

# POLITICS

## BEFORE AND BEYOND THE PRAGUE NATO SUMMIT: A PRACTICAL AGENDA

### FOCUS

At present, more than ever, there is a perceived political need for a balanced NATO enlargement on both its Northern and Southern flanks. The intention is to invite as many as seven countries from Central and Eastern Europe – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania from the Baltic, Slovakia and Slovenia from Central Europe, and Romania and Bulgaria from the Black Sea region. However, it is possible that NATO will choose a “stream process”, that is to put forward specific Membership Action Plan (MAP)-based criteria, which would facilitate early accession for some of the invited countries and place others on hold until specific issues are sorted out. Such an approach would make NATO enlargement more similar to the EU model of enlargement – i.e. invitation for all, but individualized accession according to performance.

The issuing of a single Alliance decision to basically admit most – seven out of ten – members of the Vilnius Group without having actually to take them in at once has the advantage of avoiding subsequent bargaining and unwanted enlargement debates as more countries become ready for NATO membership. However, if implemented, this approach would weaken the political premium ascribed to NATO membership and take away incentives from those countries that have worked hardest to present strong cases for their NATO accession in Prague.

This section represents an assessment of Romania’s progress on the accession process and the post-Prague tasks that Romania should accomplish after receiving the invitation to join NATO.

### **GEOPOLITICAL AND STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES – ARE THEY ENOUGH?**

Despite making overall great strides on their way towards democratisation and market economy in the past two years (Fig. 1), all other six most likely invitees have their own problems, which have to be sorted out somehow by the time of the end of the ratification period at latest. Estonia still has social

cohesion and cultural identity problems. Latvia has to increase its defence budget to 2% from its current 1.7%, to revise its policy on ethnic minorities and improve its relations with Russia, including the signing of a new bilateral border agreement. Lithuania still has to come to grips with its Holocaust past. Slovenia has to raise its defence expenditure from the current 1.5% to 2%, to turn the Slovenian army into a professional one and to increase its public support for NATO membership, including by organizing a referendum on NATO accession. Bulgaria has to enhance its anti-corruption efforts, to reform its judiciary system and complete its military reform.

**Fig. 1. The Vilnius Group Ratings**

	Assessment	ALB	BUL	CRO	EST	LAT	LIT	MK	ROM	SK	SLO
Political process	1999-2000	4.25	2.25	4.25	1.75	1.75	1.75	3.50	2.75	2.50	2.00
	2001	4.00	2.00	3.50	1.75	1.75	1.75	3.75	3.00	2.25	1.75
Civil society	1999-2000	4.00	3.75	3.50	2.50	2.25	2.00	3.50	3.00	2.25	1.75
	2001	4.25	3.50	2.75	2.25	2.00	1.75	3.75	3.00	2.00	1.75
Media	1999-2000	4.50	3.50	5.00	1.75	1.75	1.75	3.75	3.50	2.25	1.75
	2001	4.25	3.25	3.50	1.75	1.75	1.75	3.75	3.50	2.00	1.75
Governance	1999-2000	4.75	3.75	4.00	2.25	2.50	2.50	3.00	3.50	3.00	2.25
	2001	4.25	3.50	3.50	2.25	2.25	2.50	3.75	3.75	2.75	2.50
Legal framework	1999-2000	5.00	3.50	4.75	2.00	2.00	2.00	4.25	4.25	2.50	1.50
	2001	4.50	3.50	3.75	2.00	2.00	1.75	4.25	4.25	2.25	1.50
Corruption	1999-2000	6.00	4.75	5.25	3.25	3.50	3.75	5.00	4.25	3.75	2.00
	2001	5.50	4.75	4.50	2.75	3.50	3.75	5.00	4.25	3.75	2.00
Privatization	1999-2000	4.00	3.75	3.75	1.75	2.50	2.50	4.00	4.00	3.25	2.00
	2001	3.75	3.50	3.50	1.75	2.50	2.50	4.00	3.75	3.00	2.25
Macro-ec. policies	1999-2000	5.00	3.50	3.50	2.00	2.50	3.25	4.75	4.00	3.25	2.00
	2001	4.50	3.25	3.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	4.75	3.75	3.25	2.00
Micro-ec. policies	1999-2000	4.50	4.00	3.75	2.00	2.50	2.75	5.00	4.50	3.50	2.00
	2001	4.25	3.75	3.75	2.00	2.50	2.75	5.00	4.50	3.50	2.00
Democratization	1999-2000	4.38	3.31	4.19	2.06	2.06	2.00	3.44	3.19	2.00	1.94
	2001	4.13	3.06	3.25	2.00	1.94	1.94	3.75	3.31	2.25	1.94
Rule of law	1999-2000	5.50	4.13	5.00	2.63	2.75	2.88	4.63	4.25	3.13	1.75
	2001	5.00	4.13	4.13	2.38	2.75	2.75	4.63	4.38	3.00	1.75
Ec. liberalization	1999-2000	4.50	3.75	3.67	1.92	2.50	2.83	4.58	4.17	3.25	2.08
	2001	4.17	3.50	3.58	1.92	2.50	2.75	4.58	4.00	3.25	2.08

