

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
ON NATO ENLARGEMENT  
MARCH 27, 2003

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, I want to thank you for giving me and my colleagues the opportunity to testify before you on the enlargement of NATO and the qualifications and the contributions of the seven countries invited to join NATO at the Prague Summit last November.

At the outset, I would also like to thank Chairman Lugar and the members of the committee for your leadership on this issue. Your support and encouragement, but also the tough questions that you have asked, have pushed us to look closely at our approach on enlargement, and to refine and to strengthen our arguments. I also want to thank Senator Biden for his leadership as Chairman last year when much important work was being done. We have greatly appreciated the close cooperation that we have had from the Committee and its staff over the past two years.

Here before you today, is the core of the inter-agency team, from the State Department and the Defense Department, that has worked for the better part of two years on the enlargement issue. It was our job to ensure that our Principals had the information they needed to advise the President, who made the ultimate decision on which candidates to support for membership.

I would like to assure the Committee that my colleagues and I took our responsibilities very seriously. There is no more important commitment that one country can make to another than to pledge that its citizens are prepared to fight and -if necessary -to die for the other. And when a country is invited to join NATO that is what we are deciding. NATO is not a club; it is a collective defense organization in which its members commit themselves, under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, to considering an attack on one as an attack against all.

So, the standards for membership must be high, but NATO leaders have wisely recognized that there is no single set of criteria, no simple checklist that determines whether a country is qualified for membership. NATO needs to be able to accommodate members as diverse as the United States and Luxembourg or Turkey and Iceland.

As a result, Article 10 of the Washington Treaty states only that:

"The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, 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 to accede to this Treaty."

When Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic formally joined the Alliance in 1999, NATO's leaders reflected on their experience and recognized that preparing for NATO membership was a difficult task. They decided to create a tool to help aspirant countries to understand what was expected of NATO members and to prepare themselves for membership. They set up the Membership Action Plan or MAP.

In establishing the MAP, NATO's leaders stated specifically that the MAP "cannot be considered as a list of criteria for membership." Instead, MAP is a tool to help countries prepare themselves. Each fall, under the MAP, the aspirant countries developed an Annual National Program (ANP) to set objectives and targets for reform. These reforms were focused on five key areas: political and economic development; defense and military issues; budgets; security of sensitive information; and legal issues. NATO reviewed the Annual National Programs, and each Ally provided comment and feedback. In the spring, each aspirant met with the North Atlantic Council in a "19-plus-1" format to review its progress in achieving its reform goals.

The MAP process has given us a strong basis by which to measure the readiness for NATO membership of the seven countries that were invited at Prague. But, given the importance to the United States of NATO and the Article 5 commitment, the Administration has carried out additional steps to evaluate each country and to encourage the hard work of reform.

In February of last year, Ambassador Burns led a team, including a number of us on this panel, which visited all of the aspirant countries. We met with Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Justice, as well as with military officers and parliamentarians. We warned our interlocutors that joining NATO was an intrusive process, that as allies we would need to know everything about each other. We asked difficult

questions about corruption, about property restitution and historical issues, about the treatment of minorities, about gray arms sales, and defense spending. We urged the leaders to adopt specific programs of reforms.

Later in 2002, in July we met again with all the leaders of all the aspirant countries in Riga on the margins of the "Vilnius-10" Summit. During the summer, we also conducted what we called a "mid-term review" of reform implementation with each of the embassies of the aspirant countries here in Washington. Finally, in October, another team led by Ambassador Burns, again including myself and others on this panel, returned to all of the aspirant countries to evaluate their progress. We met with every Prime Minister and with nearly every President, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of Defense. We again asked difficult questions and sought assurances that their reform processes would continue well beyond the Prague Summit, if an invitation to join NATO would be forthcoming.

As I said at the beginning of my testimony, we have taken our responsibility seriously. We have held literally hundreds of meetings and traveled thousands of miles to learn as much as we could about the aspirant countries and to encourage their preparations to join NATO. By issuing the invitation at Prague to Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to join the Alliance, President Bush and his fellow NATO heads of state signaled their belief that these intensive, hands-on efforts to promote and encourage reform had been an outstanding success.

Mr. Chairman, nothing has happened since Prague that should cause us to question their judgment. The evidence clearly shows that all seven invitees have made an enduring commitment to the core values of NATO and that each is ready, both politically and militarily, to contribute to the defense of the NATO Alliance.

