



A Preview of the Bucharest NATO Summit: Afghanistan, Enlargement, and the Future of the Alliance

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After an introduction like that, it's tempting just to leave now. There's not anything I could possibly do to improve on that. I think I should just go. But I promised Mike that I would speak, so I will.

It is a real pleasure to be here, and a real pleasure to be introduced by Mike Haltzel, too. Because as much as he's standing up here singing my praises, Mike really made some critical contributions on foreign policy as a senior staffer in the U.S. Senate for a very long time. He mentioned Budapest, when Senator Biden came out there. I remember when I was working for Lord Robertson at NATO and there were a lot of tensions in the late 1990s about is the U.S. going to stay in Bosnia? Is the U.S. going to stay in Kosovo? Are we going to pull out in 2001? We ended up with a formula of in together, out together.

I remember my boss at the time, Lord Robertson, corresponding with Senator Biden because they wanted to team up and figure how do we prevent some bad policymaking in the heat of an election campaign from trapping us? Mike, personally, was very helpful and engaged in that, and of course his boss, Senator Biden, was very helpful in that.

The other thing I remember is the year that I spent in the Senate staff working for Senator McCain was the year that the Senate voted for the first time in modern times on enlarging NATO, 80-19. Senator Biden was the Floor manager for moving ahead the resolutions of ratification of NATO enlargement, which people look back on this and they say oh, of course. Well, that was not the atmosphere at the time in the Senate. There was a heated debate.

Some of you might know Michael Mandelbalm, and he wrote a very articulate, very thoughtful piece called "NATO Enlargement -- Bridge to the 19th Century". That was the sort of serious intellectual debate and argumentation that was going on.

So with Senator Biden leading the charge on the Floor of the Senate, Mike Haltzel really had his work cut out for him because he was, therefore, leading the charge behind the scenes in the Senate. The fact that it came out with such a strong endorsement for NATO enlargement is in no small measure due to Mike's efforts, making all that work, and come together with, of course, colleagues on the other side of the aisle as well. I think it was Senator Roth who was the other Floor manager, a great moment for the State of Delaware. And Steve Biegun and Ian Brzezinski and others who worked in a bipartisan way to push that forward.

I should say that NATO has always been an issue that has enjoyed a great deal of bipartisan support both from the Republican and Senate sides.

I did want to comment and talk about the Bucharest Summit which is coming up April 2-4. I see our Romanian Ambassador here. Welcome. It is a great thing to have a summit meeting in the territory of one of our new allies. We had a summit meeting in Riga in 2006. This will be the next one. I see other friends around here as well, our Portuguese Ambassador who recently gave up EU duties there, and others from around town.

Before getting to the agenda, though, I want to take a moment and remind people a little bit of where NATO has come from. What have we done? Because there's a tendency to get lost in the discussion of Afghanistan or stuck on the question of enlargement and membership action plan. I think we need to take a step back just to see a little bit of this in context.

First, I think it's important to stress, and you can never say this enough, that the U.S. and Europe as a transatlantic community really do form a single democratic community anchored on shared values of democracy, market economy, rule of law, human rights. We are the pillars of this in the world. We need to work together because we see the same challenge in the world, whether it is in violent extremism that is attacking societies in the form of terrorism, whether it is security threats, crises, such as in Darfur or recently supporting Kofi Annan's efforts in Kenya. Whether it is Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Lebanon with Unifil, Israeli-Palestinian issues. We see the world in much the same way. We are affected by it in the same ways by the challenges. We need to deal with these challenges together.

We are doing far better at this now than we were in 2003-2004. I think that was a low point in our efforts to work together as a transatlantic community, but if you look around now I think that on each one of these issues that I mentioned and many more, you can identify how the U.S. and Europe are putting our heads together, what the framework of our cooperation is, where the common positions lie.

Of course there will always be some differences, there will always be some tactical differences, but I feel that we are very much on the same page and working very well together. That's something we've worked very hard at to recover from after 2003 and 2004.

That means not only working with coalitions, but I should add working with institutions like the European Union, like working within NATO.

