



## NATO 2008: Is the Alliance Ready to Face New Challenges? Expectations from Bucharest

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**His Excellency Adrian Vierita, Ambassador to the United States from Romania**

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**Mr. Hickman, NPC:** -- Those Newsmakers, as you know, are the recently arrived Ambassador of Romania to the United States, His Excellency Adrian Vierita. He presented his credentials to President Bush in January. Mr. Ambassador. And the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Mr. Kurt Volker, who has been nominated by President Bush to be the next U.S. Ambassador to NATO. Congratulations, Mr. Secretary.

Ambassador, Mr. Secretary, welcome to you both. We're very glad you could be here with us, and I want to welcome back to the NPC and thank the person who suggested and did most of the work in arranging this Newsmaker, the Press and Cultural Affairs Officer of the Romanian Embassy in Washington, Ms. Ilinca Ilie who is sitting somewhere modestly around here.

Copies of our newsmaker's bios are available so I won't take up their time by telling you what you can already read, but let me just mention a couple of the higher highlights.

Ambassador Vierita is a career diplomat. He was Romania's Ambassador to Germany. He also served at the Office of International Organizations in Vienna, and was his country's deputy representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency and UNITO. And Mr. Ambassador, I've forgotten what UNITO stands for. United Nations, what is it?

**Ambassador Vierita:** United Nations Organization for Industrial --

**Mr. Hickman:** Industrial. And prior to his present posting, Ambassador Vierita was State Secretary for European Affairs in the Romanian Foreign Ministry.

Secretary Volker also is a career diplomat. He's been posted in Budapest, London, NATO headquarters, and the U.S. Senate -- is that considered a foreign assignment? [Laughter]. Where he worked on foreign policy with Senator John McCain. His experience has been largely in U.S. security policy, transatlantic relations, and NATO policy which certainly should stand him in good stead with his new job.

As you all know, Romania is hosting the 2008 Summit Meeting of NATO heads of state and government in Bucharest April 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup>. This is the largest summit in NATO history with all members plus the members -- 26 members, plus 23 members of the Partnership for Peace attending. At the summit I understand that President Bush is scheduled to meet with Romanian President Traian Basescu, Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu, and NATO Secretary General and Summit Chairman, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. I read that Russian President Putin is going to attend the meeting, and something NATO has said it hopes will, and I quote, "yield practical results." Let's hope it does.

So today our Newsmakers are going to preview this largest NATO Summit to date, whether the organization is ready to face new challenges, and what might be expected from the Summit. After they speak, they will take your questions, and please let them know your name and affiliation when you ask them, and to whom your question is directed. And when you do have a question if you'll give me a signal of some sort I'll call on you in turn, as many of you as time permits. Finally, if you haven't already done so, as you leave please add your name to the sign-in sheet outside. Thank you very much.

Secretary Volker, do you want to go first?

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** Thank you very much. I think I'll speak, and then Adrian, and then we'll do questions at the end of that. Thanks very much.

I have been speaking a little bit about the NATO Summit in various venues now so I recognize some of you from other events. So I apologize if I'm being repetitive, but I do think it's important that we take some time to discuss what we see are the major issues involving NATO right now, what we hope to be accomplishing at the Summit.

The first thing I would want to call your attention to is that NATO has been undergoing a substantial transformation since the end of the Cold War, since the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans in the '90s and since September 11, 2001. There has been a tremendous transformation that has taken place.

Let me give you just an illustration of how that transformation has gone. In 1995, not that long ago, 13 years ago, NATO was an alliance of 16 countries. It had no partners, had not established a Partnership for Peace yet. Had never conducted a military operation. Had of course done a lot of defense planning, had conducted a lot of exercises, but had never engaged in a military operation where NATO was leading that.

