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THESIS

**THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA AND NATO - PARTNERSHIP
AND INTEGRATION**

by

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June 2000

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**THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA AND NATO - PARTNERSHIP AND
INTEGRATION**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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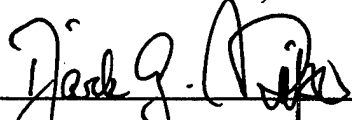
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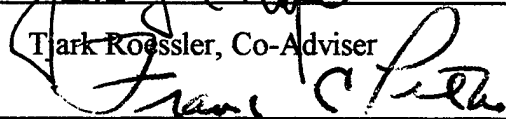
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ABSTRACT

The transformations of the political relations in Europe at the dawn of 21st century resulted in deep changes in the concepts of security and redefining the existing systems for collective defense in Europe. NATO becoming the security and defense framework of Europe had to deeply reconsider its *raison d'etre* and to enlarge.

In this connection the Republic of Bulgaria deeply reconsidered its political and strategic position in this new environment, started profound reforms in its security institutions and continues to consolidate the democratic statecraft. This Thesis analyzes the process of NATO enlargement and advocates the possibilities of membership for Bulgaria at the next 2002 NATO Summit. Bulgaria needs a quick entrance, not only for its strategic geopolitical position in Southeastern Europe, but for its efforts to participate in the building of the united Europe and to support the Alliance as a reliable partner, committed to contribute and to preserve the peace and stability in the region and Europe and to promote democratic values. The membership will strengthen the process of European integration and create a better climate for economic growth and prosperity in Europe.

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I. INTRODUCTION - THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AND THE POSITION OF BULGARIA IN THE NEW EUROPE

At the very beginning of the 21st century Europe's political and economic order is by no means settled. It is rapidly shifting. Europe changes in a new political environment. The Cold War is over, the major threats and fears of global war's cataclysms are gone, bringing deep and dramatic changes into the bipolar model of international relationships between the super powers and rearranging the security relations and the existing status quo.

The traditional East - West confrontation and the dividing line in the core of Europe disappeared and more or less was put an end to the dual nuclear deterrence. Along with that the European security institutions underwent significant changes, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved but NATO unquestionably remained the security and defense framework of Western Europe¹.

Regretfully since 1989 new security risks or boiling pots of conflicts on the political stage of South Eastern Europe revealed their complexity. Europe started to search and remake its identity, different from the "vulgar"² map of Huntington in his book "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order"³, which divided Europe into

¹ Brenner, Michael, *NATO and Collective Security*, p. 249, St. Martin's Press, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1998.

² Ash, Timothy Garton, "The Puzzle of Central Europe", *The New York Review*, pp. 18-23, March 18, 1999.

³ See Appendix A. Huntington's dividing line in the map as adapted from Huntington, Samuel P., *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of the World Order*, p. 159, Simon and Shuster, 1996.

civilized and uncivilized parts based upon rather unacceptable if intelligible at all religious and cultural criteria.

The states brought to the scene their problems, social tensions, economic crises and political instabilities that were ignored or somehow suppressed in the previous political framework. Now there are more than ever internal conflicts, the resolving of which engages the efforts of the states committed to preserve the global peace.

The Republic of Bulgaria is among the states that had deeply to reconsider its political and strategic position in this new environment in order to contribute and to preserve the peace and stability in the region and Europe⁴. This process forms the focus of the analysis of this thesis.

The recent events in South Eastern Europe, climaxing in Kosovo in 1998-99 unleashed many questions and provoked the need to reshape the security architecture of the region and Europe, which surely has global influence because of the world powers' involvement in this theater. However, these issues need just and viable security solutions. This means integrating the countries of South Eastern Europe into the Euro-Atlantic system. This Thesis argues that Bulgaria and other states of the region must be brought into NATO and the European Union remodeled to the requirements of the present era.

This thesis analyzes the 1991-2000 process of NATO enlargement and advocates the possibilities of membership for Bulgaria.

⁴ See Pond, Elizabeth, "Bulgaria", *Europe*, pp.. 26-27, June 1999.

The immediate questions are:

What are the ways to ensure the security of the country from external threats at this stage?;

What are the challenges the Bulgarian security and military reform face?;

How crucial to Bulgaria are the goals for membership in NATO?

This thesis suggests that, despite the recent trials of the North Atlantic Alliance in the second half of the 1990s, the accession of Bulgaria to NATO remains a vital interest to all concerned with peace and security in South eastern Europe. Plainly the events of 1999—the Article 10 accession of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as well as the Kosovo operation—demonstrate that NATO is in the midst of great change, much of this process is of a critical and dangerous nature. The NATO operation of March-June 1999 reminds all concerned of the familiar challenges of waging war in a coalition of democracies. However, these problems cannot obscure another truth that is equally as vital: the exclusion from the west of those partner countries with a vital interest in institutional association can yet lay the seed of renewed conflict in Southeastern Europe.

Bulgaria is entitled to such individual approach, not only for its strategic geopolitical position in Southeastern Europe, but for its efforts to support the Alliance as a reliable partner and to promote democratic values in the region. The membership will strengthen the process of European integration and create a better climate for economic growth and prosperity. With Bulgaria as a partner NATO and also the EU under the auspices of the ESDI (common foreign and security policy agenda) will form a strong Southeastern strategic flank.

The variables that affect the process of accession of Bulgaria in NATO include: historical factors; political culture and political institutions; democratic state and society structures; socioeconomic development; the military reform; the security policy; and international factors. The thesis will assess the impact of only three essential variables: 1) the strength of the democratic reforms in the security and military institution; 2) the military aspects of the security policy - the impact of the war in Kosovo (1998-1999) and 3) the Bulgarian security relationships with NATO. The three variables correspond with the criteria for accession in accordance of the "Study on NATO Enlargement" 1995⁵ and Membership Action Plan 1999⁶. The focus here is on Bulgaria's possibilities for membership – how this goal can be achieved quickly.

The dependent variable is the process of enlargement of NATO as cooperative security institution with core function of collective defense. The independent variables are the three factors, which are considered as most important for the case cited above. The thesis will apply them in an effort to assess the perspective of the country to achieve its security goals.

The transformations of the political environment after the failure of the model of “real socialism”, and the end of the Cold War resulted in profound changes in the concepts of security and redefining the existing systems for collective defense. NATO as a collective defense institution had to a) reconsider its traditional strategic operational

⁵ NATO, Study on NATO Enlargement, 1995. Available (Online):[<http://www.otan.nato.int>]. 15 February 2000.

⁶ NATO, *Membership Action Plan*, Press Communiqué NAC-S(99)66, Washington Summit, April 1999.

raison d'être and to adopt new missions, b) to open its doors for new members and c) to spread the security umbrella over them. The policy of enlargement created a deep division among scholars and policymakers⁷. The opponents of the policy, representative of different schools, realist or institutionalists, considered the idea for new members in the words of John Lewis Gaddis as "ill-conceived, ill-timed and ill-suited to the realities"⁸. Henry Kissinger concluded that the price of NATO enlargement was its gross dilution⁹. They are wrong however.

The reappearance of instability and tension in South Eastern Europe from 1991 on, revived for the politicians and the public the negative geopolitical term "the Balkans" with connotation of being drenched in blood¹⁰.

This crisis turned to be now the major threat for the security in Europe and the closest external threat for the neighboring countries. In terms of geography the Republic of Bulgaria is located very close to this area of crisis and has deep historical links, which make it a direct participant in the events. The country as all the former East European states wants to find a decent place as a stable democracy within the European tradition and culture. In this particular aspect Bulgaria considers membership in NATO as the only possible form of collective security and defense. The institution of NATO is supposed to

⁷ Croft, Stuart, Redmond, John, Wyn Rees, G., Webber, Mark, *The Enlargement of Europe*, pp. 22-48, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, NY, 1999.

⁸ Kay, Sean, *NATO and the Future of European Security*, p. 103, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Maryland, 1998.

⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁰ Ash, Timothy Garton, "The Puzzle of Central Europe," *The New York Review*, p. 20, 18 March 1999.

provide reassurance against a revival of a hegemonic power in Europe, to support the peace and to stabilize and pacify the relations of the European countries.¹¹

In 1997 the Bulgarian government stated the nation's desire to become a member of the Atlantic Alliance and its readiness to be invited to start the accession negotiations. A significant portion of the public¹², who share the values, principles and objectives that the Alliance represents, supports this policy.

The only way to achieve the strategic foreign policy goals is to follow this immutable course. The Balkans have always been considered a region bearing a penchant for “producing more history than it can consume”, as Churchill once said¹³. For the last century the region has been in the center of two world wars and numerous regional conflicts and the spread of nationalism has release dangerous forces of destruction¹⁴. Bulgaria, trying to forget the historical iniquities for being sometimes a victim of the Great Powers' plots¹⁵, plays an important role as a stabilizing factor in the region and did so again in the Kosovo conflict in 1999.

¹¹ Brenner, Michael, *NATO and Collective Security*, p. 249, St. Martin's Press, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1998.

¹² See the polls cited in Chapter IV of this Thesis, p. 60.

¹³ As cited by Unger, Brooke, Survey: "The Balkans: Europe's Roughest Neighbourhood," *The Economist*, 1999. Available (Online): [http://www.economist.com/editorial/justforyou/library/index_surveys.html]. 15 January 2000.

¹⁴ Giplin, Robert, *War and Change in World Politics*, p. 225, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1981.

¹⁵ Craig, Gordon and George, Alexander, *Force and Statecraft*, p. 35, Oxford University Press, Inc., New York, 1995.

In order to be such a factor the Bulgarian policy has to rise above the historical heritage of ethnic and religious clashes and to orient the foreign relations with the neighboring states towards peaceful cooperation and stability.

Firmly desiring to promote the democratic values, in 1998-1999 Bulgaria took the risk to oppose openly the events in neighboring Yugoslavia. Being a reliable partner, Bulgaria fully supported the international efforts of NATO countries by contributing to them while participating in IFOR and SFOR and later in KFOR, thereby supporting NATO's operation in Kosovo. At the same time, Bulgaria is among the states suffering the greatest political, economic, and psychological losses as a real "hostage" to the conflict¹⁶ as discussed in details in Chapter IV of this Thesis. In spite of that the Government supported the NATO airstrikes, challenging the regime of Milosevic and also the Russian foreign policy for the region of Pan-slavism and 19th century pattern of obsolete Great Power politics.