For this to succeed in the future I think we have two things that are required. We need a continuing commitment from the United States to work together as part of a larger democratic family of nations and a larger community trying to solve problems together. We need to sustain that U.S. commitment, which we are pushing now and I'm confident will continue. We also need European allies and partners to contribute substantially to solving the problems that we're dealing with together. It's a resource and a capacity question as much as a political question. Maybe the parts to focus on are the political engagement, in addition to the resource contributions that the U.S. makes and the capacity engagement in addition to the political contributions that Europe makes.

Another thing that I think is worth keeping in mind is the context of thinking about security in the 21st Century. NATO has as its mandate Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, the collective defense of the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. That is an important, valid fact for the future as well. Just because the Cold War is over and just because we don't have this military standoff with what used to be the Soviet Union or with Russia today, that doesn't mean that security challenges have gone away. It just means they've changed. In many ways they're more complicated. And the well being that European societies enjoy today, the well being the United States enjoys today, continues to depend upon our ability to provide security for our people. That requires conscious investment in security in order to make that happen.

Here's where I think we have some work to do among many other things within NATO, is tying the sense of well being that we do enjoy to the continuing need to invest in security as we deal with the challenges that we face.



Related to that, during the Cold War it was true and everyone knew it, that European and United States security were linked. That you couldn't really have long term security in one or the other, you had to have it in both. That was a lesson from World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and post Cold War with the wars in the Balkans and it remains true today. Even in the face of very different kinds of threats and challenges, that U.S. and European security remains linked, and so we have to approach it that way.

What are some of these changes that NATO has to react to? So an old organization, 60th Anniversary is next year, with an old mission, providing for the collective defense of its members, but in a very different environment. The threats are different. We talk about terrorism, we talk about proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, we talk about missile defense, we talk about failed states, regional crises, think about Afghanistan.

The geography of this is different. The geography during the Cold War was well known. The geography today of the challenges that NATO has to face is kind of unlimited. Threats and challenges can emerge from anywhere to affect the countries of Europe and the United States and Canada, and so we need to deal with these challenges without geographic limit. This is the old out of area debate that took place in the late '90s and early 2000's as NATO was deliberating what about Bosnia, what about Kosovo, what is out of area.

In May of 2002 at the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Reykjavik, NATO essentially decided there is no such thing as out of area any more because the nature of the challenges change.

We need to make sure, as I said, that we keep the transatlantic community together. I think there is a divergence in perceptions in many ways between the U.S. and Europe over some of these challenges, but I firmly believe that we are one community and we are affected by these challenges in much the same ways, and therefore it's imperative that we do stick together.

And the capacity investments. Just to throw out a couple of numbers, I think the U.S. defense budget is about four percent of GDP. I think the average of NATO nations minus the U.S. is about 1.3 or 1.4 percent of GDP. So there's a discrepancy in the way our societies are approaching defense investment and I think that's something we'll have to address in the future.

So with these changes that have taken place in the threat environment, And the well being that European societies enjoy today, the well being the United States enjoys today, continues to depend upon our ability to provide security for our people. That requires conscious investment in security in order to make that happen.

NATO has not been standing still. When we think about the summit coming up in Bucharest we need to think back to the summits that we've already had in Riga and Istanbul and Prague and Madrid. That NATO has been adapting to a new security environment for some time.

I think the easiest way to illustrate this, and some of you may have heard me say this before, is just to take two snapshots in time, 11 years apart.

In 1995, before the summer, NATO had 16 members, had no partners, we had no such thing as Partnership for Peace. No partners, 16 members, and had never conducted a military operation. A lot of defense planning, a lot of exercises, but that was NATO.

In 2006, NATO had 26 members, had 20 partners in Eurasia, had seven in North Africa, the Mediterranean Dialogue, four in the Persian Gulf, and was conducting six operations simultaneously in Afghanistan, in Bosnia, in Kosovo, Active Endeavor which is counter-terrorism naval operations in the Mediterranean, we were transporting African Union troops through airlift to Darfur and delivering humanitarian relief after the earthquake in Pakistan. So you had a NATO that had fundamentally changed from what it was doing in 1995. Operationally engaged, geographically diverse, working with partners.