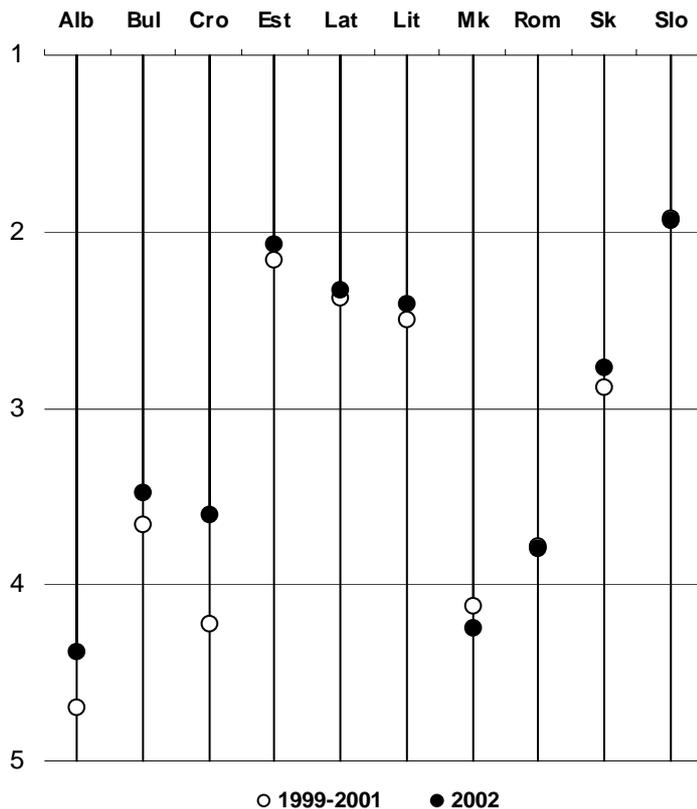
Source: Freedom House Ratings and scores are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level and 7 representing the lowest level of performance.

Romania, however, has more than one priority on its hands: to address more convincingly its corruption problems, improve its economic performance in order to be able to sustain its military reform and rather high defence budget, deal with the issue of the confidentiality of sensitive NATO information, as well as complete its recognition of Jewish deportations and persecutions during the Ion Antonescu regime (1940-1944). According to Freedom House ratings, Romania scores worst amongst the seven candidates that are likely to receive an invitation to join the Alliance at the Prague summit (Fig. 2). Moreover, unlike the other candidates, it has not made any progress.

Following a Western suggestion, Romania and Bulgaria have managed to put their NATO candidature in a 2+2 format, convincing Greece and Turkey, traditionally at odds with each other, that lobbying for the two NATO candidates is in their, as well as NATO's, best interest, namely that of consolidating NATO's Southern dimension and simultaneously diffusing bilateral tensions.

By and large, Romania and Bulgaria have been successful in making the strategic argument for their accession into NATO. The two South East European countries were among the first in the region to sign up to President Bush's coalition against terrorism. Both Romania and Bulgaria have opened their airspace unconditionally and offered the use of all land and port facilities, providing bases for U.S. forces flying into Afghanistan and sending peacekeepers in that country. Both countries have tripled their presence in international peacekeeping missions in the Balkans to free up allied troops for Afghanistan. A Romanian facility in the Black Sea city of Constanza has become a staging ground for the rotation of U.S. troops in and out of the Balkans and other theatres, including Afghanistan. And the two countries' military units have co-operated rather well within the International Security and Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF).

**Fig. 2. Comparative evaluation scores of would-be members**



Source: Freedom House; 1 highest score, 7 lowest score

Romania and Bulgaria have been propelled into serious consideration for NATO membership in its next round of enlargement because of a range of reasons.

- The two countries managed to remain stable in a very adverse environment, overcoming the threat of importing destabilization.
- Both have proved to be reliable regional security stabilizers. Not only they have proved to be loyal partners in the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo and in the war against terrorism, but they have also adopted pro-active regional security co-operation policies.
- Their combined population is of approximately 30 million, making them a critical mass for bringing stability and security in a very sensitive area.

