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On NATO Enlargement
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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on the case for NATO enlargement and the qualifications of the seven countries which have been invited to join the Alliance. I would also like to offer a strategic context for the decision the Senate is being asked to ratify and to suggest how this enlargement will further shape and strengthen NATO.

I

The decision at the NATO Summit at Prague to invite seven countries to join NATO was a major step in the post-war strategy of the United States to build a Europe that is whole and free. Assuming we count the reunification of Germany as a *de facto* enlargement, the so-called "Vilnius States" whose ratification is before the Senate will constitute the sixth round of enlargement since the formation of the Alliance in 1949. A brief review of NATO's history suggests that there are several misconceptions about the current round.

Many people believe that this will be the largest round of enlargement in history since the Senate may consent to the ratification of seven states. But NATO has always been as much of an alliance between peoples as an alliance between governments so population may be a better guide. Next to Spain which entered in 1982 and East Germany during reunification, the combined population of the Vilnius States of 43 million constitutes one of the smallest enlargements to date. Greece and Turkey in 1952, West Germany in 1955, and Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary in 1999 were all significantly larger in terms of population and physical size.

Many people believe that the seven Vilnius democracies are weaker militarily than their predecessors. This is also a misperception. In 1955, when West Germany was invited to join the Alliance, it had no army and no budget for defense. Today, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia and Slovenia have well-trained self-defense forces, regional security arrangements such as BALTBAT, and have achieved or are approaching defense budgets of 2% of GDP. The two larger countries, Romania and Bulgaria, can tell an even more impressive story. After downsizing and modernization, the end-strength of Romanian forces will be approximately 75,000 and Bulgarian forces approximately 45,000. Together, Romanian and Bulgarian forces in being are twice the size of what the European Union defense force might be in ten years. More importantly, Romanian and Bulgarian forces are deployable today to most of the contingencies the EU fictional force could not deploy to tomorrow.

Some critics have suggested that the quality of democracy in the Vilnius states is somehow more fragile and potentially reversible than the democracy in existing NATO states. While it is true that democracy in the Vilnius states flowered after the Revolution of 1989 making them some of Europe's newest democracies, their youth in an historical context does not indicate a weakness of civic society. In fact, the opposite is true. Few countries in recent European history have struggled longer for their freedom or worked harder to build democratic institutions than the countries under consideration by the Senate. Although these evaluations are highly subjective, it would seem to me that the democratic credentials of the seven Vilnius states are superior to Greece, Turkey and West Germany at the time of their invitations and comparable favorably to where Polish, Czech and Hungarian democracies were at the time of the Senate's ratification in 1998. In some ways, the energy and enthusiasm of Europe's new democracies make them more robust than the older democracies of Western Europe and more resistant to extremism and political backsliding. This Committee should also be aware that there has been no instance where democracy has been overturned or reversed in Central and Eastern Europe since the Fall of the Berlin Wall.

Finally, some critics have argued that this round of enlargement is exceptional because of the absence of a Soviet threat and the appearance that the decision of the nineteen NATO Heads of State at Prague was motivated by political reasons, rather than presumably more legitimate calculations of military advantage. Here again, NATO's history conflicts with this view. There has been no Soviet threat during the last three rounds of NATO enlargement in 1982, 1991 and 1999. When the Senate ratified the accession of Spain in 1982 in a unanimous voice vote, there was no threat to Spain posed by Soviet tank armies. It is quite clear from commentary at the time that Franco and the last vestiges of Spanish fascism had finally died and that it was time for Spain to rejoin the community of shared values. Every decision to expand the alliance of democracies has been a political act in the finest sense of the term Apolitical.@ Both German enlargement and German reunification were part of the great project of rebuilding a democratic Germany. Greece and Turkey were not invited because they were strong, but precisely because, if they remained isolated, they would remain weak and vulnerable. For the past fifty-four years, the central decisions on membership have been guided by the belief that there is a natural tendency of democracies to ally with one another in a collective effort to defend themselves and the values they share.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Robert Bradtke, in his testimony before you last week cited Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, which speaks to the political question at the heart of the Senate decision on ratification. Article 10 permits the NATO allies to invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of the Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.@ I would like to turn to the qualifications of the seven invited countries in light of these two criteria: democratic principles and the willingness to contribute to security.

II

President Bush in his historic speech at Warsaw University said that he believed the community of European states which share our values and are prepared to share our responsibilities stretches from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Let me begin with the Baltic States and focus on how each state has defined its democracy and where they stand on individual contributions.