Fast forward that to 2006, 2007, 2008. Here you have a NATO that is now 26 members, having enlarged, brought in ten new members in a couple of waves of enlargement; having partners through the Partnership for Peace in Eurasia; partners in the Mediterranean through the Mediterranean Dialogue, seven of them; 20 in Eurasia; four in the Persian Gulf through the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative; working with other global partners such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, in common endeavors such as the operations in Afghanistan. And NATO, which had never conducted a military operation for most of its history, by 2006 and beyond was conducting multiple operations simultaneously. To name a few of them, obviously running the ISAF operation in Afghanistan, also KFOR in Kosovo, having a presence in Bosnia still, Active Endeavor which is a NATO counter-terrorism operation in the Mediterranean, delivering humanitarian relief supplies after the earthquake in Pakistan or after Hurricane Katrina here in the United States, or transporting African Union soldiers to Darfur, so NATO's role has transformed considerably.

The way I would explain this is that NATO's mission, NATO's purpose, the collective defense of its members, Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, remains unchanged. That is still the fundamental mission of NATO. The way it has to go about that mission in today's world is very different. The world today is characterized by threats that are very different than those that prevailed during the Cold War and immediately after. So we see things such as counter-terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failed states, extremism, and NATO's response to this is therefore very diverse. If you look at the operations that I mentioned, there's a great diversity in the ways in which NATO was handling these challenges, whether it is humanitarian, delivery of humanitarian relief, airlift, standard traditional peacekeeping operations, or very high intensity operations in combat such as in Afghanistan. So a great diversity of tasks that NATO has taken on for the same purposes of the security and defense of its members under the Washington treaty.



So this has been a substantial transformation that has taken place already since '95, since 2001, but there is more to come as well. I would characterize the Bucharest Summit as a further milestone in the continuing transformation and evolution of NATO, touching on these very same areas that I've already mentioned.

To give you some examples, we do expect there to be further invitations to countries to join NATO at the Bucharest Summit. There are three countries -- our Ambassador of Macedonia has just arrived. Welcome. There are three countries in the Membership Action Plan right now -- Albania, Croatia and Macedonia -- who are seeking NATO membership. We hope to have the largest possible number of that group invited to join NATO at the Summit itself. We have been working very closely with all of these countries and they've been working very hard on their political, economic defense reforms. So we'd like to see the strongest candidacies possible from these countries and they've been working hard at it, and we'd like to see the widest possible enlargement agreed by NATO. So that is one of the issues.

Another is Afghanistan, I mentioned this already, but NATO will be having a meeting that is not just NATO but NATO working with a lot of different partners who are all contributing to the efforts in Afghanistan. President Karzai will be there, the European Union will be there, United Nations including the new Special Representative of the Secretary General Kai Edie, other institutions, other partners and contributors in Afghanistan. I understand the Australian Prime Minister is planning to be there. So this is an opportunity for NATO to mobilize and be a host for a larger international community to focus on our efforts in Afghanistan.

NATO will be articulating a comprehensive approach, a vision for how we need to proceed in Afghanistan, supporting the Afghan government and working with them. Military areas, of course, because we face a very difficult insurgency, and I expect we'll see some announcements of new contributions. But also in civilian areas such as reconstruction, development, governance and supporting the Afghan government, and also in counter-narcotics and other ways.

Again, Bucharest furthering the transformation of NATO. I mentioned the enlargement issues, I mentioned Afghanistan. There are countries who have sought to be part of NATO's Membership Action Plan. That's Ukraine and Georgia. That will be discussed at the Summit itself. We certainly support their aspirations of drawing closer to NATO. It's something we have long supported. They have made official requests now to the Secretary General. These decisions are made by consensus within NATO, and we're in the process of consulting with our allies about those issues right now.

Kosovo I should mention. Concerning Kosovo we face contention in the Balkan region right now as a result of Kosovo's declaration of independence, and that being recognized by a large number of European countries, the United States and others. And NATO has a particular job in Kosovo which is to maintain peace and stability in Kosovo, maintain freedom of movement, protect minorities in Kosovo, protect related institutions, and NATO is fully prepared and capable of doing that job and will make clear at the Summit that it intends to continue to do that.