- All seven are already acting as de facto allies by providing overflight and basing rights and by providing troops to peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan, or by having liaison officers with CENTCOM in Tampa.
- As Senator Voinovich will recall from his participation at the Prague Summit, all of the invitees, acting through the "Vilnius-10" group,

offered their political support to the U.S. on Iraq on November 21. They reiterated this support in February in another V-10 statement which endorsed the U.S. position that Saddam had to comply with UNSCR 1441 fully and immediately or face the military consequences.

- All of the invitees have committed to spending at least two percent of GDP on defense and should be able to make real contributions to NATO's defense. When these seven countries join the Alliance, they will bring with them 200,000 troops and important specialized capabilities, which will be further developed in accordance with the Prague Summit Capabilities Commitment.
- All have taken steps to improve their political, economic, legal, and military systems to overcome the burdens and problems inherited from decades of Communist misrule. All are parliamentary democracies with free and fair elections, open market economies, and respect for the principles of free speech and a free press.
- All have taken steps to improve governance by bolstering judicial independence and adopting anti-corruption measures. All have improved their protection of human rights, including minority rights and civil liberties. All have taken steps to reconstitute property and to deal with complex and difficult issues from the past.

While each of the seven countries invited at the Prague Summit share these broad accomplishments, I would like to comment briefly on the particular contributions and steps that each invitee has made to qualify for NATO membership. I would note that the President's Report to Congress on NATO enlargement, submitted earlier this week, contains a more detailed analysis of each country.

**Bulgaria** - All segments of Bulgarian political opinion strongly support NATO membership (including all four parties represented in Parliament). Bulgaria has also given strong support for the disarmament of Iraq. On November 7, the National Assembly approved the Government's decision to support coalition action against Iraq. Bulgarian support includes: over-flight rights and the transit of U.S. and coalition forces; basing for up to 18

U.S. aircraft at Sarafovo Airport near Burgas; and the deployment of Bulgarian NBC units (up to 150 personnel) to the theater of operations. Bulgaria was an important partner of the United States in dealing with Iraq in the United Nations Security Council. Bulgaria also contributed to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), including hosting a deployment of six US KC-135 transport aircraft and 200 support personnel at Burgas, the first stationing of foreign forces in Bulgaria since WWII. Bulgaria has also provided personnel for SFOR and KFOR and donated arms and ammunition to the Afghan National Army. The Government has agreed on a minimum level of defense expenditures as a proportion of GDP, projected at higher than 2.8% in 2003 and 2004.

Since the fall of Communism, Bulgaria has clearly demonstrated the sustainability of its commitment to democracy by holding free and fair elections and the peaceful transfer of power. Basic civil liberties are guaranteed by the Constitution. Bulgarians pride themselves on tolerance, and no extremist group enjoys significant support, either inside or outside the political system. Bulgaria has made material progress on the return of private and communal property. Macro-economically, Bulgaria remains committed to the path of reforms laid out by the IMF and EU, even in the face of growing public dissatisfaction with low living standards.

**Estonia** - The Prime Minister stated publicly on March 18 that Estonia is ready to contribute to post-conflict operations in Iraq. Possible contributions include a light point defense platoon, an explosive ordinance demolition team, and cargo handlers. In the Balkans, 100 Estonian personnel are currently on a six-month rotation as part of KFOR. Estonia also has deployed a 21-man military police contingent with the Italian Multinational Support Unit in KFOR. Estonia has deployed two explosive detection dog teams to Afghanistan to assist with airport security, and offered overflight and landing rights in support of OEF. It has also deployed an explosive ordnance destruction (EOD) team with ISAF.

Estonia is a fully functioning democracy with a successful market-oriented economy (GDP grew by an estimated 5.7% in 2002). The Government has committed to spending at least 2% of GDP annually on defense. Estonia is working actively to integrate its Russian-speaking minority by eliminating language requirements for electoral

candidates and promoting naturalization. Estonia is also taking concrete steps to deal with the past, completing its restitution process entirely and emphasizing the work of its independent Historical Commission. In January, Estonia observed its first national Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust.