Lithuania: Apart from the role Lithuanian freedom fighters played between 1989 and 1990 in regaining their independence, the notable achievement of Lithuanian democracy has been its handling of issues surrounding the Holocaust. For a nation that was itself brutally victimized by Nazi Germany and held captive by Stalin and his Soviet successors, the complicity of Lithuanian citizens in the destruction of the Jewish community in Vilnius and their nation's subsequent indifference to Jewish survivors came as an unwelcome shock to this generation of Lithuanians. Nevertheless, consecutive Lithuanian Governments made Lithuania's painful past their priority. As a result, Holocaust education is taught at all levels of Lithuania's educational system. Torah scrolls have been returned to the Jewish Community. The restoration of the Jewish Quarter in Vilnius is beginning and legislation is being prepared to enable the restitution of communal property. While more work needs to be done, Lithuania's commitment to come to terms with its past should give us great confidence in its future. Lithuanians have taken the time to build a foundation of religious tolerance and historical understanding for their democracy. These values are the core principles of the Alliance.

With regard to Lithuania's willingness to contribute to security, there can be no serious question. Lithuania is already contributing to NATO operations in Kosovo and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and is sending military medical personnel and logistics experts to Iraq. From the beginnings of the Vilnius Group in May 2000, it has been obvious why the new democracies chose Vilnius. Lithuania has been stalwart on security issues from the days of Popular Front and an advocate for solidarity with the United States throughout the Vilnius process. Lithuania and the six other countries I will discuss agreed in the Statement of the Vilnius Group Countries on February 5, 2003:

Our countries understand the dangers posed by tyranny and the special responsibility of democracies to defend our shared values. The trans-Atlantic community, of which we are a part, must stand together to face the threat posed by the nexus of terrorism and dictators with weapons of mass destruction. The clear and present danger posed by the Saddam Hussein's regime requires a united response from the community of democracies.

Latvia: Latvia has also distinguished itself in terms of the democratic transformation of its civic society. Possibly the greatest accomplishment of Latvian democracy has been the integration of Latvia's Russian-speaking minority. Despite 50 years of Soviet deportations and occupation, Riga has reached out to ethnic Russians who have come to regard themselves as Latvian by offering citizenship to tens of thousands, reducing fees and language barriers to naturalization, and removing bureaucratic barriers to political participation at all levels of elected office. There are many countries in Western Europe which fall short of the enlightened approach to the integration of minorities that Latvia has chosen. Secondly, the new government of Prime Minister Repse has launched a serious campaign to counter corruption. The Latvians have recognized that corruption is the single greatest threat to the growth and development of their democracy and taken steps to eradicate corruption at the governmental level. All the countries of the Vilnius Group have reached this same conclusion, and I will try to point out their different approaches.

Latvia is also a stand-out in its contributions to KFOR, ISAF and has authorized deployment of forces to Iraq for peace enforcement and humanitarian operations. Few Presidents in the history of the alliance have made a greater contribution to its political and moral leadership in as short a time as President Vaira Vike-Freiberga. Many believe (I think correctly) that the Latvian President has emerged as the moral and political successor to President Vaclav Havel. Consistent moral counsel and militant political solidarity may be the most enduring contribution a democracy can offer to the security of the Alliance.

Estonia: Estonia has focused its effort on sustained democratic and market reforms which have brought it to the forefront of EU accession in addition to the NATO invitation it secured in Prague. The Estonian model has not only resulted in significant economic success but also informs us of how market-oriented democracies can build cooperative and equitable relations with Russia. Estonia's role in leading the Baltic democracies into the European Union also serves to link NATO countries more closely with the Nordic states and will certainly influence Finland's decision in 2005 regarding a closer relationship with NATO.

Estonia's contributions to security compare favorably with its Baltic neighbors. Like Lithuania and Latvia, Estonia is supporting NATO operations in Kosovo and Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and is preparing to deploy in support of peacekeeping operations in Iraq. The willingness of Estonians to contribute to the collective defense of the alliance is best illustrated by the oft-quoted remark of Prime Minister Siim Kallas to President Bush shortly before the war with Iraq:

“You don't have to tell us about Saddam Hussein. We have seen what happens when democracies are indecisive. That's when small countries like ours lose their freedom.”

Slovakia: Because of its struggle for political stability since the Velvet Divorce, Slovakia's democratic credentials are, in many ways, the most impressive of all the Vilnius states. In the past five years, Slovaks have fought and won a hard fight with corruption, political extremism and primitive nationalism. The first anti-Meciar coalition elected in 1998 consisted of five disparate parties and ran the gamut of politics from left to right. Few thought it would survive for four years let alone succeed in major defense reforms and choose as its final act the enactment of funding for a Holocaust reparation program. As a result of the seriousness of purpose of this coalition of democratic parties, Meciar and other extremists were rejected conclusively in September 2002 and a second, stronger center-right coalition was reelected. The return of Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda's coalition is the first re-election of a center-right reform government in Central or Eastern Europe since the fall of the Wall. In itself, this is a huge achievement in a post-Communist electorate and a clear indication of the rapidly growing political maturity of Slovakia.