You can learn a few things from just those facts as well, too, so that a NATO that is doing all those sorts of things has much different requirements than a NATO from 1995. It has to have forces and capabilities that are able to deploy, sustain themselves at some distance, cover a wide range of missions from airlift to peacekeeping to humanitarian relief to combat operations in Afghanistan, to naval operations. So a big variety of what NATO needs to be able to do. And part of this also is recognizing that it's not just military. That there is a spectrum of civil/military cooperation and engagement that is necessary to succeed in these challenges.

Afghanistan, again, is a perfect example to illustrate this. Security and development go hand in hand. You can have successful military operations, but if you don't have the development and the civilian efforts behind that, it won't be sustainable. On the other hand, you can't even get your civilian and development operations off the ground if you haven't established security. So, we are mutually dependent on these things and we need to see them as a whole as NATO takes on these roles in the future and needs to work with other institutions such as the EU, the UN, others on the ground in Afghanistan to be successful.

So there's been a great deal of reworking and rethinking of NATO already. That's what brings me now to the Bucharest Summit because the goal of the summit is to take where we've gone so far and advance them further, in each of these areas.

If you had to figure out what are the headline issues that are going to be addressed at Bucharest I think they would be Afghanistan, enlargement -- and that is both invitations and possible Membership Action Plan, missile defense, I think we'll have to stay focused on Kosovo, and some of these capabilities issues of strengthening NATO capabilities.

Let me take a moment to go through each of those as agenda issues for the summit, then have a few other closing comments.

On Afghanistan, Afghanistan as I said is a prime example of the role that NATO needs to play and needs to play successfully in the security environment that we now have. Essentially the well being of our societies, the security of our societies, depends upon what we do in Afghanistan. Remember, that it was from the territory of Afghanistan that the plot to attack the Twin Towers in New York was hatched, and it was a complex one because it was hatched there, but then we had cells in Germany and we had people who then arrived in the United States and acted within the United States to carry out an attack. So there is a failed state or a state taken over by terrorists dimension to security in Afghanistan. But there are other dimensions.

Afghanistan is by far the single largest source of opium reaching Europe and having an affect on lives of young people in Europe every day, and putting costs on societies in Europe that need to deal with problems of drug addiction and the associated problems that come with drug addiction such as health issues and crime issues.

You have a phenomenon of violent extremism. I mentioned this earlier. Where it is currently a serious matter for us to think about as democratic societies that you have violent extremists out in the world who deliberately use violence to attack societies, to attack civilians, and that they are finding a climate where there's a war of ideas going on. There's a debate over whether moderate societies rise up and prevent this sort of thing from happening, moderate people within society, or whether some of this is justified. I think it's essential for the United States, for Europe, for those who believe in civilization to say no. Deliberate violence and attacks against civilians that include women, that include children, that include the elderly, that are indiscriminate, really. You think about the principal number of victims of violent extremist attacks have been Muslims by other Muslims in Iraq or in Afghanistan or elsewhere. These are terrible things. So this is a long term challenge for us.

This is played out in Afghanistan. We need to help the majority of the people in Afghanistan, the vast majority, who want to build a society, who want our help to do so, who have formed a government through a free and fair election, who have a constitution based on the meeting of a loya jurga, who are establishing governance really for the first time since before the Soviet invasion. This is a major challenge that is important for us because of the global stakes. The second point is it's also important for the people of Afghanistan. Because without the help we can give them it's going to be very very difficult. They face determined, armed extremists who are trying to retake the country and they depend on our assistance to prevent that from happening.

I think we've made a lot of progress in Afghanistan. If you look at measures like access to health care, eight percent of the population in 2001, over 65 percent today.

Education, 900,000 kids in school in 2001, over five million today. Girls, zero in school in 2001 because it was illegal, over a million and a half today. Infrastructure, 50 kilometers of paved roads in 2001, over 4,000 kilometers today. There are a lot of measures of progress and development that we've made in Afghanistan.