**Latvia** - The Latvian parliament passed a bill March 19 allowing Latvian troops to take part in operations in Iraq. The bill authorizes the Government to send units of its Armed Forces to Iraq on operations "under the military command of the armed forces of the international coalition." Latvia has already deployed eight military medical personnel to ISAF, and participates in a six-month rotation every 18 months of some 100 personnel as part of KFOR (previously in SFOR). It also maintains a medical and military police team with the British and an EOD team with the Netherlands in KFOR. The government is committed to spending a minimum of 2% of GDP on defense through 2008.

Latvia has also undertaken significant political and economic reforms. Following parliamentary elections in October, 2002, a new government was formed headed by Prime Minister Einars Repse that has demonstrated a firm commitment to combating corruption. A newly created Anti-Corruption Bureau is working to investigate and prosecute corruption allegations within government. In addition, the new government has accelerated efforts to integrate Latvia's minorities. Since 1995, 58,145 persons have become naturalized citizens. The Government has taken steps, such as reducing fees, to ease the naturalization process. The property restitution process in Latvia, which is nearly complete, is also a great success story. The Government promotes Holocaust education and public awareness, and commemorates Holocaust Remembrance Day on July 4.

**Lithuania** - On March 17, Lithuania reaffirmed the "Vilnius-10" group statement on Iraq of February 5, 2002. Lithuania's Parliament passed legislation on March 24 authorizing the Government to send logistical and military medical support to a possible effort in Iraq, as well as humanitarian aid. 37 Special Forces soldiers support OEF; four military physicians deployed with a Czech unit in ISAF in 2002 and will report to Afghanistan in May. Airspace and airfields in support of OEF are on standing offer. Contributions in the Balkans include a six-month rotation every 18 months of 100 personnel with the Danish contingent

in KFOR (previously in SFOR) and a platoon of about 30 servicemen with the Polish-Ukrainian contingent in KFOR. The Government is committed to spending a minimum of 2% of GDP on defense.

The Government has taken steps to strengthen its legal and institutional framework for combating corruption. It has successfully cracked down on corruption by customs and tax inspectors. We have seen a genuine and exemplary commitment to address the injustices of the past. The Government has returned hundreds of religious scrolls to Jewish community groups, instituted a Holocaust education program, announced plans to restore parts of the Jewish Quarter in Vilnius' Old Town, and consistently been one of the most active members of the 15-country International Task Force on Holocaust Education. A joint Government-Jewish community committee is working on an amendment to the property restitution law to allow communal property restitution.

**Romania** has demonstrated its readiness to contribute to NATO. Public support for NATO membership is about 80%, the highest of any invitee country. Romania is a staunch supporter of the war on terrorism and the effort to disarm Iraq. Romania granted blanket overflight, basing and transit rights to coalition forces for operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The Black Sea port of Constanta and Mihail Kogalniceanu airbase have accommodated U.S. troops en route to the Persian Gulf. Romania also has offered to deploy a 75-man nuclear, biological and chemical weapon response unit to support Iraq operations. Romania has provided robust support of OEF, self-deploying a 400-man infantry battalion to Kandahar, Afghanistan, and providing a military police platoon to the ISAF mission in Kabul. The Romanian defense budget is linked to GDP forecasts and will be based on the Government's commitment to ensure a minimum level of defense expenditures, representing 2.38% of GDP in the years 2003 to 2005.

The Romanian government continues efforts to strengthen democratic foundations, improve living standards, and create a society based on respect for the rule of law. Romania has a free press, five major political parties, and an established record of consistently free and fair elections. To further strengthen democracy and improve transparency, the Government has drafted legislation to compel the disclosure of public figures' assets, limit their ability to influence

business decisions, make political party financing more transparent, and increase the openness of the government decision-making process. While Romania still has much to do in the matter of restitution, it has now drafted and passed publicly available laws to replace the former ad hoc decrees and is adjudicating thousands of claims. Economic growth resumed in 2000 after a three-year recession, with increases in GDP growth of 5.3% in 2001 and 4.5% in 2002. Decreases in unemployment and inflation represent encouraging developments.

**Slovakia** has also demonstrated its readiness and commitment to supporting U.S. national security interests by contributing to the global war on terrorism, operations in the Balkans/Afghanistan, and in Iraq. Contributions include sending 100 soldiers to Kosovo, an engineering unit to Kabul, and on February 26 a 75 person Nuclear, Biological and Chemical weapons unit to Kuwait. Slovak military reform is on course. Parliament is committed to joining NATO and has earmarked 2% of its budget for defense spending.