In addition to the sweeping reform of the Ministry of Defense I mentioned, the Slovak army has joint programs with the Indiana National Guard and has deployed peacekeepers to Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Cyprus. Slovakia has also just deployed a company-size Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological unit capable of detection and demining to Kuwait to support coalition operations in Iraq. As impressive as these contributions are, this Committee should not overlook the political contributions of Slovakia to Euro-Atlantic security. In addition to a significant leadership role within the Vilnius and Visegrad Groups, Slovak diplomacy and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were at the forefront of the popular movement to overthrow the Milosevic regime in Belgrade. Continuing the tradition of Charter 77, Bratislava is the center of activities for NGOs and human rights activists working for democratic change in the Balkans and in Europe's eastern neighbors.

Slovenia: In the last decade, Slovene democracy has faced slightly different challenges than the other invitees because of the difficult circumstances of Slovenia's independence. Whereas the Baltic States, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria are all in some sense the children of 1989, Slovenia is more the oldest orphan of the death of Yugoslavia. In a remarkably short period of time, Slovenia has built a self-confident, coherent nation and an economic miracle in the ashes of Milosevic's first war of aggression. The greatest challenge faced by the Slovenes was to rebuild the trust of the people in governmental and Euro-Atlantic institutions, which had failed the Slovene people all too frequently in the past. The achievement in the recent referendum of 90% public support for EU membership and 66% public support for NATO membership is a watershed in the construction of Slovene democracy.

Sadly, the greatest contribution of Slovenia to Euro-Atlantic security is often forgotten. In 1990-1991, Slovene freedom fighters, such as Janez Jansa, met invading Serbian forces in the mountains of Slovenia and defeated them. The Slovene accomplishment can be compared with the heroic struggle of the Finns in the Winter War, albeit on a much smaller scale. Like the Finns, the fledgling Slovene state fought

alone for its survival, without Western aid against a superior enemy, and years before the intervention of Allied forces. Quite without our help, Slovenia handed Milosevic his first defeat on the battlefield. In addition to its historical record, Slovenia has contributed humanitarian assistance and training to Afghanistan, military forces to NATO operations in Bosnia, and troops and equipment to SFOR and KFOR.

Romania: Romania is both the largest and most consequential strategically of the Vilnius Group. It is also widely regarded as the most dramatically improved democracy and economy in Central and Eastern Europe. The difficulties inherent in constructing democratic institutions after the civic devastation caused by the Ceausescu regime were compounded throughout the 1990-s by the recessionary effect of war in the Western Balkans and the sheer size of Romania-s population. (More than half of the people whose countries may join NATO carry Romanian passports.) Against this forbidding backdrop, Romania has rebuilt a free and contentious press, multiple political parties, and a flowering artistic and literary community. While reforms often move too slowly in the Parliament and anti-corruption offices are still getting traction, the reform of the Ministry of Defense and Romanian security services has become the case study of success in bringing national security under civilian control and democratic oversight. On the economic front, former Prime Minister Isarescu, who now chairs the Romanian Central Bank, has instituted monetary reforms which have created the conditions for GDP growth rates of nearly 5% for the last three years. Moreover, this growth has been achieved organically, without significant foreign direct investment and in a recessionary European economy.

On defense contributions, Romania has been a stalwart even among contributors. Less than 48 hours after the September 11th attacks, Romania and Bulgaria granted blanket overflight rights, basing and port facilities, and full intelligence cooperation with US forces. These contributions were approved by a unanimous vote of the Romanian Parliament despite the fact that the United States had not requested this assistance either formally or informally. Nevertheless, Romania and Bulgaria recognized that they had a responsibility to make assets and access available to US and coalition forces. Romania has contributed military forces to every major NATO and coalition action in the last five years: Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq to name but a few. Finally, Romania is the only country in Europe to deploy a battalion-strength combat force to Afghanistan using its own military airlift. Romania is already making concrete security contributions which exceed the military capabilities of some existing NATO members.