An essential aspect of the Bulgarian strategy for NATO's admission is to demonstrate commitment to being a responsible partner and dependable future ally able to undertake the obligations of membership. In particular Bulgaria has made a great improvement in the reform of the security institutions and military reform, which for eight years was trying to find its way out of the legacy of the 20th century totalitarianism and

¹⁶ Reuters, Kostov, Ivan, "*Kosovo - Biggest Problem for Bulgaria*," *Capital*, 1999. Available (Online): '<http://www.capital.bg/>'. 15 January 2000.

war, weak civil-military control and a ruined economy¹⁷. Bulgaria started its NATO-relationship by joining the North Atlantic Cooperation Council - NACC (now Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council - EAPC) and the Partnership for Peace program (PfP). It continues to be an active PfP member and efficiently participates in the initiative, but its final goal is full membership in NATO. This objective is hard to be accomplished in a period of economic crisis, which Bulgaria is undergoing now but the recent three years of democratic rule show the stable process of their achievement. Its efforts are to establish a stable democracy and to achieve interoperability with NATO as soon as possible. The countries, which have made the most substantial progress in democratic and economic reforms as Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, were the first to be invited to join NATO in 1997. Bulgaria was deemed not ready to fulfil the requirements and facing difficulties, but actively supported with its foreign policy the efforts of NATO and the EU to stabilize the region, being itself a stabilizing factor. In its full membership in the European Union and NATO Bulgaria sees its future not only as a civilized choice but also as a matter of survival. Bulgaria needs their assistance while in the process of transition to democracy as it is stated in Art. 2 of the Washington Treaty¹⁸. Only within the community of the democratic European states Bulgaria can fully recover and build its prosperity. Such examples already exist with the democratic transitions and stabilization in Portugal,

¹⁷ Simon, Jeffrey, "Bulgaria and NATO: 7 Lost Years," *Strategic Forum*, Number 142, National Defense University, May 1998.

¹⁸ Art.2, The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington, D.C., 1949.

Greece, Turkey and Spain¹⁹, achieved in part as members of NATO. The uncertainty and eventual delay in the time schedule of accession might lead to a defect in the ongoing institution building process and to the frustration in the beliefs of the people, which is critical for the legitimacy of democracy. The feeling of disappointment can shake the stability of the political civic arena as the latest election in 1999 in Bulgaria showed and induced to the changes in the cabinet and even of the minister of defense.

While the Kosovo operation of March-June 1999 may be too fresh in the collective mind to allow a full scholarly analysis, this thesis per force must attempt a tentative appraisal of these contemporary events as concerns the character and evolution of Bulgarian foreign, security, and defense policies in this era of rapid change in Southeastern Europe. Although these events cannot provide this thesis with the necessary criteria for academic explanation they are used in this study as a background information concerning the current constraints upon the Bulgarian foreign and defense policy. Bulgaria being a "front-line state" made its commitments to Euro-Atlantic policy.

The Bulgarian foreign policy sees real guarantees for security and stability only in an alliance with NATO²⁰. Its past choices as a member of the former Warsaw Pact already judged by history can be seen as an illumination of this decision. The study will revise the achievements and weakness in the way of fulfilling this goal. The events in the

¹⁹Agüero, Felipe, *Soldiers, Civilians and Democracy*, p. 205, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1995.

²⁰ Program of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria 1997-2001. Available (Online): [http://www.bulgaria.govrn.bg/eng/oficial_docs/index.html]. 10 February 2000.

Balkan region prove the significance of the collective measures and the importance of the Alliance as the sole peace-making factor. The recent future membership of Bulgaria in the organization is aimed to strengthen the stability in the region and in the world²¹. Bulgaria's active pursuit of regional cooperation and its tireless efforts to muster the regional democratic security policy already gave results in the EU's decision to invite Bulgaria for accession talks, convinced of the Bulgarian European vocation. The next logical step is the Bulgarian membership in NATO.

The following chapters of this Thesis discuss the topics in detail:

Chapter II - NATO Enlargement - The New Challenges - examines the process of accepting new members and the challenges, which the Alliance face. The new political environment changed the strategy and the concept of the organization²². The process of enlargement faced NATO with new dilemmas: to avoid the creation of new dividing lines in Europe it will have to find a way to spread the security umbrella over each country or to accept them all as members. On the other hand this process and approach can foster regional tensions if a country is not accepted or if it is accepted. The alienation of relations with Russia, which still is a world player and still is sensitive about the accession of the former Warsaw Pact states in "the club", imposes additional tension. The

²¹ See Pond, Elizabeth, "Come Together", *Foreign Affairs*, pp. 8-12, vol. 79, Number 2, March/April 2000.

²² For more information about former NATO strategy based on the assumption of the total war, used in 1949-1989, see Duffield, John S., *Power Rules: The Evolution of NATO Conventional Force Posture*, p. 25, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1995.

thesis argues that the process of enlargement is driven by political reasons and NATO should apply individual approach for every state's accession.

Chapter III - Bulgaria and NATO: Assessing the Democratic Reforms in the Military Institution of Bulgaria - analyzes the ongoing military reforms in Bulgaria. The achieved and expected significant changes result not only in transformation of the size of the armed forces, their tasks, functions and structure, but also in the main elements of the institution building process concerning the professionalism and the way of thinking. The Civil-Military Reform in Bulgaria is considered the most important factor that prepares Bulgaria for the membership. The newly adopted Plan 2004²³ reflects the real measures, which will make the membership a reality.

Chapter IV - The Impact of Kosovo Crisis and the Bulgarian Foreign Policy towards Accession - offers an analysis of the threats and constraints, which the current events place upon Bulgaria, the dilemmas of the foreign policy and the cost of its decisions. Bulgaria stays firmly on the path towards NATO and is not embarrassed to demonstrate this orientation. The frustration will appear if Bulgaria will not be able to meet the criteria for membership or if its accession is delayed because of other players' political lobbies or interests.

Chapter V - Conclusion - There are three conclusions that can be drawn and will be discussed in this thesis concerning the enlargement of NATO and the potential

²³ Decree of the Ministers' Council No. 200, Plan for Organizational Development of the Armed Forces until 2004 according to the Appendix (Top Secret), *The State Gazette*, Number 98, Sofia, 12 November 1999.

Bulgarian membership: a) the membership in NATO is the only way of insuring the security of Bulgaria; b) the participation in the PfP Program and other NATO activities is enough to guarantee the security of Bulgaria, and c) Bulgaria can be a neutral state and membership in NATO is not necessary for the defense and security of Bulgaria.

This thesis supports the first enumerated conclusion that Euro-Atlantic membership remains vital to Bulgaria. This country can have no enduring peace and security outside the Alliance. Bulgaria has made strides to become a center of stability in a region of past and present tensions in the hope that Bulgarians can make their full contribution to the eradication of such tension from this region of Europe in the decades to come. In this respect Bulgaria hopes to emulate the example as elsewhere in European borders lands of violence in the past decade. The thesis argues that the changes in the democratic and military aspects in Bulgaria might still not be in perfect accordance with the provided Euro-Atlantic criteria, but the country has made significant steps and continues to reform. The thesis points out the weaknesses and makes recommendations for the further integration in the organization.

II. NATO ENLARGEMENT - THE NEW CHALLENGES

The failure of the model of "real socialism", the disappearance of the Soviet Union from the political map, and the end of the Cold War resulted in profound changes in the international political, economical and security systems. The Warsaw Pact disappeared in 1991²⁴ and left its former members and the newly emerging countries in a security vacuum. The new players were too weak to face the new tensions, political and economical instabilities and security risks and logically they started seeking guarantees and insurance for the peace, which they can receive only in alliance with the system of collective defense that has already proved its viability. The stage set for confrontation needed to be rearranged and a framework needed to be created that can blur and soften the edges of the interests of US and western and Russian power in Europe.²⁵

These lead to the need to be established a new security architecture in and for Europe and reconsideration of the existing military institutions because the West also intended to promote security and stability in Europe and to expand the democratic system and values.

NATO, surviving this exciting historical time, turned out to be the means for "preserving and extending this "European Civil Space" as far as possible in both time and

²⁴ Protocol of the Termination of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, signed at Warsaw, 1 July 1991.

²⁵ Goodby, James, "Can Collective Security Work?," *Managing Global Chaos*, p. 243, United States Institute of Peace, Washington , DC, 1998.

terrain.²⁶ But it was not the only task and dilemma it has to resolve. The elimination of the primary threats in the former bipolar model of international relations that NATO was created to meet according to its founding Act - the basics for the Treaty of Washington 1949 - had to be reconsidered. The defense capabilities of the organization has to be kept, but focused and adequate to the new political environment; ready to accept new missions ranging from peacekeeping to prevention of terrorism and organized crime. The fragile and uncertain relation with Russia had to be reconsidered and efforts had to be made to keep Russia in the arena of the democratic changes. Thus from a mainly defense oriented organization NATO turns out to be an influential institution with decisively political functions. The last summit in Washington in April 1999 analyzed NATO's achievements, defined its new role and determined some of the future key issues of its long-term agenda. NATO changed and adapted its internal civil and military structures, reshaped its posture of forces and echelons for combat and peace support operations. In the process, NATO made these units more flexible, capable of addressing multiple tasks and missions and more operational in the context of the challenges of the 1990s and beyond.²⁷ The Alliance redefined its attitude towards the other nation-states (players in the complex international arena), accepted three new members, and declared its policy of enlargement. NATO's "door remained open" for other nations to join in the future.

²⁶ The U.S. Ambassador Hunter, Robert, "*Enlarging NATO: Reckless Or Requisite?*." Available (Online): [<http://www.fas.org/man/nato/index.html>]. 20 January 2000.

²⁷ For more information see - *The Alliance's Strategic Concept, Approved by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington on 23-24 April 1999*. Available (Online): [<http://www.otan.nato.int/docu/com/.htm>]. 20 January 2000.

A. THE PROCESS OF ENLARGEMENT

The idea of enlargement is not something new for the Alliance. It is a part of the task to promote democratic values and a result of the process of consolidation of democracy on global scale when "unprecedented number of countries have completed democratic transitions"²⁸. Its legal roots lay in Article 10 of the Washington Treaty:

The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty.²⁹

Here one can see the criteria and the procedure for membership as the founding twelve states created it.