Finally I should mention missile defense is another area where we believe that NATO will be taking some substantial steps forward.

When I talked about transformation of NATO, it is facing different threats and challenges in a new era with the purpose still on collective defense. Here's an example where we do see an increase in missile threats that can reach the territory of NATO members, and it's perfectly appropriate for NATO to recognize that these threats are growing and to welcome the contribution of the U.S. and others toward a missile defense system that can protect alliance territories and population, and to task further work, what more should NATO be doing to look at alliance territory in the face of growing missile threats in the future. So I think NATO taking some steps forward on the issue of missile defense will also be part of what comes out of the Summit.

Those are the principle issues there. I can answer questions about those and about others that may come up, but let me turn to my Romanian colleague who I know has some things he wants to say about the preparations for the Summit as well, and then we'll take your questions. Thank you.

**Ambassador Vierita:** Thank you very much. Good morning. And allow me first of all to thank you for coming today here to listen to us. Thank you very much, Peter, for organizing this event, and thank you Kurt, for breaking the ice.

Allow me to tell you that the NATO Summit is something which for Romania is extremely important. It's not because only the fact that Romania is a supporter of sound transatlantic relationship and NATO. NATO is for us a very important organization. But also because we are facing after almost 60 years, Romania was not completely witnessing 60 years, but the last four of the alliance, and we think that we have to make a very important decision for the alliance, for the organization.

For us in Romania, this is the biggest event ever organized by Romania, but I think that it's also the biggest event when it comes to the size of the Summit.

We are expecting, I think 24 heads of state have confirmed their participation. So far 26 heads of government and 87 personalities having the rank of Ministers.

I'd like to refer briefly to address three issues here -- organizational, public diplomacy and substance, and deliverables for the Summit.

Organizational, we are really well, and we are working according to the scheme. There is a huge mobilization of security and law enforcement forces and expensive preparations to provide for a proper level of convenience and comfort for a large number of delegates. We are expecting more than 3,000 delegates and 3,500 journalists to come. I'd like to kindly draw your attention on the second media advisory on the NATO Summit, which is placed outside. The first one was issued in January, but this second one is probably more important.

Public diplomacy and substance. Allow me to say that there are a number of events designed to enhance the public profile of the Summit and to raise the awareness of the public opinion. We have in Bucharest the almost traditional, I would say, German Marshall Fund Conference on the transatlantic relationship, and we will have the U.S. Atlantic Council, Young Atlanticist Forum, which has a modern approach involving internet events with the purpose to project the Summit among the younger generation.

Other events in Bucharest, the CSIS Conference on Central European Security. We are expecting U.S. and European officials, analysts, business leaders, to attend.

Political agenda. As Kurt said, there is high expectation from this Summit and allow me to tell you some topics which are of importance for Romania. Enlargement process. I would dare to say that this Summit is developing under the I would say auspices of the Figure 3. So it is -- The Summit lasts three days. We expect three new members to be invited. And it is actually the third Summit after Madrid, Prague, where the alliance invited new member states.

Again, when we talk about partnership, again I think I could speak about three levels. First is the upgrading NATO's relationship with three new partners in the Western Balkans -- Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro have already expressed interest to participate, to develop an intensified dialogue with NATO. I also think that the alliance could give a strong signal to Serbia regarding the readiness of the alliance to cooperate to Serbia when Serbia is ready to do it.

Second, the invitation of Georgia and Ukraine to the Membership Action Plan.

Thirdly, consolidation of the Euro-Atlantic partnership that continues to represent strategic importance for NATO.

Missile defense is also very important for Romania based on the principles of solidarity and the indivisibility of security among allies. We would like to see a NATO MD system complementary to the U.S. one, and I think this could also be something that the allies may wish to debate, also to convene in Bucharest.

Last, but not least, Peter, you mentioned the visit of the President of the United States to Romania. We are attaching great importance to this visit and we hope to have a very successful event in Bucharest. Thank you.