Bulgaria: Bulgaria has faced many of the same structural problems which Romania confronted and a few of its own. As one of the oldest nations in Europe, Bulgaria has a long tradition of religious and political tolerance and, in the post-communist period, has succeeded in building robust political parties and a system of free and fair elections. Bulgaria-s long history, however, is a mixed blessing. Bulgaria-s natural conservatism and extended isolation from Western Europe have

slowed the pace of market and judicial reforms and contributed to a sluggish economic environment, which, in turn, has contributed to an increasing alienation of the electorate.

Therefore, I disagree with those who have suggested that the management of the Bulgarian Ministry of Defense is the greatest concern in Bulgarian democracy. I do not think this analysis is correct. Despite the recent scandal of illegal arms sales, Minister of Defense Svinarov has held those responsible to account and continues to press for reform in the military services. The real threat to Bulgarian democracy lies in a profoundly corrupt judiciary system and the tolerance of corruption in the business community among the leaders of Parliament and Government. The greatest danger to Bulgaria's future is the penetration of the judiciary by transnational crime and the failure of the Office of the Special Prosecutor to investigate governmental corruption, organized crime or the manipulation of Bulgaria's media and political processes by foreign parties. Over the next 5-10 years, Bulgaria must devote a major effort to strengthening its judiciary and criminalizing corrupt business and political practices.

Although the pace of non-defense reforms has lagged other Vilnius Group democracies, Bulgaria's contributions to security, both militarily and politically, have been exemplary. Like Romania, Bulgaria has contributed troops and bases to all major NATO and coalition deployments. From the beginning, Bulgaria has steadfastly supported the United States in the war on terror and in coalition action against Iraq. It is also evident that US diplomacy got as far as it did in the UN Security Council only as a result of the firm support and solidarity of Bulgaria in what must certainly have seemed to Bulgarians to be a thankless job. I think Americans should be immensely grateful for the loyalty of Bulgaria in this difficult and dangerous time.

I have tried to outline the specific challenges facing these seven democracies as well as their strengths and general willingness to contribute. I do not think we should expect every post-1989 democracy to develop at the same rate or to choose the identical path to self-definition. On balance, however, I believe that each of these countries is fully qualified in terms of democratic values and security contributions for membership in NATO. I would now like to turn to how these new members might shape a New NATO and contribute to its changing mission.

III

Shortly after the Washington NATO Summit in 1999, I wrote a briefing which came to be known as the Big Bang. This briefing proposed the inclusion of these seven countries in NATO and claimed for this enlargement strategic advantages for NATO and moral benefits for the democratic community of nations. On May 19, 2000 in Vilnius, Lithuania, these propositions were adopted by nine of Europe's new democracies as their own and became the objectives of the Vilnius Group. It might be

useful to review these original claims in the light of NATO's new missions and continuing institutional adaptation.

There were five central elements to the argument for the ABig Bang.@

1. The invitation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania would bring a comprehensive peace to the entire Baltic Sea and Nordic region and set the stage for a new relationship between Europe and Russia.
2. The inclusion of Slovakia would create a coherent center in the alliance and close the door to transnational crime. This would make Europe safe for historic neutrals and allow countries like Ukraine the opportunity to redefine their relations with Europe.
3. The inclusion of Slovenia would create a model for post-Yugoslav success and accelerate the larger democratization of the Balkans.
4. Invitations to Romania and Bulgaria would bring a ASouthern Dimension@ to NATO. This ASouthern Dimension@ would limit transnational threats to the Western Balkans, serve to bring Turkey and Greece closer to Europe, and begin to create a security structure for the Black Sea.
5. Collectively, invitations to Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia would signal the strategic integration of Southeast Europe in Euro-Atlantic institutions and could bring states as far away as Cyprus and the Caucasus into a peaceful European system.

Surprisingly, these initial hopes for the Vilnius Group have been realized to a far greater extent than its founders had any right to expect. Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski observed shortly after the Prague Summit that the invitation to the seven countries of the Vilnius Group marked the beginning of the third and final phase of contemporary European history. The transformation of Europe which began with the Revolution of 1989 has effectively completed two major phases. The first phase, the Visegrad, was marked by the integration of democratic nation-states with long European histories into modern Euro-Atlantic institutions. The second phase, the Vilnius Group, saw European nation-states mature as democracies and integrate into the institutions of the West.

In the third phase, which began at the Prague Summit and whose conclusion will presumably mark the end of the period of Europe's post-war geopolitical transformation, states which are not adequately democratic, isolated from mainstream European history and, in some cases, still in the process of defining themselves as nations will attempt to become integrated European democracies. These states will define the borders of modern Europe. In my view, the mission of a new NATO is inextricably linked with these frontiers of freedom.

Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley defined NATO's strategy in a speech in Brussels on October 3, 2002. He said:

The strategy has three pillars: We will defend the peace by opposing and preventing violence by terrorist and outlaw regimes; we will preserve the peace by fostering an era of good relations among the world's great powers; and we will extend the peace by seeking to extend the benefits of freedom and prosperity across the globe. As you can see from these three pillars this is a strategy that does not render NATO obsolete but rather envisions a central place for NATO.

The integration of the seven Vilnius states in NATO will create a stronger, more inclusive alliance which can turn its attention to the final stage of this defining period in European history. This third phase will undoubtedly be the most complex of this historical period and in some ways may be the most critical to long-term Euro-Atlantic security. Where we find ourselves politically five years in the future will be where we stand geopolitically for the following fifty years. Stephen Hadley is right to remind us that NATO is the critical vehicle for this task.

Therefore, we should not define the New NATO solely in terms of its capabilities, lest it become a tool kit without a purpose. Nor should we define NATO exclusively as an expeditionary force, which would only serve to create a Foreign Legion for out-of-area peacekeeping and garrison duties. The mission of the New NATO is to extend the peace.

Over the next five years, we have excellent chances to bring the remaining three Vilnius countries, Albania, Croatia and Macedonia, into Euro-Atlantic institutions, thereby building an enduring security structure in the Balkans. In the few short months since the Prague Summit, these three countries and the United States have developed an Adriatic Charter which will serve to accelerate democratic reform and provide a roadmap to EU and NATO membership. NATO will be central in rebuilding our relationship with Turkey and, perhaps, developing a Black Sea security system linking the South Caucasus to their neighbors around the Black Sea. Ukraine is also seeking a new relationship with Europe and with NATO. All along the frontiers of freedom, there are missions for NATO which have major implications for Euro-Atlantic security. The mission of NATO should be nothing less than to set the stage for the completion of Europe before the end of this decade. An alliance with the seven nations of the Vilnius Group will improve our chances of success in this great endeavor.

IV

In conclusion, I would like to appeal to this Committee to consider the proposed amendment to the Washington Treaty on the merits of these seven democracies. Last week in the Senate Armed Services Committee, frustration with French diplomacy introduced two questions of structural change in the Washington Treaty apart from the question of ratification. These changes would be a great mistake and serve as a cautionary example of how a good political case can make bad law.

The first suggestion is that NATO might adopt a majority voting system in an effort to limit France's ability to obstruct prompt decision-making. Unhappily, this change would have the opposite effect. Majority decision-making would give rise to factions within NATO which would attempt to achieve slim majorities to the detriment of US interests and leadership. The rise of factionalism would lead inevitably to the passage of half-baked schemes with the United States in the dissenting minority. Over time, the erosion of US leadership in NATO would precipitate the decline of American political support for our security commitments in Europe. At present, the United States is the only country that can consistently produce unanimous outcomes at the level of the North Atlantic Council or, failing in that, at the Defense Planning Committee. The process of achieving unanimity is uniquely and, perhaps intentionally, to the advantage of the United States. The countries whose ratification is before this Committee are aghast that the Senate might consider weakening US leadership in NATO, which is the aspect of NATO they most admire, just as their democracies reach the threshold of membership. I share their concern.

The second suggestion is even more pernicious. Some have suggested that NATO needs an expulsion clause to protect the institution from members who deviate from the principles of the alliance or otherwise fail to maintain accepted standards of human rights. Notwithstanding the fact that this clause has not been necessary for fifty-four years and that NATO membership has been the most effective mechanism for democratic reform we have found since 1989, advocates maintain we need to protect NATO from hypothetical bad actors.

In my view, an expulsion clause would invariably be employed against the vulnerable and never against the deplorable. It is easy to envision a 1930's NATO expelling Czechoslovakia for their mistreatment of ethnic Germans immediately before Hitler's invasion or concluding that the abduction of Christian children by the Jews of Warsaw relieved the Atlantic Alliance of the obligation to defend Poland. And, today, if Turkey were threatened with military attack, I am certain there would be a motion to conclude that deteriorating human rights conditions obviated any obligation to honor NATO's Article V commitment. Although I have overstated for the purpose of effect, my point is that no country could fully rely on Article V, if the members of the Alliance harbored the option to expel. The automaticity of Article V is the soul and the genius of the Washington Treaty. A provision to expel would introduce a corrosive mental reservation in the commitment to defend an embattled democracy and would completely debilitate the most powerful military alliance ever created.

This Committee and the Senate of the United States have a far better option. The Senate can significantly strengthen the constituency, character and resolve of the Alliance by ratifying the accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia as NATO members. This affirmative action would improve the security of the United States and strengthen the moral and political fabric of the alliance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