In September, Prime Minister Dzurinda's government was re-elected, firmly cementing Slovakia's democratic reforms. Former authoritarian Prime Minister Meciar's party HZDS has all but collapsed. Although economic reforms have been painful, with unemployment currently at around 18%, the Slovaks nonetheless have moved forward with privatization and financial reform, and their efforts are beginning to bear fruit. Slovakia has engaged actively with its Jewish community and with U.S. NGO's to settle outstanding restitution claims. The OECD has projected a 4% economic growth rate, the highest in the region, for FY 2003.

**Slovenia** - In addition to offering facilities, overflight permission, and intelligence support to the War Against Terrorism, Slovenia provided demining and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, donated arms and ammunition to the Afghan National Army Training Program, and will help train Afghan police. Slovenia also deployed a motorized infantry company to Bosnia in January 2003, adding to troops and equipment already sent to SFOR and KFOR. Slovenia shows good progress in increasing interoperability and reforming its military, emphasizing deployable and sustainable reaction forces. It will end conscription next year and plans to have a fully professional force by 2008. Defense spending is rising



steadily; the Government has committed to spending two percent of GDP by 2008.

Slovenia has a stable, multi-party, democratic political system, characterized by regular elections, a free press, an independent judiciary, and an excellent human rights record. Slovenia has a free market economy, an impressive record of sustained, broad-based growth, and a per capita GDP approaching 72% of the EU average. There is near-uniform support in Parliament for NATO membership, and 66% of participants in a referendum on March 23 voted in favor of joining NATO.

Mr. Chairman, the record of contributions and accomplishments by the seven countries is impressive. But just as no current member is perfect, problems do remain in the invitee countries. Issues such as corruption, gray arms sales, treatment of minorities, protection of classified information, and defense reform will continue to need the close attention of the leaders of the seven invited countries. Based on the extensive dialogue that we have had with these countries, we are convinced of their willingness to continue their reform efforts. As the leaders of seven countries have told us, they are continuing reforms not just to impress us in the hope of joining NATO, but because these reforms are in their own long-term interest.

This permanent commitment to reform was reaffirmed yesterday, when the Permanent Representatives of the nineteen NATO Allies signed the Accession Protocols for the new invitees at NATO headquarters. Each of the Foreign Ministers from the invitee countries submitted a reform timetable for their country at the time the Protocols were signed. These reform timetables are very detailed lists of further political, economic, military, resource, security and legal reforms that each country commits itself to. Each invitee designed its own timetable, in consultation with Allies.

We and our NATO allies will ensure that they live up to these commitments. We will also help them to do so. They will need our continued moral support and technical assistance. The systematic and formal review process that NATO provides will allow them to make further progress along the reform path while simultaneously increasing their contributions to Alliance security and values.

Mr. Chairman, one might well ask why the Administration is asking the Senate, during a period of such dramatic events in Iraq, to take the time now to consider the issue of NATO enlargement and give its approval to bringing Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into NATO. Part of the answer lies in the leadership that the United States, in the last two Administrations, has shown on NATO enlargement. Expeditious action by the Senate will demonstrate to our current Allies and our new Allies our commitment to a larger, stronger, more capable NATO, even during period of transatlantic differences. It will show our commitment to the vision of a Europe, whole, free, and at peace, that President Bush put forward in his speech in Warsaw in June 2002.

But there is another reason, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps nothing captures it better than a story about the head of the Iraqi embassy in Bulgaria. Earlier this month, as the U.S. began to move its forces to the Bulgarian airfield of Burgas, the Iraqi diplomat traveled there. Standing outside the airbase, the Iraqi told a group of reporters that if the United States took military action in Iraq, then Bulgaria and the base at Burgas would be a target for Iraqi military strikes. When the Bulgarian Minister of Defense was asked whether he was concerned about this threat, he responded: "This is the normal statement of an ambassador from a terrorist state." And the Minister added, "He will not be an ambassador when the regime in Iraq is changed."

In the willingness of the seven invitee countries to stand with us against such threats, in all that they are doing already to enhance our collective security, in all that they have done to rid themselves of their totalitarian past, they have shown their abiding faith in us and their faith in our promise to open NATO's door to them. We now need to keep faith with them. We need to recognize them as true Allies.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you very much for permitting us this time. My colleagues and I would be happy to hear your questions and concerns.