**Question:** Michelle Kelleman with *National Public Radio*. I wondered about the Russia's participation and whether Putin's going to and whether or not it's going to cast a shadow over the MAP aspirations of Russia, I mean of Georgia and Ukraine. And also, Mr. Volker if you could comment on what level of troops commitments on Afghanistan you are hoping for.

**Ambassador Vierita:** There is the intention of President Putin to come to Bucharest. I think this could be a very good signal for NATO, a very good signal for Romania and for Russia. I cannot tell you precisely right now how certain this participation is. We still have some time, some more days.

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** On the question of President Putin's participation, I would add a couple of thoughts to what Adrian has said. First off, NATO has invited President Putin to each of the Summit meetings that we've had over the last several years. This is the first time which the Russians have indicated a possibility that he may come.

Certainly we want to work together with Russia. We believe that since the end of the Cold War, we have a lot of issues in common concerning security, and we ought to be able to work together. For example, just the area of missile defense where the missile threats that we're concerned about can equally affect Russia, and we should be able to find ways to work together and cooperate. This was part of the discussions that Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates had in Moscow earlier this week.

Secondly, as it comes to Ukraine and Georgia, this is a decision for NATO itself to make. NATO should be looking at countries who are sharing their desire to strengthen their democratic institutions, their market economies, to become part of a wider transatlantic community and make its own decisions on the merits of those decisions. That is what we expect NATO will do.

Concerning Afghanistan, it's not for me to announce what other countries hope to announce later on, but my understanding in working with this is first off, the scale of the requirements. This is something that is established by the Combined Joint Statement of Requirements that the military commanders work up on a continuing basis about what's needed in Afghanistan. They've made clear that what we need is additional maneuver forces, a maneuver battalion, helicopters, trainers for the Afghan military and trainers for the Afghan police, to give some concrete examples. And I do expect that at the NATO Summit there will be countries coming forward to make contributions in these areas, whether it is maneuver forces or trainers for the military and police, so I do expect some substantial contributions.

**Question:** Julian Josephson, *Bootstrap Press* and a blog called [inaudible]. Nations and their militaries, the center line is energy. What do you foresee NATO doing to try to A, diversify its source of energy from those sources where NATO is not wished very well? And B, to come up hopefully to a Manhattan type project for new sources that perhaps diversify away from petroleum and at the same time are sustainable.

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** I'll take that on first, and then maybe Adrian has additional comments.

The first instance, NATO is many things. NATO is a political alliance. It's a place where we engage in consultations with our allies about issues of strategic significance, and clearly energy is one of those issues where we should be consulting with each other.

Second, NATO is a military alliance so it's an area where we can instrumentalize particular approaches.

When you look at the questions of energy security and the geostrategic dimensions of energy security, there are certain things where NATO as an institution can play a contributing role beyond the consultation and dialogue that goes on, but in more operational ways. Such as protection of line to supply, protection of ceilings, protection of pipelines, critical infrastructure. These are areas that NATO is discussing, what is the best way for NATO to look at and address these kinds of issues.

Other things that are part of your question are areas that really NATO does not have the lead on. These are things that are national energy ministries, private energy companies, European Union, so other actors who need to look at the day-to-day commercial issues related to the consumption and production of energy.

For example, if you want to diversify sources of supply or create alternative routes of supply with other pipelines. Those are going to be commercial deals negotiated with companies and where the energy ministries and the prime ministries of individual companies will be engaged. The European Union has a policy supporting a diversification of energy supply and transparency in markets, and that scenario where that's being addressed.

So NATO has some particular roles both in consultation and then in some of the security areas, but others are going to be tackled day by day by others who are dealing with them.

A final point, to again take it out of the NATO context, the U.S. has been engaging very intensively with these various countries -- Southeastern Europe and the Caucasus with the European Union to talk about diversification of sources of supply, routes of supply, types of energy. We've used our process at the US-EU Summit to build common projects, so-called lighthouse projects beginning with the German presidency where we are working to develop alternative sources of energy together. So there's a great deal that we are doing in many formats, and NATO is one of those for particular reasons, but it's a much wider question.