But the fact is that the challenges remain very very grave and greater than our collective efforts to deal with them at the moment. We need to be doing more and better, and we need to change some of our approaches.

I think we've learned a lot about counter-insurgency in Afghanistan and I think we've seen some progress in the eastern part of the country, and I think we need to continue to rework our NATO strategy on counter-insurgency to make sure we can increase our effectiveness throughout the whole country.

That is Afghanistan as I believe probably the number one issue for the summit. We need to be handling this well as an alliance.

I should add that NATO will not only be meeting by itself, but we've invited President Karzai, the United Nations, European Union, to host a larger meeting in Bucharest where the global community that is engaged in Afghanistan will be able to meet and discuss how we proceed on these critical issues.

The second theme that I mentioned was enlargement. This is an area that I think has been a tremendous historic success for NATO. We now have over 100 million people from the Baltics to the Black Sea who live in free, democratic societies, market economies that are prospering, and are secure as members of NATO and integrated as members of the European Union with a Europe that's whole and free. That's a tremendous achievement. NATO enlargement was the vanguard on this. It's not the only thing. EU enlargement was critical as well. But NATO enlargement pushed ahead and that made a tremendous difference for the countries and the people of Central and Eastern Europe.

It also made NATO better. I know this was a debate in 1997-1998 when we had the ratification debates, would this weaken NATO to bring in countries that are not as rich and not as developed and whose military forces are not as strong as the old countries from NATO of 1996. It was a debate, it was an honest question, but I feel confident now saying that NATO is better. NATO is stronger as a result of having countries like Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, in as members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. They bring capacity, they bring political will, they bring a commitment to the same values and principles that NATO has always believed in, and I think that NATO is more outward looking, more engaged operationally, and more relevant to the future today as a result of that enlargement that took place in 1997 and in 2002.

So we look ahead and we see that the job of building a Europe whole, free and at peace is not finished. We have the Balkans, we have Ukraine, we have Georgia, we have Belarus - a dictatorship, and we say that we need to be continuing to build and strengthen strong societies in Europe.

Here we've used a tool, the Membership Action Plan, to help countries such as Albania, Croatia and Macedonia to strengthen their political, economic, military reforms, build interoperability, take part in operations together such as in Afghanistan where all three are participating, in order to build their capacities and their ability to function effectively as members of NATO.

The idea behind the Membership Action Plan, it was created at the Washington Summit in 1999, was well, we're not ready to issue an invitation to these countries today but we don't want to just fold our hands and say no, so we wanted to reach out and help. The Membership Action Plan was NATO's vehicle to assist countries to say we want to see you succeed, so let us figure out ways that we can help you do so so that later on we will be able to take a positive decision on membership that we can't take today. That was the genesis of it and I think it's worked very well. Certainly for the seven countries that were invited in 2002, I think they made great use of the Membership Action Plan. And as we look ahead to the summit in Bucharest we have three countries that have again made great use of the Membership Action Plan.

It's a consensus organization, NATO. It takes a decision by all 26 members to agree to invite any additional member. I'm very confident that there will be new invitations in Bucharest. We would like to see as many countries succeed as possible. We are working hard to help bring that about, but it is a decision that is yet to be taken in this country, exactly which countries will we support. That is a decision that only the President can make, and it's a decision for the alliance as a whole, say will we support three or two or one, or what will the decision be on further enlargement. But we are very confident that enlargement has been a good thing for NATO and will continue to be a good thing and we want to see these countries perform and have the widest enlargement that's possible at the NATO Summit.

We have two other countries that have expressed interest in NATO membership and they've written to the Secretary General and said we'd like to take part in the Membership Action Plan, and that's Ukraine and Georgia.

Again, we have always believed that NATO's doors should remain open, that we should support countries who want to reform their economies, their political systems to become more democratic, strengthen their institutions, militarily to reform defense establishments, to work together to build security in the world. We've always felt that NATO should remain open to that. And we have always supported Membership Action Plan for Ukraine and Georgia, but we recognize that again, this is a decision that NATO as a whole has to make. There are lots of considerations that go into this, and I can't give you a prediction today where that will come out but I think the trend line has to be clear.