The first steps of the enlargement started in the years of the Cold War in 1952 with the accession of Greece and Turkey, then the accession of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955 and the accession of Spain in 1982. The historical period gives its military or political explanation to the strategic admission of these countries.

What provokes or makes possible the current wave and the contemporary continuation of the process of NATO expansion also lies among the historical events of the millennium and in the changes of the bipolar political model.³⁰ The first attempts to define the attitude of the Alliance towards the new democracies and to introduce the

²⁸ Linz, Juan J. and Stepan, Alfred, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, p. 6, The Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1996.

²⁹ NATO Office of Information and Press, *NATO Handbook*, 1999, Appendix 8.

³⁰ Croft, Stuart, Redmond, John, Wyn Rees, G., Webber, Mark, *The Enlargement of Europe*, pp. 22-48, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1999.

policy of the open dialogue were made in 1990. In the NATO's London Summit Declaration the Allies stated:

We today also invite the governments of the USSR, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Hungarian Republic, the Republic of Poland, the People's Republic of Bulgaria and Romania to come to NATO not just to visit, but to establish regular diplomatic liaison with NATO. This will make it possible for us to share with them our thinking and deliberations in this historic period of changes. Our Alliance will do its share to overcome the legacy of decades of suspicion.³¹

The Allies stayed firmly behind the idea to foster democratic reforms in Europe, peace and stability and to create a better climate for economic growth. The establishment of NACC in 1991 at the summit in Rome (it turned later in 1997 into EAPC with new and extended role) was a logical continuation of their efforts. The US foreign policy initiated the "open door policy" debate and "by late 1990 NATO enlargement has already been considered as follow-on to NACC"³². Probably the most important among other activities was the summit in Brussels in 1994 which launched the initiative "Partnership-for-Peace" (PfP) and the confirmation of the expansion to the East as natural event:

We expect and would welcome NATO expansion that would reach to democratic states to our East, as part of an evolutionary process, taking into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe.³³

³¹ NATO Information Service, *London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance*, July 1990. Available (Online): [<http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/c91067a/htm>]. 20 January 2000.

³² Solomon, Gerald, *The NATO Enlargement Debate, 1990-1997: Blessings of Liberty*, p. 19, Praeger Publishers, Westport, 1998.

³³ NATO, Final Communiqué, North Atlantic Council, M-NAC-2, No.6, 1 December 1994. Available (Online): [<http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/c941201a.htm>]. 20 January 2000.

Leading analysts of politics and society Central and Eastern Europe conclude that the states of Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe have long identified themselves with the history, culture, and politics of the Western tradition. Tragically, the makers of peace in 1945, in a short sighted fashion, forcefully broke these bonds of society and culture, and thus disrupted these natural links to the west. The settlement put in hand by the anti-Axis allies in the years 1944-46 led quickly thereafter to the outbreak of the Cold war and to the disappearance behind the Iron Curtain of the subject peoples of the Soviet system.

With the end of the Soviet Union's hegemony, the states sought their democratic roots but the process of democratization is not an easy one. All the states faced a political and economic crisis because of a "flattened civic society" and lack of maturity in the "five interacting arenas"³⁴ necessary for the consolidation of democracy. These arenas are the establishment of a civil, economic and political society, the rule of law and a working government. Without ties to the West European and Atlantic institutions, the East European geopolitical space will become a no-man's-land between the "so called" West and Russia. The instability in Central and Eastern Europe also will have a negative impact upon the West unless liberal democracies are established in the former "communist" zone. To be economically and politically viable, these states need the European Union, and for their security they need the Atlantic Alliance. Since most members of the European Union are members of NATO, and since the European integration has also reached a certain point and the European defense is tightly linked with NATO, membership in the European

³⁴ See Linz, Juan J. and Stepan, Alfred, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, p. 7, The Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1996.

Union will lead to at least de facto extension of the NATO guarantee. These two processes mutually influence each other. But the players in them from both sides were and are not ready yet.

Some scholars like Kissinger, though he personally is very conservative towards NATO enlargement, argue that the victory in the Cold War has made it far more difficult to implement Woodrow Wilson's dream of universal collective security and that PfP is not a path to NATO, but an alternative to it³⁵. He also states that the Partnership for Peace runs the risk of creating two sets of borders in Europe - those that are protected by security guarantees, and others where such guarantees have been refused - a state of affairs bound to prove tempting to potential aggressors and demoralizing to potential victims.

The administration of President Clinton offered in 1994 the PfP program, arguing that NATO could not afford to "draw a new line between East and West that could create a self-fulfilling prophecy of future confrontation."³⁶ It invited all the states from Eastern Europe to join the initiative³⁷ aiming to create a substitute of a collective security system and to prepare the eventual new members for their admission. The initiative introduced the concrete steps of the new security relationship:

³⁵ See Kissinger, H., *Diplomacy*, p. 824, Simon and Schuster, Inc., NY, 1994.

³⁶ Goldgeiger, James M., "NATO Expansion: The Anatomy of a Decision", *The Washington Quarterly*, pp.. 85-102, Winter 1998.

³⁷ For more information about that process see Goldgeiger, James M., *Not Whether but When: The US Decision to Enlarge NATO*, Washington, D.C., 1999.

...we will work in concrete ways towards transparency in defense budgeting, promoting democratic control of defense ministries, joint planning and creating an ability to operate with NATO forces in such fields as peacekeeping, search and rescue and humanitarian operations...³⁸

The PfP initiative indicated the good will of the NATO members to help the former Warsaw Pact states, including the Soviet Union-successors' states, to transform their armed forces and to integrate into Euro-Atlantic values while participating together in different activities. The initiative promoted democratic civil-military control and called for cooperation and interoperability of the armed forces with NATO member-nations' forces. Its objectives in the long-term turned to be not only military but also political - fostering friendship and stability beyond Europe:

Through the PfP the East and the West seek to build the habits of consultation, trust and cooperation. ... There is, however, more to the PfP than military exercises and activities. We aim to provide our experience and expertise to the new democracies in creating democratically organized and accountable Ministries of Defense.³⁹

The former adversaries in a short time learned how to work together and to apply the democratic approaches in order to resolve problems and crisis of mutual importance.

³⁸ NATO, Declaration of the Heads of State and Governments issued by NAC in Brussels, Belgium, Press Communiqué M-1(94)3, 11 January 1994, Available (Online): [<http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/c940111a.htm>]. 15 February 2000.

³⁹ Claes, Willy, "NATO and the Evolving Euro-Atlantic Security Architecture," NATO Review, No.1, January 1995, Available (Online): [<http://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/9501-1.html>]. 15 February 2000.

But at the inception of the "Partnership for Peace" in January 1994, the creators of the program in Brussels shied away from the offer of traditional security guarantees to the Partners. The PfP program could not substitute the membership in the organization. PfP was only able to provide the framework for evaluating the states willing to join NATO and a framework for cooperation for all those nations not willing to join NATO.

The next step was the Brussels' ministerial meeting in December 1994 where the opening of the Alliance to new members was officially announced. But universally valid criteria for accession, giving answers to the questions "who", "why", "how" and "when", were not explicitly developed as was declared in Brussels:

We have decided to initiate a process of examination inside the Alliance to determine how NATO will enlarge, the principles to guide the process and the implication of membership.⁴⁰

Even the questions "who" and "when" were left without discussion as premature, until 1995 when the "Study of NATO Enlargement"⁴¹ examined the "why and how" and outlined the principles of the admission. One can argue that according to NATO's founding Act - the Washington Treaty, Art. 10 - there are no criteria for admission except for the general ones and it is unfair to apply such now and that the individual approach is a better solution. The previous practice of the Alliance to accept members because of geostrategic considerations despite the fact that, for example, they were ruled by dictatorship regimes and did not fit the criteria of being a consolidated democracy such as

⁴⁰ NATO, Final Communiqué, *North Atlantic Council*, M-NAC-2, 1 Dec.1994, No.6. Available (Online): [<http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/c941201a.htm>]. 15 February 2000.

Portugal as a founding member, and later likewise vis-à-vis Greece and Turkey in 1952, was reconsidered though.

Analyzing the political and historical moment in 1994 is obvious that NATO itself was not prepared. The process was improvised on step-by step basis, the improvisation aimed to govern the pace of international events. The moment was suitable strategically for the frontline to be moved towards Russia and to stabilize the core of Europe but the Alliance was not ready to change its *raison d'être* as an organization of collective defense. NATO was developing its main core function forwards an organization of cooperative security, but NATO was not yet willing to become a system of collective security, spreading its umbrella over all the PfP states⁴² and the PfP program was never intended to offer security guarantees:

As it increases the number of members and the geographic scope of operations, the alliance gradually loses its restrictive character and begins to take on the attributes of a CSO (collective security organization). More states and greater territorial coverage mean more contingencies to guard against⁴³.

⁴¹ NATO, *Study of NATO Enlargement*, Brussels, 1995.

⁴² Actually there are 25 PfP-partner nations. By December 1999 Ireland joined as 25th actual PfP-partner nation, mean while Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as former PfP-partners became NATO members.

⁴³ Art, Robert J., "Creating a Disaster: NATO's Open Door Policy", *Political Science Quarterly*, volume 113, number 3, p. 395, 1998.

It became clear that the organization itself needed internal adaptation and transformation. It needed to decide what would be the new concept and strategy of the expanded organization.

Russia, considering itself a "great power" and still being a nuclear one, also opposed a broad enlargement. Russia declared its fears concerning expansion to the Baltic states and some states considered as Russian zone of interest although its relation with NATO was well organized with the NATO - Russia Founding Act from 1997. The crisis in Kosovo in 1999 aggravated very much that cooperation to the freezing point.

After internal debates about the pros and cons the Madrid summit in 1997 gave the official answer to the question of "who" will be the first round of new members⁴⁴. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic were officially admitted to NATO on 12 of March 1999 and the members became nineteen.

The evolution of the "Partnership" in practice alongside the deepening crisis in ex-Yugoslavia led to a further strengthening of Partners' ties to the Alliance, especially in the midst of the March 1999 war. Nonetheless, for such Partners as Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria, the post-1998 expansion of non-Article 5 aspects of NATO within PfP can still be no substitute for the full-fledged guarantee of collective defense enshrined in Article 5. of the Washington Treaty. Hence, PfP can never supplant the full membership as enjoyed by the nineteen NATO nations.

