival in 1999, and in particular in March 2004 during the ethnic violence that erupted and that targeted Serbs and other non-Albanians, Roma in particular, when NATO soldiers intervened to defend those attacked and defend the Serbian Christian Orthodox monasteries.

On 25–26 July 2011 during the unilateral action of Kosovo’s Rosa special police seizing the Brnjak crossing in a Serb-dominated area of Kosovo, a new period of great tension arose that went on for months. These events prompted Serbs living in the north to block the roads leading up to the checkpoints. The situation was on a razor’s edge but ultimately all sides managed to avoid greater levels of violence.

The dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina will be continued in Brussels in the coming days. A compromise is expected on the issue of Kosovo’s presence in regional meetings. If this is achieved Serbia could get candidate status for EU membership, and Kosovo would participate in all regional meetings under the pursuance of UN SC resolutions.

After the July rise in tensions between Belgrade and Pristina, there seems to have been an understanding in Pristina also that tensions and possible violence are in no way conducive to the pursuit any goals, and of stability and security in particular.

It seems that Belgrade and Pristina are edging towards agreeing to disagree on the principled issue of non/recognition. Serbia does not recognize Kosovo’s independence. Kosovo maintains its full independence. But the pursuit of the solution must be to benefit the lives of people living there, and must lead to a diminishing of tensions, for the greater good of stability and peace no matter how complex the search for a solution may be.

Kosovo is expecting to get a road-map for a visa free travel regime. It is the only part of the Western Balkans without such a regime. Kosovo has also managed to accomplish a cycle of dialogue with the EU on the Stabilization and Association Process.

Rule of law and anti-corruption policies and implementation are particularly necessitous areas of reform in Kosovo. In issues concerning possible past crimes an investigation under the jurisdiction of the EU’s rule of law mission. EULex, into alleged organ trafficking, will be led by US prosecutor John Clint Wiliamson and a seven member task force. This task force will probe the Council of Europe’s 2010 report that was prepared by the Swiss parliamentarian Dick Marty. This investigation has the strong backing of both the EU and the US administration.

It is interesting to note the levels of participation of countries of the wider region in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan

Albania	286
Bosnia-Herzegovina	55
Bulgaria	602
Croatia	317
Greece	158
Macedonia	163
Montenegro	36
Romania	1,948

Slovenia	78
Turkey	1,840

A NOTE ON NATO—EU RELATIONS

Since Cyprus joined the EU in 2004 the relation between the two has been difficult to say the least. Turkey who does not recognize Cyprus restricts cooperation between the two organizations to a very great extent. It claims that sensitive military issues would be passed to the Greek Cypriot authorities. Cyprus has reciprocated by putting obstacle to Turkey's participation in numerous EU defense activities

The NATO Secretary General has stated with this regard that: "The EU must act to accommodate some concerns raised by NATO members that are not at the same time members of the European Union." He underlined that cooperation was even more important since the EU was taking on a "more robust" foreign policy role under the Lisbon Treaty. He added that the EU should conclude a security agreement with Turkey and an arrangement that would allow Turkish participation in the European Defense Agency. However, he admitted that the political complications cannot be resolved "overnight."

REGIONAL COOPERATION AN UNSUNG STORY

All the countries of this "micro-region" of approximately 20 million people (4 percent of the half a billion citizens of the EU) have realized that only by cooperating can they weather many difficulties, achieve economies of scale in trade, production, infrastructure and combat the plague of organized crime.

Just in the past two months just to mention one example in the domain of security cooperation the ministers of defense and the chiefs of military intelligence have had their regular regional conference.

Regional cooperation has shown that a spirit of European partnership is pervasive. The renewed and intensified relationship between Croatia and Serbia that has existed since January 2010, when President Ivo Josipovic of Croatia was elected, has been a clear demonstration of the awareness that the countries of the region only together will they be able to forge a way forward. They are very dependent on each other in multiple ways and in particular in commercial terms. The economic crisis has shown this patently. In fact cooperation in matters of fighting organized crime in the past two years has shown dramatic successes. The police forces and the ministries of interior have developed very intense levels of cooperation in particular over the past several years. These efforts are conducted in close cooperation with the U.S. agency Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the British Serious Organized Crimes Agency (SOCA). Regional and international criminal networks have been followed and exposed and curtailed.

Regional cooperation in a multiplicity of fields has been the unheralded story of the past decade. A "Yugosphere" has been talked about to indicate the versatility of the numerous links, exchanges, joint ventures and mutual investments that have materialized over these years. This is expression is not to everyone's lik-

ing for many reasons but it indicates the capacity to rebuild links among the newly independent countries that are driven by common interest and sheer necessity.

As an example of these efforts one can highlight the first regional summit of business leaders (held in Serbia October 2011) from Serbia, Croatia Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia, Summit100—Business Leaders of Southeast Europe. The Summit100 was organized with the aim of having business leaders propose specific solutions and assume their share of responsibility for strengthening competition of national economies of the countries and the overall competitiveness potential of South Eastern Europe.

This regional cooperation has been compounded by the significant efforts aimed at confronting the wrongdoings of the past. Addressing the issue of the crimes committed during the conflict of the 1990s during the breakdown of former Yugoslavia has been an important part post-conflict development in the whole region and thus in Serbia as well. The mutual apologies for the crimes done in the name of the countries have contributed to overcoming tensions furthering peace. Furthermore, the presence of leaders at memorial sites, for example of the President of Serbia but of other regional leaders as well, at the commemoration of the genocide committed in Srebrenica is just one testimony to these endeavors.