**Ambassador Vierita:** Kurt, you gave such a comprehensive answer, I couldn't agree more. Maybe one small point to add. If I'm not wrong, at Riga the Summit decided to address the issue of the energy security, and, of course, we'd like to see it developed in Bucharest along the lines that Kurt presented here. Coming to the diversification of resources, I'd like to mention that Romania is a strong supporter of the Nabucco project which is also supported by our partners, also by the United States but also by our partners in the European Union, so Nabucco, I would say, is a European project, which will not be necessarily tackled during the Summit. It's not necessarily a NATO issue, but nevertheless, a problem of diversification of sources is there. I think that we need to address it.

**Question:** James Morrison, *Washington Times*. My question concerns Macedonia. How do you bring Macedonia into the alliance while keep Greece satisfied?

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** That's what diplomacy is all about. [Laughter].

Let me explain the issue that you're raising that we have a dispute between Greece and Macedonia over the name used by Macedonia as a country. The Republic of Macedonia's position, and the Ambassador can correct me if I misstate it, is that they are the Republic of Macedonia, it's their constitutional name, and they would like to use that. The position of Greece is that that is not an acceptable name from a Greek position because of Greece's historical identity as, Macedonia's historical Greek identity and the territory some of which remains inside present-day Greece. So they would hope that Macedonia would change its name and have something else that it would use in all cases.

These are mutually exclusive positions they can't both hold at the same time, so what we hope is that some solution will be found with both parties working through the UN process and through the UN negotiator, Matthew Nimetz, to arrive at some compromise whereby they are addressing the issue of the name in a way that they can both live with and avoid that issue becoming an obstacle to a NATO invitation.

Right now, Greece has said that unless this issue is resolved it would not support a NATO invitation. That is something that Greece can do. NATO takes decisions by consensus; Greece is an ally; it has the ability to block such a decision. But rather than looking at the negative, what we are hoping to encourage both sides to do is to work together and work through the UN process to find a way forward, so that this does not become an obstacle to an invitation.

The U.S. is playing an active role in trying to facilitate this effort, and I think it was announced yesterday that the two sides, they met on Monday under the auspices of Matthew Nimetz, the UN negotiator. They're scheduled to meet again in New York. We are trying to facilitate a meeting directly between senior officials of both sides tomorrow in Brussels with the aim of helping them find a formula that can take them forward. So that's what we're trying to do. We hope this is a successful effort, that

they're able to find that kind of solution.

**Question:** Desmond Butler with the *AP*. On the missile defense question, do you expect a specific proposal at the Summit about building new infrastructure in Europe [inaudible]?

**Ambassador Vierita:** You mean Romania having precise expectations, or --

**Question:** The question was really directed to both of you. Do either of you expect there to be announcements at the Summit?

**Ambassador Vierita:** Yes, we would like to see actually a continuation of what we have started a couple of years ago on a NATO missile defense system which would allow countries and territories in the alliance to be fully covered by the system and we'd like to see some progress on this issue, a system which is complementary and could be integrated with the American one.

**Question:** What would you consider progress?

**Ambassador Vierita:** This is a very good question. I would personally, I would consider progress if we could agree to task NATO to continue dealing with this.

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** Let me just pick up on that point. I think that is the stage at which we will be at Bucharest, in fact. I think we will be recognizing that missile threats do exist and are growing, that the U.S. system that we are working with a few allies is a contribution to the protection of alliance territories and populations, and that NATO should do further work on the protection of alliance territory.

So to your first question, specific decisions about programs, I do not expect anything additional. What I do expect is, as the Ambassador said, a decision to task the North Atlantic Council with further work in developing further options.