⁴⁴ NATO, *Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation*, Madrid, 8 July 1997.

B. THE CHALLENGES OF THE POSSIBLE NEXT ROUND OF ENLARGEMENT

The list of the potential member states, which at the Washington summit 1999 declared their firm will to join, is still long. The countries applying for membership want to live under NATO's protective umbrella and the security guarantee mostly coming from the United States. The membership for them means political self-confidence, being a part of the democratic community of nations, values and institutions. It means stability and security for all countries in the Euro-Atlantic region. But the candidates, the so-called "have-nots" need the consensus of the members which means that any new membership is a matter of geopolitical and geostrategic interests, negotiations and political lobbyism.

The Washington Summit posed serious challenges for the candidates in the form of greater differentiation among the PfP partners⁴⁵ - they were divided in 9 Membership Action Plan (MAP) states and 15 non-MAP states. The nine countries in the list - Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Macedonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, continue with the reforms in their political and military structures in order to achieve interoperability with NATO and to be able in short-term to meet the responsibilities and the obligation of the future membership. The initiation in 1999 of NATO's Membership Action Plan⁴⁶ - a program of activities for assistance of the aspiring countries, will help

⁴⁵ The status of the PfP members as it is in April 1999.

⁴⁶ NATO, *Membership Action Plan (MAP)*, Press Communiqué NAC-S(99)66. Available (Online): [<http://www.otan.nato.int>]. 15 February 2000.

them to build the strongest possible candidacy. For some of the states the membership is a matter of survival⁴⁷ because the refusal might compromise the democratic changes.

The Washington summit raised a lot of questions and uncertainties. The organization felt that the enlargement burdens the intra-alliance relationships and the new members will tend to reorganize the Alliance and the ability to generate consensus. The war in Kosovo and the position of NATO was a difficult test for such defense cooperation. The new tasks were in conflict with the national interests and objectives. They provoked conflicts inside NATO and can do that in the future when mutual strategic interests are not clearly defined. It was obvious that some of the new members were not prepared as Hungary and the Czech Republic for example were feared to become "free riders"⁴⁸ and not able to contribute to the military security in NATO. They were especially behind in defense reform and budgeting.

Both the members and the aspirants must very carefully assess the cost and benefits of the process of enlargement. There are lots of voices against⁴⁹ future accession of new members because of the existing internal problems of NATO the new members own failures will probably slow down the process of enlargement, despite the efforts of the new aspirants and MAP countries. The April 1999 meeting of the North Atlantic

⁴⁷ Simon, Jeffrey, "Central and Eastern European Security", *Strategic Forum*, Number. 151, p. 4, 1998.

⁴⁸ Simon, Jeffrey, "The New NATO Members: Will They Contribute?," *Strategic Forum*, Number. 160, p. 2, 1999.

⁴⁹ Kay, Sean, *NATO and the Future of European Security*, p. 103, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Maryland, 1998.

Council determined that the next round of Enlargement would be taken up, at the latest, at the next summit meeting of the NAC to be held in 2002. The question remains, nonetheless, in NATO and Partner capitals whether there will even be a second round of Enlargement; further, if, indeed, there is to be such a second round as policy seems to indicate, then the questions of "when" and "who" remain to be answered⁵⁰, as well. The aspiring nations will remain under active consideration⁵¹ for future membership and no European democratic state, whose admission will fulfill the objectives of the Washington Treaty, will be excluded from consideration. Definitely the choice will be influenced by the political preferences of the national interests of the member-states.

The accession of Bulgaria will be influenced by the last international events and the positive aspects emerging out of the Kosovo war as the implementation of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe, the initiation of the accession talks of Bulgaria with the EU, and the heightening interest of the U.S.A. in Southeastern Europe⁵², neither of which was operative in 1997-1999.

⁵⁰ NATO, An Alliance for the 21st Century, Press Communiqué NAC-S (99) 64, Issued by the Heads of States and Government Participating in the Meeting of NAC in Washington, D.C., 24 April 1999.

⁵¹ There was not taken a decision for a definite enlargement, but a decision for eventual enlargement might be taken on the next Summit in 2002.

⁵² Action Plan for Southeastern Europe, announced by the White House on the occasion of Bulgarian President Stoyanov's visit to the United States, p. 4, 10 February 1998.

C. FOUR DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO NATO "SOFT" EXPANSION⁵³

There are long lasting political and scholarly debates concerning the next round of enlargement⁵⁴ and theoretically different approaches:

1. Pause before enlarging to put relations with Russia on a firmer footing;
2. Enlarge with one or two states and then have a lengthy pause for a period of consolidation;
3. Enlarge in a series of relatively fast-paced accessions that would include most of the current applicants while Russia's relationship with NATO remains as defined in the NATO-Russia Charter, or while Russia is weak;
4. Enlarge gradually, ultimately including a firmly democratic Russia after a period of demonstrated stability.

The first approach is favored by many that think NATO enlargement is dangerously premature. The second approach is the most likely outcome. The Russian opposition to accession to NATO of any newly independent state that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union there will be considerable hesitation, at least in Western Europe, about a broad second round of expansion. The third approach - expansion to include nearly all the applicants - is a possible if less certain outcome.

⁵³ Rudolf, Peter, "The Future of US as European Power: The Case of NATO Enlargement", *European Security*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 175-195, 1996.

⁵⁴ The opinions of the opponents of enlargement will not be discussed here.

Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, are considered the possible candidates for the next round. But they need to have almost certain unanimous support. And there will be hesitations about adding the Baltic States and Ukraine.

The fourth approach - an expansion that ultimately would include a democratic Russia has few real supporters.

After evaluating the individual candidatures according to their recent political activities,⁵⁵ an intellectual guess can be made that:

Albania and Macedonia cannot be regarded as prepared candidates because of internal instabilities;

Slovakia is recently performing well economically and made a sharp curve towards democracy with the ouster of Meciar, and might catch up with the first group;

The Baltic states face problems with the attitude of Russia⁵⁶ and their accession will be postponed;

Romania is recently falling behind and faces problems with the reforms⁵⁷;

Bulgaria and Slovenia are advancing considerably well with their reforms, especially Slovenia;

Slovenia alone is an option or together with Bulgaria and possibly Romania have chances to be the first group to be accepted. This will make a very strong Southeastern

⁵⁵ For its analysis this thesis reflects the events from 1999 and the beginning of 2000.

⁵⁶ Gordon, Philip, *NATO's Transformation*, p. 158, Rowman, Littlefield Publishers, Inc., London, 1997.

⁵⁷ "Romania and Bulgaria: The Tortoise and the Hare", *The Economist*, 7 August 1999. Available (Online): [http://www.economist.com/tfs/archive_tframeset.html]. 10 February 2000.

flank of NATO along with Greece and Turkey. The behavior of some of the aspiring states as Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania, during the Kosovo crisis and their support of the NATO activities now gives them certain advantages and also political engagement on behalf of the Alliance, as the recent visit of President Clinton in this region showed. Bulgaria being a "front-line state" made its commitments to Euro-Atlantic policy and along with the economic stabilization is now seen as a reliable partner.

But probably the most recent date for acceptance is 2001 or 2002⁵⁸ and besides the fulfillment of requirements, a candidate will need the political sponsorship of the NATO members. The applicants will have to secure the unanimous consensus of all nineteen NATO members and the US Senate and the international political relationships will have enormous influence. The analysis of the political situation shows different connections between the players not only influenced by their geopolitical positions as seen on the map. Though speculative, an intellectual guess can be made to estimate the attitude of the member-states towards the aspirants. For example Italy, Portugal and Spain are favoring large expansion. The UK will support a small expansion and supports Slovenia and Bulgaria, while Germany, Greece and Turkey, concerned about the Southern rim of NATO will like Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia to be in the next round.⁵⁹ France and Netherlands are for stabilizing the Balkans with the accession of Slovenia and Romania,

⁵⁸ Speech by Lord Robertson, the Secretary General of NATO at the Bulgarian National Assembly, 10 February 2000. Available (Online):[<http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/s000210a.html>]. 20 February 2000.

⁵⁹ "Romania and Bulgaria: The Tortoise and the Hare", The Economist, 7 August 1999. Available (Online): [http://www.economist.com/tfs/archive_tframeset.html]. 10 February 2000.

Belgium and Canada support the same states, while Denmark and Iceland support the Baltic States. Norway is not yet convinced that any of the candidates is ready to become a member. The US officials declared that the US would support every state that is ready for the acceptance.

In addition, because it is implausible to admit nine new members in the near term, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) must find a way to successfully deal with the expectations and needs of the MAP partners.

D. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE EUROPEAN STATES THAT AREN'T INVITED INTO NATO⁶⁰?

This is a reasonable question because instability in only one European country can cause problems and instability on the continent. The candidates still face a lot of challenges in their military reforms⁶¹. Compared to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, which downsized their armed forces before their entrance into NATO, the MAP partners either must still downsize (Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia) or build armed forces from scratch (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Slovenia). Albania and Macedonia fall into yet a third MAP subgroup with different problems.⁶²

⁶⁰ See Yost, David, *NATO Transformed*, US Institute of Peace, Washington DC, pp.. 118-119, 1998.

⁶¹ Simon, Jeffrey, "Central and Eastern European Security", *Strategic Forum*, Number 151, National Defense University, December 1998.

⁶² Simon, Jeffrey, "Partnership For Peace (PFP): After the Washington Summit and Kosovo", *Strategic Forum*, Number 167, National Defense University, August 1999.

As the reduction of the partners' armed forces result in social complexities, NATO may become the object of blame. It has to be admitted that for the modern standards most of the armies really are too heavy and numerous but not effective, and their reduction is not a NATO requirement. If NATO ultimately does not recompense with an invitation, some MAP partners, restructuring their Armed Forces as if part of NATO may end up with weak and disconcerted forces. Such forces will not be able to fulfill their constitutional duties and will have little utility in helping the state deal with its own security.