The position of principle. Whether or not you have a decision at Bucharest in favor of Membership Action Plan or not, the decision or the position has to be we need to be able to support people and support countries that want to build strong, democratic, secure societies and work together to build security in the neighborhood and in the world. So we very much believe that NATO needs to give a positive signal like that.

I mentioned Kosovo. I won't dwell on Kosovo today but I just want to emphasize that NATO has a particular job in Kosovo which is to run the KFOR operation, to maintain security in Kosovo, to maintain freedom of movement, and to protect minority communities and religious establishments within Kosovo. That is what KFOR is there for. It's working very hard to do that. I think 90 percent or more than 80 percent of the troops in Kosovo are European. The U.S. is only 1700 troops. But KFOR, a NATO operation, has a very important job in Kosovo at a time that we are seeing Kosovo establish its independence. And NATO is committed to seeing that through and accomplishing its mission.

Capabilities issues. I want to mention a couple. Missile defense, but then a few others.

Missile defense, I know there's been a great deal of debate on this within Europe. I would look at it this way. Article 5 of the NATO Treaty basically says that NATO is supposed to protect its territory and its populations against threats. We have a collective defense commitment. It doesn't say that we'll protect ourselves from everything except missiles. It says we ought to do this. And as missile threats emerge that can hit alliance territory and population centers, imagine the effect of a missile hitting a European city. It would be devastating.

So to have a defensive system that can take a missile out of the sky so that that kind of devastation can't happen, that is a remarkable step forward technologically, but it's also a remarkable step forward politically because it means that NATO is doing its job of collective defense.

We're talking about a very limited number of interceptors. We're talking about interceptors that don't have their own warheads. It's a kinetic effect to take out the incoming missile. But it is an important contribution, I think, to NATO security overall.

Other issues, I want to mention a couple. One of them is as we've developed forces that are able to deploy and sustain themselves at a distance, we've also come across some critical gaps of what we don't have enough of. One of them was airlift, strategic airlift, where it's very expensive and not enough countries were able to transport themselves to and from the theater of operations, so we launched an initiative for the Riga Summit back in 2006 to get a consortium of countries together in which the United States took part to buy some C-17 aircraft so that we would have an ability to provide airlift.

That is still underway. It sounds modest, three or four airplanes. But they're very expensive and it's more than one country can do alone. So by pooling resources we create a physical capacity of airlift that can then support NATO operations or support EU led operations or support the needs of a nation that's engaged in some operation somewhere, based on having shared the cost and now owning a share of the hours of transportation of that aircraft.

Other gaps have emerged as well and we need to chip away at filling these gaps. Helicopters is probably one of the most important ones at the moment that we would identify. The ability to have tactical airlift within a theater of operations such as Afghanistan where the helicopters have the necessary protective measures, where they're able to transport troops throughout the entire country, and where we have the deployed maintenance and logistics teams able to keep the helicopters flying. Very expensive, very difficult, we don't have enough of the maintenance and logistics and we don't have enough helicopters overall as an alliance, so we need a further investment in that. That's something that the alliance is starting to work on and that we think we'll make some progress on at Bucharest.

Another one I wanted to mention is Special Operations Forces. Until operations began in Afghanistan, NATO had not really tried to coordinate among the Special Operations Forces of the allies. We've begun to do so and we find it very very productive and very rewarding, so we've created a cell in Europe, SHAPE, where Special Operations Forces coordinate with each other and we are working to do so on the ground as well, so that those who are deployed in Afghanistan are working together.

The final one on capabilities, although there are many others that I could mention, is just the NATO Response Force. The NATO Response Force was created as a result of a decision at the Prague Summit in 2002 to give NATO a deployable capability that was ready and known and exercised. Before that everything was a tin cup operation. Everything was you had a crisis, you had to go to the nations and see what countries could volunteer that wasn't otherwise being used. It made it very difficult for NATO to know what was available and what could really be done on short notice. The Response Force was created to give NATO that capacity.