**Question:** [Inaudible] Serbian Embassy. Ambassador, I would highly appreciate your comments regarding Serbia that you made in your statement. Just a brief question. Mr. Volker mentioned that [inaudible]. If you can comment a little bit more on the last event in North Mitrovica and the [inaudible] NATO and Partners for Peace that will in fact be [inaudible] European Union task force or new mission. And of course if the Ambassador [inaudible] as well, [inaudible] the Romanian position regarding the unilateral declaration of independence.

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** Thank you very much. As I mentioned, NATO's job is to run the KFOR mission, to maintain peace and stability within Kosovo, to assure freedom of movement, and to protect minorities and religious sites. That has been NATO's job for a long time under 1244 and that continues.

I'm very dismayed at the violence that took place in North Mitrovica a few days ago. These were well organized and well armed protests. There were grenades fired against UN personnel, against KFOR personnel. There were weapons, AK-47s and rifles, fired against UN personnel and against KFOR personnel.

The international community, both the UN and KFOR I think acted with the utmost restraint. There were several injuries suffered by the UN and KFOR. A Ukrainian civilian police official died, very regrettable, from wounds suffered at the time. So it was very dismaying to see that level of violence.

We would urge calm, restraint, non-violence for all parties in Kosovo, and we would encourage the Serbian government, we would encourage all international partners to be urging the same thing, to see non-violence and to see an establishment of a calm civil order which the UNMIK police and which KFOR are responsible for overseeing.

**Question:** Regarding the European Union mission [inaudible]?

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** Yes. There is always a delicate moment in NATO Summits when the issue of the EU comes up because the EU is sensitive about making its own decisions about what the EU does and is that something that's discussed at NATO.

But the fact is that we support the EU mission. We intend to contribute to the EU mission, as the United States. We believe it's important that these missions be well coordinated between NATO, between the EU, and the international civilian representative, and in the transition from the UNMIK presence that is currently there. So I do expect that this will be discussed to some degree as to how the coordination and the transition is going on and with full support from NATO for working together with the EU and Kosovo.

**Question:** [Inaudible] with Strat Council. I have a question about the new directorate that has been proposed by former NATO commanders and journalists.

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** Oh, I know what you're talking about. There is a group of five former NATO generals -- Koss, Nauman, Leudin, a few others -- who prepared a study. And in this study one of the recommendations they made was that the U.S., NATO and the EU form some kind of international directorate for providing political oversight to the transatlantic alliance, transatlantic community. And I gather you're seeking a reaction to that particular proposal.

**Question:** Yes.

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** I have to say I find that an interesting proposal but not necessarily a very workable proposal. I think nations that are members of NATO take pride and attach importance to the fact that they are represented at the table. They join in taking decisions by consensus. Particularly when you're talking about security issues, where you're talking about the commitment of troops, the risking of lives, the commitment of national treasure, that this is something that nations feel very vested in. So to have a directorate over top of this somehow that is providing a direction to that I think would take away from the basic principle of consensus within NATO at the political level. So that's one area that's important.

Another is the practicality of how this works. When you pause to think about it, many countries that are members of NATO are also members of the European Union, and then there are some who aren't. And who is representing whom in a discussion like that? The institutions themselves are still functions of who the members are, so I'm not sure that that proposal is actually, can be worked in a very practical way.

If I could add one more point to this, I think what the generals are getting at was finding ways to strengthen the coordination among the institutions -- NATO and the EU -- and to strengthen the political cohesion of a transatlantic community in tackling common challenges. Those ambitions, those objectives of better coordination among institutions, stronger political cohesion, those we firmly support and are areas that we hope to work on even if this particular proposal I think has some questions around it.

**Ambassador Vierita:** I fully agree with Mr. Secretary. I also think that the proposal might be useful and anyhow a source of inspiration. The issue of cooperation between NATO and the EU is an issue that we should probably address. It has also not a long but I would say an intensive story after 2001 when we decided together to cooperate based on some mechanisms, plus, and we within that we have actually two tasks ahead of us and we hope to, actually I'm convinced that at the end of the day the cooperation between the two will be successful in both cases that I mentioned -- Kosovo and Afghanistan.