If any or all of the MAP aspirants fail to receive membership invitations, they will likely be disillusioned, resulting in a cleavage of the MAP partners from the Alliance. Some MAP partners have expressed doubt about NATO efforts to develop regional cooperation in the Baltic region and South Eastern Europe and fear that efforts to regionalize will undermine the fulfillment of their enlargement objective.

Most of the states, following the example of Spain⁶³ in 1982 also seek membership to strengthen democracy and achieve possible opportunity to enter the European Union.

The prime task of NATO is to secure the peace and stability in Europe. The states have to know that the enlargement is a process, not a one-time event as U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made it clear:

⁶³ Fouquet, David, "A Brief History of NATO Enlargement", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 7 July 1997. Available (Online): [<http://www.janes.com/company/search/searchset.html>]. 15 February 2000.

Today, as NATO embarks upon a new era, our energy and vision are directed to the future. It is our common purpose over time to do for Europe's East what NATO has already helped to do for Europe's West. Steadily and systematically we will continue erasing, without replacing, the line drawn in Europe by Stalin's bloody boot.⁶⁴

Those states that were not invited to join NATO are not denied membership forever. NATO will continue and strengthen its "intensified dialogues" with interested countries to ensure they receive specific information to better prepare them to join the Alliance.

NATO also will continue enhancing its Partnership for Peace (PfP) program that builds military cooperation and confidence between NATO and its Partner states across Europe and the former Soviet Union.

NATO has pursued new cooperative agreements with certain European states that have not sought NATO membership, such as with Ukraine.

The process will continue because adding new states to NATO will bolster stability and democracy in Europe. Partly to improve their prospects for membership, the applicant states have settled border and ethnic disputes with neighbors, strengthened civilian control of their militaries, and broadened protections for ethnic and religious minorities. Such actions not only make Europe more stable and peaceful, but also create a better long-term climate for global trade and investment.

⁶⁴ As cited by Bransten, Jeremy, "1999 In Review: New Challenges As NATO Moves East." Available (Online): [<http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/1999/12/F.RU.991220150049.html>]. 10 January 2000.

Enlarging NATO will erase Stalin's artificial dividing line in Europe. NATO enlargement will help prevent the emergence of a gray zone of insecurity in Europe and especially in regions that has been at the heart of this century's worst conflicts.

III. BULGARIA AND NATO: ASSESSING THE DEMOCRATIC REFORMS IN THE MILITARY INSTITUTION OF BULGARIA

After the domino-like collapse in 1989 - 1991 of the communist system, most of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe began their transition towards democracy under the influence of international factors before significant domestic changes occurred in their society⁶⁵. The world changes reflected in Bulgaria with a regime-controlled transition in 1989 from early-post totalitarianism towards consolidated democracy in 1995⁶⁶. During that period, the democratic institution building process slowly and painfully started the military reform in Bulgaria and the establishment of democratic civilian control over the armed force. This involved the restructuring of the military roles to assistance in the formulation and implementation of the national defense policy⁶⁷ and the removal of the military from societal to institutional concerns, the legal basis for which were the new Constitution (1991) and the Defense and Armed Forces Law (1995).

In 1994 Bulgaria joined the Partnership for Peace initiative but was reluctant to take steps towards membership in NATO because of the prevailing negative attitude in the Parliament and even as of this writing the Bulgarian Socialist Party does not yet have a clear position.

⁶⁵ Linz, Juan and Stepan, Alfred, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, p. 235, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1996.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 333-341.

⁶⁷ Aguero, Felipe, *Soldiers, Civilians and Democracy*, p. 20, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1995.

In 1997 after heavy economic crisis, the general elections brought into power a new Bulgarian government formed by the political movement Union of the Democratic Forces, which stated the nation's desire to become a member of the Atlantic Alliance and its readiness to be invited to start accession negotiations.

Most of the former Warsaw pact nations from Central and Eastern Europe that seek to join EU and NATO have made strong declarations of their commitment to the principles and values of OSCE, European Union, NATO and to the security of the NATO area. These declarations have been made by successive governments and oppositions and generally represent solid national consensus. These declarations are matched by such actions, as sustained democratic and market reforms, efforts to improve relations with neighbors, and efforts to deepen civilian control of the military, restructuring their armies and achieving interoperability with NATO.

Because of the lack of political consensus over the military priorities, without a formulated National Security Strategy and Military Doctrine put into place, Bulgaria was very much behind the other states in its reforms on the way towards NATO. The past choices of the military alliances in which Bulgaria participated during the historical period from its establishment after the Ottoman yoke in 1878, through WWI and WWII till the end of Warsaw pact additionally burdened the hesitations of the political decision. The legacy of the past had made Bulgaria very cautious when choosing partners. Bulgaria and the other countries of the region had been victims of the egoistic interests of the Great Powers. Bulgaria emerged as a state in 1878 after a shameful deal of the Bismarck's

policy⁶⁸, which left more than half of the Bulgarian nation and territories (Thrace, Macedonia, Dobrudga) partitioned within the boundaries of other neighboring states. The nations' desire for unification was one of the reasons for the choice of the alliances during the Balkan war, in the WWI, partially the same desire motivated the participation in the WWII on the side of Hitler's Germany and the Axis. After Yalta's conference in 1945⁶⁹, the Great Powers' dividing Europe into two zones again decided the future of Bulgaria as part of the Soviet bloc. All the previous bad choices and alliances with Germany in two world wars and with the Soviet Union in the Warsaw Pact lead the country to three national catastrophes in which Bulgaria lost great parts of its territory and suffered heavy economic losses. The past suggests that military alliances, which are based on hegemonism and aggression, cannot solve the problems and the struggles between the weak, vulnerable, and insecure nations in Southeastern Europe. The legacy of ethnic tension, political diversity, and fragmentation is deeply ingrained there and the region needs integration into the European identity, into EU and NATO as collective organizations of equal partners, integration, which will breed trust, stability and prosperity and stimulate the development and stabilization of democracy. With the process of enlargement of EU and NATO Bulgaria received the opportunity to change the paradigm of the past.

⁶⁸ Craig, Gordon and George, Alexander, *Force and Statecraft*, pp. 33-35, Oxford University Press, Inc., New York, 1995.

⁶⁹ Nye, Joseph S., Jr., *Understanding International Conflicts*, p. 104, Longman, New York, 1997.

In 1997 realizing the geopolitical and economic constraints for Bulgaria, the Government of Ivan Kostov started its ambitious program⁷⁰ for integration with EU and NATO. The political authorities had the clear notion that the security of the state should be sought in participation in these international organizations, not in neutrality or under the postulates of maintaining a large national military power, for which there was not a strategic need neither were financial resources.

In the short-term the objectives for Bulgaria were to create domestic conditions for consolidating democracy and stabilizing a market economy, to prove this image in the international arena and to become one of the unquestionable leaders and guarantors of stability and security in the region. The Secretary General of NATO Javier Solana pointed:

...despite of domestic difficulties, Bulgaria is ready to end the vicious circle of hatred and conflict that has been the bane of the Balkans for centuries.⁷¹

The military structures as main tool for fulfillment of these objectives were to be put in alliance with this program, to catch up with the time and to prepare to be part of the Euro-Atlantic security institutions.

⁷⁰ Program of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria 1997-2001. Available (Online):[http://www.bulgaria.govrn.bg/eng/oficial_docs/index.html]. 10 February 2000

⁷¹ NATO, Secretary General's Council Welcoming Remarks, 1997. Available (Online): [<http://www.nato.iint/docu>]. 14 March 1999.

A. BULGARIAN MILITARY REFORMS AND RELATIONS WITH NATO IN THE PERIOD PRIOR 1998

In the fall of 1991 the Bulgarian Armed Forces totaled 107,000 soldiers with 46,000 professionals and until 1998 remained at this level⁷². Very little was done to change the orientation of the structure of the Armed forces from "offensive" to "defensive" concepts and to introduce the "brigade-corps" form of organization. The creation and development of the basic documents as National Security Concept and Military Doctrine, which were supposed to formulate the main principles for the architecture of the Armed forces and their tasks, took a long time.

The military reforms were vague and ambiguous and the numerous changes in the governments and the Ministers of Defense⁷³ were an obstacle for providing a stable course of well-formulated and understood in short-terms and long-terms objectives of the reform. This was due not only to the individual qualities and the administrative skills of the civilian officials but also to the different political platforms, which the Ministers were supposed to implement. The officers' corps was desperately trying to survive in the strategic vacuum left by the end of the Warsaw Pact, without and not understanding its new strategic tasks, aiming to keep the prerogatives and privileges that they had inherited from the previous regime.

⁷² Simon, Jeffrey, "Bulgaria and NATO: 7 Lost Years", *Strategic Forum*, no. 142, p. 3, 1998.

⁷³ From 1991 until 2000 for 9 years Bulgaria had 7 Ministers of Defense from different political parties and platforms.

The "Programme for Reforms" was adopted with a Decree of the Council of the Ministers No. 216 on the 15th of November 1995, which stipulates: "The Council of the Ministers enacts: Adopts the concept of reformation of the Bulgarian Armed Forces until year 2010 according to the Appendix (Top secret)"⁷⁴. This Programme was not discussed in the Parliament or in public but the reduction of the forces was estimated to be to 75,000.

At the same time because of lack of maturity and experience the civic society was not yet able to answer the question "who guards the guardians?" and to establish sufficient and effective civilian control over the areas of security and national defense including institutions, process and cultural support. The civilian supremacy of civilians, elected by the general population over these areas is central to any democracy⁷⁵ and particularly for Bulgaria, where the military occupied prominent positions during the totalitarian regime.

The Constitution (1991) and the Defense and Armed Forces Law (1995) regulate the division of powers and enact their prerogatives concerning security matters, the budget, and the number and the engagement of the Armed Forces in operations abroad. The reform had to clarify the lines of authority between the new institutions – the National Assembly, the President as Supreme Commander and the Government (Prime Minister and civilian Defense Minister), the Chief of the General staff in peacetime and in wartime, but was not efficient enough. For example, the pro-NATO president Zhelev was in

⁷⁴ Decree of the Council of the Ministers No. 216, *The State Gazette*, Sofia, 15 November 1995.

⁷⁵ Aguero, Felipe, *Soldiers, Civilians and Democracy*, p. 17, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1995.

different positions with the ex-communist government⁷⁶ and some of the military reforms, personnel reduction or promotions of officers were used as a bargaining chip between the political powers. The first civilian Minister of Defense entered the "military fortress" in 1991 and gradually started the process of building the civil-military relationship.