- Last but not least, post-September 11<sup>th</sup> reasons related to the geopolitical and strategic importance of the Black Sea, which could provide a military launch pad for any widening of the war against terrorism, reinforced the cases for Romanian and Bulgarian NATO membership.

However, in order not to remain a simple NATO accession strategy, the Romanian-Bulgarian military duo should move their cooperation to a new level. For the Romanian and Bulgarian military this means working together in various domains, including in the sensitive area of joint capabilities, and taking the lead in promoting regional cooperation. It shall also comprise a deeper involvement in crisis management operations, including possible joint initiatives under the Multinational Peace Force South Eastern Europe (MPSEE), as well as considering the interconnection of the air surveillance systems of the two countries. Thus, once invited to join NATO, Romania and Bulgaria will be able to demonstrate that together they really make a difference for the security environment of South East Europe.

**Romania and Bulgaria  
should not wait, but start  
working on common  
military capabilities such  
as joint units or  
connected surveillance  
systems**

Romania's and Bulgaria's getting into NATO will present the two countries with important investment opportunities. It is well-known that foreign investments in the three Central European countries of the first post-Cold War NATO enlargement increased significantly since those countries joined the Alliance in the late 1990s. Together with Slovenia, the two South East European countries, once admitted into NATO, are bound to reinforce the Southern flank of the Alliance, link it with an exposed member (i.e. Turkey), improve NATO's access for its Balkans peace-keeping operations and enhance regional co-operation and stability, thus generating a more conducive environment for achieving the aims of the international community in the troubled Balkan area. The acceptance of the candidates from both the Balkan and the Baltic regions will boost the process of transforming Russia into an equal and democratic partner in the Euro-Atlantic area.

## **IMPLEMENTING THE SEPTEMBER 11 LESSONS**

The Alliance that will invite new democracies to join it in November 2002 in Prague is not the same military-political organization that it was before 11 September 2001. In spite of NATO's invocation for the first time of its article 5 in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 events, the U.S. decided to bypass its allies and thereby somehow downgrade NATO's military role. Thus, whereas concerning all democracies, by and large the war against terrorism has been America's war, with Europe reduced to playing a supporting role. With the capabilities gap between the U.S. and Europe growing even wider after September 11 and Russia's getting closer to the Alliance after the Reykjavik summit in May 2002, NATO faces the challenge of re-assessing its identity and its strategic significance.

Against this background, the Prague summit is intended to be a NATO transformation summit. The change will emerge in the following directions:

A new, more focused capabilities initiative, with firm, country-by-country commitments to deliver the most urgent requirements, is most likely to emerge. NATO Secretary General George Robertson urged defence ministers to spend more, and more wisely, on their military forces to ensure that the Alliance remains relevant in the post-September world. NATO's Defence Capabilities Initiative launched at the Washington summit in April 1999 has failed to improve the situation. The US\$48 billion increase planned for the U.S. defence budget in 2003 is larger than the total annual defence budgets of both Britain and France, the next biggest military forces. The Europeans not only spend overall just 1.8% of their GDP on defence, as compared with the US 3.4%, but they lack strategic airlift, precision-guided weapons, air-to-air refuelling and tactical missile defence.

Among other things at stake is the way in which NATO is going to handle the increasingly global terrorist threat. Terrorists are to be uprooted in roughly 60 countries and the US cannot wage this rather long and complex battle alone. Despite being a centrepiece of every security scenario and intelligence forecast after the Cold War, the terrorist threat has not triggered structural changes in the defence strategy nor a reconstruction of security institutions. Military organizations, weapons systems, training directories, information and communication systems, and the dimensions of military budgets were not transformed in accordance with the changed hierarchy of security threats. Moreover, the division of labour between law enforcement and intelligence agencies and between the domestic and foreign branches of the latter have largely remained in place in spite of the fact that the post-Cold War threats and particularly the terrorist one have blurred the boundaries between internal and external security. More than one year after the trial of the multicultural global Western world order represented by the 11 September events, at the Prague summit, NATO is committed to correct this lagging behind in combating the terrorist threat.

Several general guidelines in this respect have been already sketched and partially implemented. These include the reinterpretation of the regulations and frameworks of building up coalitions, the review of the frameworks of peacekeeping missions in accordance with the growing importance of their civilian-military and civilian components, the review of the legal instruments regulating the detection, registration, diagnosis and publicity of terrorist organizations and activities, changes in the sanctioning of terrorism, including sanctions for harbouring and financially supporting terrorists, closing down terrorist training camps and other facilities, re-regulation of their extradition, arrest warrant and legal accountability, the coordination of the measures taken against tax havens and money laundering, the inter-agency security co-operation, the integrative co-operation between secret services, with the human factor being ascribed a more prominent role, and changes in the field of research and development in defence industry, with priority given to control and analysis systems, sensors, electronic systems in general, and high-tech intelligence.