**Question:** Jeri Guthrie-Corn, Department of State. I was going to ask about Mitrovica, but instead I'll follow up on that. After the unfortunate violence a few days ago, there have been some disturbing reports in the press about a potential partition of Kosovo which I think would be destabilizing at least. I'd like to know about that question

of partition. And also what Romania might be doing to dissuade the Serbian government from pursuing such [inaudible].

**Ambassador Vierita:** You know that we have tried to discuss with the authorities in Belgrade. I can recall the visit of President Tadic one month and a half ago in Bucharest, no actually, I'm sorry, the visit of my President in Belgrade one month and a half ago and the recent visit three weeks ago I think of President Tadic in Bucharest. We have encouraged the Serbian authorities not to mislead themselves and to work with the partners, with the United States, with the European Union and also given the fact that in Kosovo is a substantial Serb minority, we have also encouraged the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

Now is probably, is a more difficult situation in Belgrade given the fact that they will have election. Again, we are there to assist them, and I think this should also be discussed in Bucharest. We know that President Tadic was invited to come to the Summit. We'll see.

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** I'll just add two thoughts to that. One of them, to be clear, and thank you, Jeri, for the question, we oppose the partition of Kosovo. We think that would be further destabilizing and leading to a potential for further violence and it is UNMIK's and KFOR's and others' jobs to ensure freedom of movement and functioning of all of Kosovo.

And taking the opportunity of your question to recall that what we are doing with Kosovo is seeing the implementation of the UN plan, Ahtasarri's plan that was developed for the most stable, secure way forward which has a heavy emphasis, I would add, on the identification and protection of minority rights and the rights of religious communities within Kosovo. That is a big part of what the international community's mission is, within Kosovo now, is to make sure that as Kosovo establishes itself as an independent state that it does so on the basis of democratic norms and the protection of minorities and minority rights.

**Question:** ITAR-TASS, Dmitri Kirsanov. Mr. Secretary, I was wondering if you will be discussing in Bucharest any new initiatives aimed at the narcotics problem.

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** Narcotics is a critical issue for Afghanistan and is in the first instance the responsibility of the Afghan government and our efforts are to support the efforts of the Afghan government. The military forces, ISAF, have a responsibility for security within Afghanistan. We'd like to see closer coordination of the military and the counter-narcotics effort. And as NATO produces or as ISAF produces I think we'll be calling these strategic vision statements, something like that, about operations in Afghanistan, I think that one aspect is that we do want to see a strengthened counter-narcotics effort that is well coordinated with the efforts at military security.

I don't expect that NATO itself will be announcing or taking new decisions on counter-narcotics efforts that it would undertake, but insofar as the forces that are there aiming to provide security in key provinces, are working more closely together with the Afghan government, with other donors who are involved in counter-narcotics efforts, we hope to be able to facilitate a turn-around in the direction of narcotics production.

I would just point out that in the eastern part of Afghanistan we've seen some success in this with a closer coordination of efforts against the insurgency and reduction of narcotics production and closer work with the Afghan authorities, and we hope to see similar progress in the south of Afghanistan.

**Question:** Another for the Ambassador. Years ago Romania had rather large energy resources, the oil field of [inaudible] which I understand were laid out during World War II [inaudible]. But does not Romania still have alternative sources working for that also could directly help the NATO effort? Isn't there some shale and other such resources?

**Ambassador Vierita:** Yes, you're right. We still have our own resources when it comes to oil and gas. We also developed a national strategy on energy as part of a broader European effort, and we are also within the European Union advocating the idea of having a European energy policy. Alternative sources are important, and I think that we could be optimistic when it comes to the target set, according to, maybe you can recall the Lisbon Strategy which deals with reduction of carbon emissions and improving, developing new sources of alternative energy.

**Acting Assistant Secretary Volker:** Thank you very much for coming.

**Ambassador Vierita:** Thank you.

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