The real and actual power relations between the General Staff and the civilian administration for a long time stayed unclear for peacetime and especially very vague and ambiguous in times of war. The constant collision between the General Staff and the civilian leadership of the Ministry of Defense often resulted in impotent cosmetic changes, not affecting the heavy structure of the Armed Forces and most of them remained on paper. Such interference not only dropped the effectiveness of the military forces and thus the nation's security, but also actually invited the military to involve itself in governance beyond national security affairs.

But gradually and especially after the amendments of the Defense and Armed Forces Law the civilian control proved its effectiveness. The Constitutional Court in addition issued several decisions, which settled some of the ambiguities of the Constitution and the collisions of powers, especially concerning the participation of the Armed forces abroad.

The civil control system was tested successfully in 1997 when the Chief of the General Staff General Totomirov was relieved to introduce the principle of "three years

⁷⁶ Solomon, Gerald, *The NATO Enlargement Debate, 1990-1997: Blessings of Liberty*, p. 45, Praeger Publishers, Westport, 1998.

rotation" for the Chief of the General Staff⁷⁷. The authorities - the President and the executive branch (Minister of Defense and Prime Minister)- proved that they could work in consensus. The civilian control also proved its viability recently when in 1998 President Petar Stoyanov relieved the Commander of the rocket forces General Marin for openly criticizing the ongoing military reform and the governmental political decisions for membership in NATO⁷⁸, which action was supported by the Government.

The creation of such new bodies as Military Cabinet of the President and a Council for National Security in 1998 to help the Ministers' Council additionally strengthened the civilian control. The Cabinet of the President includes active duty officers, one of them is the former Chief of General staff and civilians as the former Minister of Defense G. Ananiev. The Council for National Security includes the ministers and their deputies of foreign affairs, defense, and interior, and other experts. Their tasks are to analyze and predict the potential risks for national security. In this way the capacity and the expertise of the civilian authorities concerning security matters was increased. The legislative branch - the National Assembly - still lacks such a think-tank of experts and the MPs have limited military experience and abilities to critically assess the force structure or the military budget⁷⁹.

⁷⁷ Simon, Jeffrey, "Bulgaria and NATO: 7 Lost Years", *Strategic Forum*, Number 142, 1998.

⁷⁸ "The President Dismissed General Marin," Sofia, *Democracia*, 12 March 1998. Available (Online): [<http://www.democracia.com>]. 15 February 1999.

⁷⁹ Simon, Jeffrey, "Bulgaria and NATO: 7 Lost Years", *Strategic Forum*, Number 142, p. 3, 1998.

The Defense Ministry lacked sufficient trained personnel with which to perform effective administrative functions though it had a large apparatus of 3000 persons (civilian and military)⁸⁰ formally divided in three branches and General Staff, with overlapping and redundant directorates. The communications and transparency between them were very difficult and lumbering.

The military capabilities of the Armed Forces were diminished because of a limited budget. The Bulgarian military budget and military spending were sharply reduced. In the period between 1990 and 1996 the budget for defense was around 3% of the GDP of Bulgaria, but in 1997 and 1998 it became less than 2% of GDP⁸¹. That process was also part of the worldwide phenomenon of decline of the military spending as a share of GDP after the Cold War, but also a result of the economic crisis and condition of the Currency Board and the IMF agreement. Because of scarce resources most of the military equipment and armament was not maintained or renovated and the exercises and training of the forces were limited. The budget is an important constraint for the success of the modern military reform in Bulgaria.

In 1994 Bulgaria joined the PfP Initiative and actively participated in the activities, but it did not apply for NATO membership, though the Bulgarian President earlier in 1991 appealed for an association within the organization. In its early relation with NATO Bulgaria was interested in mutual consultations and dialogue. Although Bulgaria was an

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 3.

⁸¹ MOD, UK, DMCS, *Parliamentarian Surveillance and Democratic Control of the Bulgarian Armed Forces and MOD*, Research No. 3, p. 16, Sofia, 1998.

active participant, Bulgaria's main priorities were gaining access to interoperability information and re-orienting the arms industry, including co-production of weapons configured to NATO standards.⁸²

As a neighboring country to Yugoslavia, Bulgaria did not participate in the peacekeeping operations there and did not show interest in them until 1997.

A new firm and single-alternative course of action for Bulgaria was launched by a decision of the Bulgarian Government, on 17 February 1997, to gain full membership in NATO. A National Program for Preparation and Accession in NATO was adopted on 17 March 1997.

The formulation of the national strategic goals in 1997, which were integration within the European Union and NATO, required gigantic and drastic steps to catch up with the other applicants and the main NATO requirements. A significant portion of the public, who share the values, principles and objectives that the Alliance represents, support this policy and activities. Even lately while the airstrikes of NATO in Kosovo in 1999 led to clashes of disagreement in the public opinion, the supporters for NATO membership were 46% of the population and 82% were for the integration with EU, according to the sociological analysis of "Alfa Research" agency in May 1999.⁸³

⁸² Solomon, Gerald, *The NATO Enlargement Debate, 1990-97: Blessings of Liberty*, p. 45, Praeger Publishers, Westport, Ct, 1998.

⁸³ Neshkova, Reni, "The Rationalism of the Bulgarians," *Democracy*, Number 119, 10 May 1999. Available (Online): [[html://digsys.bg/bgnews/search-rresult.html](http://digsys.bg/bgnews/search-rresult.html)]. 19 February 2000.

The political desire for membership obviously forced and speeded up security, defense and military reforms in Bulgaria. Such reforms sought to: a) increase civilian expertise and military professionalism; b) reduce the total number of the Armed forces and switch to professional army; c) improve their mobility and training by establishing an efficient military education system; d) increase social status of the military personnel; e) provide comprehensive legal basis. Such reforms were urgently necessary for Bulgaria.

These were the pillars of the current military reform as it was described by the Bulgarian Foreign Minister - N.Mihailova:

Reform of the armed forces, strengthening of civilian control of the military and achieving interoperability with NATO forces are major priorities in this process. To this end, the Bulgarian parliament has introduced significant changes in national legislation concerning defence and the armed forces.

The objective of this reform is to develop a highly mobile, more professional and well-equipped force, which is significantly reduced in size, in order to meet NATO standards. The force structure will include main defence, rapid reaction and territorial defence forces, as well as reserves.⁸⁴

The redefined and approved by the Government in 1997 Defense Reform Program was envisioned to work until 2010 and to cut the military to 65,000. The Program was reviewed in the light of the requirements for possible NATO membership and achieving maximum interoperability with the Allied Forces. It aimed to restructure the Bulgarian

⁸⁴ Mihailova, Nadezhda, "Security in South-Eastern Europe and Bulgaria's Policy of NATO Integration", NATO Review, Webedition vol. 46, Number 1, pp.. 6-9, 1998.

forces into three Corps - Rapid Reaction Corps, First and Third Army Corps, to reduce the conscription, to enlist professionals and to modernize the armament and inventory⁸⁵.

The Program envisaged the transition to corps-brigade organization, redislocation and reduction of the structures of the General Staff and the services, the units and formations. It proposed development and approval of normative documents and reforming the military education system and scientific research activities, which should be done by year 2000.

The Program included finalization of the structural reform in the services; modernization of the existing armament and rearmament of the Bulgarian Army; recruitment of the necessary personnel, improvement of the barracks and the training and education facilities from 2001 to 2010. At the end of the reform the Bulgarian Army would have rapid reaction forces ready to cover the state boundaries and provide the deployment of the main defense forces. The final goal was to have Armed Forces smaller in manpower as compared to the current manpower but combat ready Armed Forces having forces interoperable with those of NATO member countries, Armed Forces that are able to prevent the involvement of the country in small and medium conflicts. At the same time the Armed Forces should be able to implement tasks having to do with the responsibilities resulting from the collective defense according to Art. 5 of the Washington treaty as well as participation in NATO operations other than that.

⁸⁵ Simon, Jeffrey, "Bulgaria and NATO: 7 Lost Years," *Strategic Forum*, no. 142, p. 3, 1998.

The following years and the events on the international stage again forced the pace of the Bulgarian military reform and changed its strategy.

B. THE PLAN FOR ORGANIZATIONAL BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT OF MOD UNTIL 2004

The new current trends of transformation process of the security and military organizations in Bulgaria were not only result of free choices and natural democratization of the institutions, but they were provoked and forced by several external and internal factors.

The most important external factors of the changes were reflection of the permanent transformation process of the geopolitical, economical, scientific, cultural and social environment, and new challenges that came from the reshaped international, regional and local security environment.

The most important internal factors that resulted in significant changes in the development process of the military institutions were the new missions and the modernization of the armaments with the application of the latest technologies.

The continuation of the tension in Yugoslavia, the war in Kosovo as a direct strategic threat for Bulgaria and the enlargement of the EU and NATO had the most significant influence for the Bulgarian military reform as external factors.

The internal factors were the emergence out of the heavy economic crisis, stabilization of the democratic social and economic life along with the firm policy for accepting the democratic values.

Both of the above mentioned factors imposed and fostered the alteration of rules and size of the armed forces, tasks, functions, structures, and needed the redefinition of the military expertise.

After the Madrid Summit of NATO in 1997 it was almost clear for the politicians and the experts that Bulgaria is far behind in its reforms and would not be able to fulfil the criteria for membership, though energetic efforts had been made.

The Washington Summit in 1999 disappointed the political leadership in this sense. The accession into NATO has been made the priority of the foreign policy and partially legitimizes the military reform. The lack of clear statement on the time frame and the possible trend of candidates could become a source of frustration for the population and jeopardize the domestic processes of stabilization.⁸⁶

Convinced in its policy the Government adopted in 1999 a package of documents, including the Military Doctrine⁸⁷ and Plan 2004, which aimed at further restructuring of the Armed Forces. It aimed by planning, equipping and training to create a modern army, with decent information technology and logistics, with communications (linguistically and technically) and interoperable with western counterparts.

The great debate between the General Staff and the political leadership was about the size of the Armed forces. The General Staff insisted on large number of personnel.

⁸⁶ Simon, Jeffrey, "Bulgaria and NATO: 7 Lost Years", *Strategic Forum*, no. 142, p. 1, 1998.