Civil society has had a major role in much of these efforts toward reconciliation and overcoming the past. Over all civil society has been a key ally in all the democratic transformational work. More still needs to be done and again it behooves the leaders to continue setting the tone to this process.

In the field of regional security cooperation the Regional Cooperation Council RCC based in Sarajevo has made important strides forward in the past two years. In their own words: “The RCC has made a particular breakthrough in developing important regional mechanism of cooperation among the chiefs of military intelligence (SEEMIC), with the full support of the EU Military Intelligence Directorate, and among the Heads of the SEE National Security Authorities, with support of the NATO Office of Security and the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU. The RCC has also initiated the Defense Policy Directors meeting in the SEECF format and the SEE Counter Intelligence Chiefs forum.”

One should also mention regarding regional cooperation the American-Adriatic Charter (A5), the Cooperation Process of SEE Defense Ministers (SEDM), and SEECH (the South-Eastern Europe Clearing House).

In addition the RCC Secretariat initiated and elaborated the 2011–2013 Regional Strategic Document (RSD) and the Action Plan for its implementation in the area of Justice and Home Affairs, which was endorsed by the SEECF Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs in March 2011.

“The RSD maps the priorities and actions in combating the most important challenges that crime poses to the region. The RCC Secretariat is coordinating the work of the Steering Group for the implementation of the Regional Strategic Document and has designed the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism to measure the progress

and the results of regional cooperation in justice and home affairs that should be functional as of January 2012,”

Another significant regional achievement that came out from joint efforts of the RCC Secretariat and the Marshall European Centre for Security Studies “is the establishment of the Southeast Europe Regional Marshall Centre Alumni Association, which serves as a high-level regional forum for debating and discussing the cross-cutting issues between security, justice and home affairs, and contributes to a greater general understanding of the Euro-Atlantic accession and membership.”

Last but not least it should also be noted that the role of women in the reform of the security sector is one that should be highlighted.

Four countries of the Western Balkans region have a National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia). In Kosovo, EULex is charged with implementing this Resolution. As a matter of interest the United States adopted its own national action plan two months ago.

CONCLUSION

The NATO Summit in Chicago in May has the opportunity to reiterate its message of open doors to all those aspiring to join as full members of NATO or to continue being partner countries. Continued training and support to the reform efforts in the field of defense and security, the reform of security forces and services, and the implementation of existing laws on the democratic control of armed forces and security services continue to be of paramount importance. Efforts must be pursued to train all relevant actors elected and civic actors in these fields so as to acquire skills and capacities that can be a solid base for institutional democratic consolidation.

There is chance to send Macedonia and Montenegro, if not invitations, then strong signals of support as well as to Bosnia and Herzegovina. But also an instance in which Belgrade and Pristina are encouraged to pursue the positive course that they have chosen by engaging in a dialogue that seeks both practical solutions but demonstrated political will to also tackle the broader challenge of finding a more lasting solution for what has been a longstanding and difficult, quintessentially Europe-type challenge.

The region has for some outside actors been a cause of frustration in terms of its slow pace of change. Yet many present indicators and past experience show capacities and potential that is promising if unleashed and shepherded in a responsible manner.

In fact, the region has advanced significantly since the Dayton Peace accords in 1995 and since the fall of the Milosevic regime in 2000. If one were to compare the two states of affairs in the Balkans in 2000 and today one could shy away from the realization that much has been accomplished and that this trend must be upheld and supported. Yes, this has happened by fits and starts, often by meandering, muddling through and sometimes with backward steps. But were one to plot a chart of these 11 years the trajectory is clear, as a political will and determination to resolve the issues outstanding.

The processes of democratic reform in post-totalitarian and post-authoritarian countries are progressive and often fragile. Young democracies need to strengthen institutions very rapidly and yet the “habits of the heart” of a democratic political culture do not appear over night. It is the practice of democracy, the practice of the market, the level playing field, competitiveness, debate and dialogue that instill norms and behaviors that dispel fragility of institutions.

Countries of the region in that respect are no different than other post-communist countries that have trodden the path of building democratic institutions, conducting wholesale reform of all of the countries institutions.

Finally, needless to say, the support of the U.S. administration to the EU integration process of the region and to the overall process of reform is most important. The visits over these past couple of years of Vice President Joseph Biden and of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have in that regard been of great importance. The finishing of the “unfinished business”—support to the creation of a democratic Europe whole, free and at peace” is a key tenet of U.S. foreign policy in the Balkans.



This is an official publication of the
**Commission on Security and
Cooperation in Europe.**

★ ★ ★

This publication is intended to document
developments and trends in participating
States of the Organization for Security
and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

★ ★ ★

All Commission publications may be freely
reproduced, in any form, with appropriate
credit. The Commission encourages
the widest possible dissemination
of its publications.

★ ★ ★

<http://www.csce.gov>

The Commission's Web site provides
access to the latest press releases
and reports, as well as hearings and
briefings. Using the Commission's electronic
subscription service, readers are able
to receive press releases, articles,
and other materials by topic or countries
of particular interest.

Please subscribe today.