Romania should prove itself capable of providing military – and, increasingly, political – support in the fight against terrorism. Military units sent to contribute to the war effort in Afghanistan are important in this context. Clarity and decisiveness is what NATO, and the US in particular,

**NATO needs allies able to fight the battles of tomorrow, not those of yesterday. Romania must prove its usefulness in the fight against terrorism.**

value now. While Washington's recent decision to boycott the International War Crimes Tribunal may be considered too prudent by halves, we argue here that our government's compliance to the US policy (by signing the bilateral treaty that effectively exempts US military from the Court's jurisdiction) was the wisest under the circumstances and consistent with the firm pro-Atlantic stance inaugurated in 1997.

### **FOR A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP)**

The September 11, 2001 events have significantly changed our perception of the world, leading amongst other things to a heightened awareness of the complexity of the new security environment. Both new and "new-old" security threats and vulnerabilities such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, small arms and light weapons (SALW) uncontrolled diffusion, drugs and nuclear material trafficking, illegal immigration, corruption, money laundering, natural hazards, water, oil and gas depletion require a joint civil-military partnership.

Only such a partnership could successfully address issues such as border management, transportation safety, public order safeguarding and civil strife prevention, civil defence and disaster relief preparedness. The need for such a partnership is even more evident in the area of combating terrorism. It became clear that governmental authorities solely could not digest the huge mass of information currently available on terrorist organizations. Moreover, the vulnerabilities of the big infrastructure systems to terrorist activity ask for the setting up of a private sector "army" comprised of financial experts, computer analysts, scientists, physicians and other highly trained specialists ready to work together with the increasingly numerous private security firms to prevent other potential September 11 events to happen.

In the US, this Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is likely to become soon a reality with the already announced intention of the American private sector to spend in the incoming period approximately US\$150 billion for increased security measures across the US, and the encouragement that this rather new trend has received from Mr. Tom Ridge, the director of the newly created Office of Homeland Security. There is a need for a PPP strategy advocacy and implementation in Romania as well. Devising such a strategy and promoting it at both governmental and NGO levels should be a post-Prague primary task in the field of security for Romania.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Romania's likely accession to NATO presents new opportunities, but also new challenges, both to the Government, as well as to the Romanian society at large. It is important, in this context, that Romania learn from the experience of earlier NATO joiners from Central Europe in order to maximize the benefits (e.g. stronger investor confidence and renewed interest from foreign investors) and manage the costs of NATO accession.

Equally, one should not forget that in the likely event of Romania's getting an invitation to join NATO, the next two years, needed for the ratification process, are going to be crucial. It is likely that the period between the moment of receiving an invitation and that of signing the North Atlantic Treaty will be more rigorous with respect to the scrutiny of the invitees. Accordingly, the mechanism of the conditionality of NATO accession, which has worked well until now as an incentive for military reform, is likely to be preserved and perhaps even reinforced in the post-Prague circumstances.

NATO accession issues to be addressed within the domestic public debate, and which will inform the public debate within NATO regarding the ratification of the invitations granted in Prague, are plenty. They include:

- the restructuring of defense in terms of downsizing, modernization and professionalization of armed forces, getting rid of unneeded capabilities and setting up new ones
- the reform of the defense industry
- the public support for peacekeeping operations, the status of the accomplishment of the current NATO integration programmes as well as the new opportunities brought about by NATO membership.

In keeping momentum for Romania's Euro-Atlantic integration, the civil society has a major role to play. The gradual forging of a new security culture based on a genuine partnership between governmental authorities and civil society is likely to trigger a new awareness on the part of the population of the need of its active involvement in the process of countering the new security threats. For promoting and implementing a PPP strategy, the authorities should:

- support security-oriented NGOs, keep them informed on governmental initiatives
- assign to independent NGO experts papers on issues which are important for decision-makers, consult them wherever there is a need for that
- actively involve them in promoting Euro-Atlantic integration.

As for their part as independent players, the grass roots NGOs have to:

- put pressure on authorities for accelerating the pace of defense reform before and after the November NATO summit in Prague

- signal any dysfunctional processes that might occur on the road, monitor the way in which different NATO integration programmes (MAP, PARP, etc) were implemented
- secure an informed public support for NATO membership.

To sum up, there is confidence among the ten NATO hopefuls in Central and Eastern Europe that up to seven of them would be invited to join the Alliance. Yet, the ratification of their membership should not be taken for granted. In the two years to come, more scrutiny will be given to how the invitees are dealing with their still pending-to-be-solved domestic problems and actively integrate themselves into NATO's transformation process to deal with the new security threats.