⁸⁷ Decision of the National Assembly, 8 April 1999, *The State Gazette*, Number 34, Sofia, 13 April 1999.

Some of the preliminary calculations were as shown in Table 1.

Military Personnel in Year 2004.	
Generals and colonels	590
Lt.colonels	1,250
Majors	1,950
Other officers	4,600
General Staff	2,126
Special Forces	593
Strategic Communication-Information System	3,035
Logistic and Medical Services	3,646
Army	20,900
Airforce	10,300
Navy	4,400

Table 1. The Armed forces military personnel was estimated to be downsized to 52,490⁸⁸ including 45,000 for the Armed Forces and the MOD and other military structures

The last version of the Plan for Organizational Formation of Armed Forces until 2004, adopted by the Government in 1999 envisaged Armed forces of 45,000 personnel (in accordance with p. 43 of the Military Doctrine), organized in three branches - Army,

⁸⁸ Emilova, Teodora, " The Defence Minister Georgy Ananiev: No Comments on General Mihov," *Democracy*, 01 September 1999.

Air force and Navy. The Plan for Organizational Formation of Armed Forces until 2004 was prepared in cooperation with civilian and military experts and with the competent help of advisers from UK MOD and US Pentagon.

The priority of the Plan will be the development of the Rapid Reaction Forces. The Army will be their core and will have another two corps of lower level personnel and armament. The Air Force will have two corps with a component for the Rapid-Reaction Forces. The Navy will be organized in two bases, one coastal brigade and a component for the RRF. The work of the command-informational and logistic support will be centralized and optimized with two commanding posts: Strategic Communication-Information System and Logistic and Medical services. Special operations will be commanded by one central command post.

The armament and the military equipment and machinery will be decreased in proportion to the number of the personnel and will be modernized. Until 2004 the aviation equipment will be diminished from 465 to 218, the number of the ballistic missiles SS-23 will be diminished four times, the tanks will be reduced to 753, navy equipment - to 117, guns - to 2,272 and antitank devices - to 1,772⁸⁹.

The military educational system will be reorganized and from the existing "G.S. Rakovsky" Staff College, four Military Academies and three NCO schools, will remain only "G. S. Rakovsky" Staff College as a defense educational facility for training officers

⁸⁹ Angarev, Panaiot, "Ananiev and Michov on Different Oppinions for Plan 2004," Democracy, 01 September 1999. Available (Online): [<http://www.digsys.bg/bgnews/show class.html>]. 15 September 1999.

for positions "Chief of Staff of battalion" and higher, as well as for training of civilians, taking specific leadership and expert positions.

The existing four Military Academies will be reorganized and the Artillery School will be closed, the Air Force, the Navy and the Army Schools will be transferred to faculties to the civilian Universities. The education of the officers will be also achieved in foreign NATO schools and academies. The establishment of the new system of military education and special training aims at developing a cadre capable to operate in multinational staffs.

The General staff will be reduced to 377 people: 314 officers, 62 civilians, and 1 NCO⁹⁰. The number of generals on active duty will be decreased from 56 to 32. The central bureaucracy of MOD will be reduced by 70% and will be developed in accordance with the requirements for the state administration. The Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces will release 62,115 people: 10,617 officers, 12,530 NCO's, 18,629 soldiers and 20,339 civilians ⁹¹.

This process of reduction and restructuring is very painful and connected with high social costs thus it has to be done with a specific caution. The reform of the Ministry of Defense and the subordination to it of the other structures is crucial for the effective

⁹⁰ "The General Staff Reduced with 400 People," 168 Chasa, 14 Jan. 2000. Available (Online): [<http://www.zone168.com>]. 17 January 2000.

⁹¹ See Appendix B. The Reform 2004.

civilian control though as Jeffrey Simon⁹² recently said in an interview: "The civilian control seems to be working in Bulgaria"⁹³. The amended legal base and the new structure no longer contains mechanisms by which the Chief of General Staff can exercise disagreement with the acts of the Minister of Defense as it happened in the past.

The unique thing about this reform is that for the first time the military police and military counter-intelligence are subordinated directly to the Minister of Defense. The civilian control proved to be working in Bulgaria.

The second trend of the Plan will be in the field of the military international cooperation and the contribution of the MOD to stabilization and prevention of conflicts in the region. The program "Security through Cooperation" includes international bilateral and regional agreements and initiatives for cooperation. The Bulgarian MOD has agreement with 35 states and 5 more are negotiated.

The third part of the Plan is the strategic and political priority, based on the Declaration of the National Assembly of Republic of Bulgaria, corroborated by the National Security Concept and the Military Doctrine, the preparation of the Armed Forces and the accession of Bulgaria in NATO and EU. Considered as a real and powerful candidate the main priorities for Bulgaria are meeting the political-economic and military defense criteria. The efforts of the military reform are concentrated on the following key

⁹² Professor J. Simon is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies (U.S.A.) and specialist of the Bulgarian military reform.

⁹³ Interview of Jeffrey Simon, *Capital*, Number 2, 2000. Available (Online): [<http://www.capital.bg/>]. 15 January 2000.

spheres: stability, democratization, professionalism and development of operative capacity to realize tasks in the sphere of collective defense and operations other than war. The existing legal basis and mechanisms will be adequately changed and will allow the implementation of a defense planning system in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The "professionalization" of the officer corps will include education and training and development of a cadre adequate for the reform, modernization and integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

As a result of the 1999 Washington summit and in compliance with the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) and Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC) for PfP and NATO cooperative operations, the Bulgarian MOD defined its priorities in reorganization, structural building and modernization of the Armed Forces⁹⁴: 1. Development of interoperability potential for participation in operations under the command of NATO, OSCE, UN; 2. Communication-information and navigation systems according to NATO standards; 3. Development of interoperable military infrastructure, modernization of military airports and naval ports, modern system for navigation and air control, standardized with NATO logistic; 4. Development, modernization and integration of the national Air-defense system with the integrated system of NATO.

⁹⁴ Minister Ananiev, " The Army has to be Ready for the Challenges to the National Security", *Democracy*, 1999. Available (Online): [[http:// www.digsys.bg/bgnews/show class. html](http://www.digsys.bg/bgnews/show class. html)]. 21 September 1999.

The Ministry of Defense plans to remake its acquisition system and to spend more than \$350 million during five years to build command, control and communications [C3] system, already known as C3 plan⁹⁵, that will be compatible with NATO.

As professor Jeffrey Simon said "this plan is very ambitious and this is its priority. The lack of ambitions for reforms led to the 7 lost years for Bulgaria and NATO"⁹⁶. Now the concrete measures to overcome the problems and to catch up with the time guarantee its success. President Petar Stoyanov is engaged with it and Prime Minister Ivan Kostov "declared that he would personally supervise the Ministry of Defense in order to better implement military reform"⁹⁷. The personal replacement of the Minister of Defense at the beginning of 2000 with the experienced diplomat Boiko Noev, former Minister of Defense and former Ambassador of Bulgaria to NATO, is considered a very positive step and necessary for the reform.

With all these reforms Bulgaria will achieve effective Armed forces, with adequate defense capabilities. The Armed forces will be a confident pillar of security for the nation and the state organs in military conflicts, emergencies, crisis or natural disasters and interoperable with NATO.

⁹⁵ Clark, Colin, "Bulgaria Prepares \$350 Mil Fund for NATO C3 Plan," *Defense News*, p. 42, 28 February 2000.

⁹⁶ Interview of Jeffrey Simon, *Capital*, Number 2, 2000. Available (Online): [<http://www.capital.bg/>]. 15 January 2000.

⁹⁷ U.S.-Bulgarian Task Force, *Preliminary Report*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., February 1999.

In the context of the MAP, Bulgaria has already developed a substantial programme for the restructuring of its armed forces. Together with last year's Military Doctrine, this programme will create a sound basis for armed forces that will be fully in line with the security requirements of today and tomorrow. This reform is a resounding demonstration of Bulgaria's willingness to stay on the course it has charted for itself. NATO is ready to assist Bulgaria in staying on that course.⁹⁸

This analysis of the ongoing military reform in Bulgaria gives evidence of the achieved and expected significant changes. The changes will result not only in transformation of the size of the armed forces, their tasks, functions, structure, but also will have more deep consequence because they will change the thinking and the military profession. In order to have such effects the reform must be done immediately, any delay in time may compromise it and lead to defects. The selection of the most capable and educated cadre, civil and military experts, is essential for the success of such reform. At the same time the more immediate challenge is how to keep the highly educated and trained personnel in the Armed Forces, the big issue is how to motivate the cadre and to find incentives. The reform also needs the consensus and the support of the nation, which will bear its social costs and which is very much motivated by the future membership in NATO. The most important issue is how Bulgaria will deal with the enormous social and economic strains caused by its commitment to downsize the Armed Forces by more than half. Bulgaria aims to build adequate forces that are NATO compatible and to contribute to the Alliance. On the other hand if Bulgaria will not find its place among the members of NATO as it was estimated for the year 2002 all these efforts and changes will cause a

98 NATO, Speech by Secretary General at the Bulgarian National Assembly, 10 February 2000. Available (Online): [<http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2000/s000210a.html>]. 20 February 2000.

loss of credibility and context. In its quest Bulgaria needs the cooperation and the competent help of the Alliance.

VI. THE IMPACT OF THE KOSOVO CRISIS AND THE BULGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS ACCESSION IN NATO

After 1989 and the following disintegration and final dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, Bulgaria was no longer the front-line state, proponent of the Soviet policy in the region, bordering two NATO states - Greece and Turkey and militarily prepared to deter any possible NATO attack. Within the political vacuum of the collapsed bipolar model of international relations, Bulgaria had to put an end to the legacy of the confronting bloc system and to revise its regional "maverick role, entrenched in the Eastern Orthodox camp but historically at odds with both Greece and Serbia over a number of issues"⁹⁹. Bulgaria had to change its national security concept and to harmonize its interests with the neighboring countries.