It was made large. It was defined as a force about 25,000 with a full spectrum of capabilities -- land, sea, air, communications, transportation. What happened then is NATO became more heavily involved in operations today, operations that are ongoing. Not planning for the contingency but carrying out the one that's real. Sustaining the real operations as well as sustaining a Response Forces exercise became very challenging just in terms of sheer numbers of troops and sheer equipment investment and the tying up of forces that could otherwise be deployed in operations today.

So we've looked at how we can rethink the Response Force. I think the simplest explanation is to say we need deployable pieces. You have to be able to have pieces of a response force that can deploy rather than the whole thing all at once, and a varying of the readiness timelines so that not everything has to be equally highly ready all the time, but can stretch out over time. This is a way then for the nations that are contributing the forces to manage the costs of that.

That is something that I think we've made some progress on and I think we'll hear more about at the summit.

A few words in closing. One of them is Russia. I see my friend here from the Russian embassy, so I want to reiterate and I'm glad that he's here to hear it, we want to work together with Russia. We believe that NATO and Russia share a great deal of common security interests and we ought to be able to deal with these together.

The NATO-Russia Council was founded in 2002 at a NATO-Russia summit meeting. I believe that we've never fully explored the potential of a NATO-Russia Council, and that we should.

We'd like to work together on missile defense. Missiles can hit not only NATO territory, but Russian territory as well. We'd like to work together on security in the Balkans. I think that depends upon an independent Kosovo and a KFOR operation that's maintaining security there. But we have to look ahead.

We would like to work together on the future of the CFE Treaty and we are disappointed that Russia has chosen to suspend implementation of the CFE Treaty, but we also want to work together to overcome that suspension so that we can get to a point where we are implementing not only the current treaty but also to a point where we will be able to ratify the adapted CFE Treaty and continue to see that as an important measure of conventional forces security and stability in Europe, and in many other areas as well.

We've done some good things. I shouldn't undersell it. We've done some good things in the NATO-Russia Council. Search and rescue things, incidents at sea. But there's more that I think we can take advantage of.

Another one that I wanted to mention was NATO-EU relations because we believe it's very important that NATO and the EU are able to work together. We're often in the same space trying to contribute to the same solutions, whether it's Kosovo or Bosnia or Afghanistan or Darfur. NATO has a comparative advantage on the military side but needs to have some liaison and capacity to span into the civilian spectrum. And the EU has a comparative advantage on the civilian side but is also developing military capacities, particularly for operations where NATO is not going to be involved, and we see that in Chad, for example. So we like to see NATO and EU be able to work together more seamlessly as institutions across a civil/military spectrum to deal with crisis management in places where we need it.

This is very very difficult at the moment because of political issues that have little to do with NATO-EU themselves, but are important, nonetheless. These are differences over Cyprus where Turkey being a member of NATO and Cyprus being a member of the EU, have positions that quite frankly need to be negotiated in the context of a Cyprus settlement rather than in the context of NATO-EU cooperation in operations, but it is a reality that they are an impediment to what we are able to do between NATO and the EU.

So we hope that we'll be able to see progress in that over time. But we should be clear that the U.S. position at least is that we want to see NATO and the EU work well together and we support a European security and defense policy that can be coordinated with NATO and that can draw upon European capabilities to do things where NATO is not engaged.

A final point, with all of that having been said about the past developments of NATO, the context that we're working in, and then what we're looking for at the Bucharest Summit. In the end, it all boils down to political will. That we have to want this. We have to recognize as societies, the way we decide where to put our money and our budgets, how we talk about things publicly, how we work together as nations, that this is important. That our security is important. It can't be taken for granted, and that the United States and Europe being able to work together on security is essential and therefore we need to have a commitment to a strong and effective NATO to do that.

So those are my remarks for this morning. I'd be delighted to, along with Mike, take some questions and answers here, and thank you very much for having me.

[Applause].

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