Bulgaria had to overcome the narrow nationalistic goals, ethnic problems and internal economic and social constraints and to undertake efforts in order to preserve and build peace in a region, exhausted by chronic conflicts. Engaged in the process of constructing liberal democracy and free market economy Bulgaria needed foreign investments and had seriously to review and change its foreign policy. Considered by the world politicians along with Romania to be a symbol of totalitarianism and "the perennial

⁹⁹ Glenny, Misha, "Heading off War in the Southern Balkans", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 74, Number 3, p. 102, 1995.

laggards of the old Warsaw Pact"¹⁰⁰, Bulgaria had to struggle to return to the international arena with the new image of a credible partner and to create stable relationships with the European community and the democratic states and institutions. There was a need to redefine all the principles of the foreign policymaking concept such as national interests, objectives, strategic threats, the perception of security environment and the ability to project influence and play an active role tracing its goals. Of course numerous external factors influenced the new choices and gave legacy to the Bulgarian foreign and security policy in its quest to NATO and EU. The reshaping of the European security architecture and the conflicts in Yugoslavia were among the international factors, which fostered the new active role of Bulgaria and its leading key position in South-Eastern Europe. The nation overcame the ethnic and religious clashes and oriented its foreign relations with its neighbors towards peaceful cooperation and stability. It had been the first country to recognize the Macedonian state and also settled its problems with Greece and Turkey.¹⁰¹ Though the credible foreign policy record counted for little against the severe internal failings of the post-1989 administrations¹⁰² which led the state to economic crisis. With a Currency Board, reviving from bankruptcy in 1997 but staying decisively behind the democratic values Bulgaria stated a new firm course of its foreign and security policy.

¹⁰⁰ "Ten Years since the Wall Fell," *The Economist*, 6 November 1999. Available (Online): [http://www.economist.com/editorial/justforyou/library/index_surveys.html]. 24 January 2000.

¹⁰¹ Pond, Elizabeth, "Come Together", *Foreign Affairs*, p. 10, vol. 79, Number 2, March/April 2000.

¹⁰² Crampton, R. J., *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century and After*, p. 437, Routledge, London, 1997.

The short-term strategic objectives for Bulgaria were focused on stabilization of the process of democratization of the region and bringing about a successful settlement of conflicts and peace. The long-term objectives were participation in the Euro-Atlantic structures, strengthening of peace, democracy and market economy and promoting the European integration and identity.

For that Bulgaria needed also to analyze and define its foreign policy towards Russia and the USA, the traditionally key factors with powerful interests in South-Eastern Europe and find the balance.

The threats and constraints of the Kosovo Crisis played the role of a catalyst for the course of the Bulgarian foreign policy. Bulgaria showed that it had settled its nationalistic dilemmas and is perfectly aware of the cost of its decisions. The cooperation in the context of the Kosovo crisis added qualitatively new dimensions to the partnership with NATO and the Bulgaria's quest for membership as the Bulgarian foreign minister pointed:

I would like to strongly emphasize that NATO's best response to present and future challenges to security is its enlargement to include the aspirants, that are in a position to give a concrete contribution to the solution of real problems and thus increase the defence potential of the Alliance. We are convinced that Bulgaria should be one of the front-runners among the next invitees.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria Mrs Nadezhda Mihailova, Meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Brussels, 8 December 1998.

A. BULGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS ACCESSION IN NATO AND THE IMPACT OF THE KOSOVO CRISIS

The instability and tension in South Eastern Europe since 1991, revived among the politicians the negative geopolitical term "the Balkanization"¹⁰⁴ and unleashed again Pandora's box of horror. The crisis in Kosovo in 1999 turned to be now the major threat for the security in Europe and the nearest external threat for the neighboring countries. Thousands of hungry and tormented people tried to find shelter and save their lives out of Yugoslavia thus threatening the stability of Europe.

Bulgaria was seized in the conflict not only geographically but also because of deep emotional and historical links, which made it a direct participant in the events. For ten years Bulgaria supported the UN restrictive measures and the embargo against Yugoslavia and suffered enormous economic losses, with the new tension in Kosovo the situation was growing unbearable. The war had a negative impact on the Bulgarian economy, because the foreign investors were not willing to participate in an unstable region. The losses were estimated to over \$300 million¹⁰⁵. Most Bulgarian exports going through Serbia or along the Danube now were blocked by wreckage from bridges bombed by NATO. Bulgaria has been almost literally caught in the crossfire. The capital, Sofia, which is less than 30 miles from Bulgaria's border with Serbia, was within range of Serbian anti-aircraft missiles. At least half-a-dozen NATO missiles that were meant to hit

¹⁰⁴ Ash, Timothy Garton, "The Puzzle of Central Europe," *The New York Review*, p. 20, 18 March 1999.

¹⁰⁵ "Trade Balance Deficit Equals \$717 Mln for First Six Months", *Capital*, 9 September 1999. Available (Online): [<http://www.capital.bg/>]. 11 February 2000.

targets in Serbia have strayed off course into Bulgaria, one hitting a house in the capital Sofia suburb.

Firmly desiring to stop the atrocities in 1998-1999 Bulgaria took the risk to oppose openly the events in neighboring Yugoslavia.

Despite the tremendous economic losses, NATO's missile incidents, and the strengthened voice of the political opposition (the Socialist coalition), the Bulgarian government stayed firmly behind NATO's actions in Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁶

Being a reliable partner, Bulgaria fully supported the international efforts of NATO countries, contributing to them. Bulgaria has been surprisingly brave in that policy. The Government of Ivan Kostov, centre-right prime minister and the Parliament let NATO aircrafts fly through a large part of Bulgaria's airspace to attack targets in Yugoslavia from the east. NATO planners considered this strategically very important as it weakened Yugoslavia's air defenses, which was prepared to resist attacks from across the Adriatic to the west. As the crisis deepened it became obvious that association with NATO is no longer just a matter of harmless peacekeeping exercises and diplomatic rhetoric. Most of the countries near the conflict zone such as Albania, Macedonia, Romania and even Hungary and Bulgaria expressed concerns, telling the alliance that they cannot be expected to shoulder the risks of association with NATO unless the western powers were prepared to give them a formal defense guarantee. At the summit in

¹⁰⁶ Vencill, Maggiel, "Central Europe Finds No Other Option But to Support NATO," *Weekly Defense Monitor*, Volume 3, Issue 22, June 22, 1999. Available (Online): [<http://www.cdi.org/weekly/1999/issue22.html>]. 19 February 2000.

Washington in April 1999 their concerns resulted in the commitment of NATO and the United States to respond to any challenge to the security of the neighboring states and to develop a long-term comprehensive strategy for security and prosperity¹⁰⁷.

Bulgaria was playing a more dangerous game than other Balkan states. The war was just as unpopular in Bulgaria as it was in Macedonia and Greece, which both, however, refused to let the alliance use their airspace for combat missions or to allow NATO troops to move through their territory. Over 90% of Bulgarians, according to pollsters, were against the war. The nation was very sharply polarized and expressed its feeling in street demonstrations. Moreover, the number of those who wanted Bulgaria to join NATO went down from 60% before the war to 46%.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand Bulgaria received numerous threats for direct war by Yugoslavia and as President Retar Stoyanov commented: "This has been a disaster for the Balkans for eight years now. Due to Milosevic, my country was destabilized long ago".¹⁰⁹

The Bulgarian policymakers had to take a tough decision. Both Mr. Kostov and Petar Stoyanov, Bulgaria's pro-western president, the two key political figures in defense and foreign affairs were worried about the growing isolation from Europe, because "the

¹⁰⁷ NATO, *Chairman's Summary, Meeting of the NAC at the level of Heads of State and Government with Countries in the Region of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, NATO Summit Press Release, 25 April 1999, point#5.

¹⁰⁸ Neshkova, Reni, "The Rationalism of the Bulgarians," *Democracy*, no. 119, 10 May 1999. Available (Online): [<http://digsys.bg/bgnews/search-rresult.html>]. 19 February 2000.

¹⁰⁹ Drozdiak, William and Lippman, Thomas W., "NATO Summit Ends With a Restoration Vow," *Washington Post*, 26 April 1999.

Europeans would have to look through the fire of the war in order to see us"¹¹⁰. They also saw the situation as a chance to strengthen Bulgaria's bid to join NATO and the European Union. They were disappointed not to get a timetable for membership at the Washington summit in 1999. Both, however, expected to get one very soon and deliberately spared no effort in that direction as it was stated in the Programm of the Government:

Our strategic goal is Bulgaria to join the European Union and NATO. The full membership to the European Union and NATO is a sovereign and explicit choice, based on a broad public consensus, and it is not an expression of a political situation or a result of outside pressure.

We will be working for stronger integration in the Euro-Atlantic structures, which has to lead Bulgaria to a full membership to NATO. We will be implementing and constantly updating the National Program of the Republic of Bulgaria for Preparation and Membership to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. ¹¹¹

For the cooperation Bulgaria received the confident engagement of NATO and US political leadership that it will be given an individual approach for quick membership.

Bulgaria was becoming a leading stabilizing factor in Southeastern Europe. It was one of the initiators¹¹² of the creation of the pan-Balkan peacekeeping MPFSEE Brigade in which participate most of the nations of the region. The Government launched a "southeastern European ministerial format" of the regional ministers and their Italian and American counterparts and also lot of other initiatives for South East European Co-

¹¹⁰ Ponds, Elizabeth, "Can Bulgaria Beat the Balkan Curse?," *Wall Street Journal*, 21 April 1999.

¹¹¹ Program of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria 1997-2001. Available (Online): [http://www.bulgaria.govrn.bg/eng/oficial_docs/index.html]. 10 February 2000.

¹¹² Pond, Elizabeth, "Bulgaria", *Europe*, pp.. 26-27, June 1999.

operation trying to encourage the region's states to co-operate on political and economic matters and to formulate common positions compatible with EU and NATO. Bulgaria participates also in SFOR with two platoons and in KFOR with one engineer platoon.

Bulgaria handed over 150 Soviet-era tanks to support building the Armed forces of Macedonia, which Serbia's rulers still view as an upstart province rather than an independent state.

The Bulgarian policy makers were convinced that the cost of rebuilding Southeastern Europe would be high as it was estimated to be between \$30 billion and \$100 billion. However, the costs of not participating in the rebuild would lead to further deterioration of the fragile democracies, and to more destabilization in the region. It was for these reasons that Bulgaria decisively exerted efforts.

The conclusion has prevailed of late that Kosovo is an uncompleted element of the process of stabilization in the Balkans. To make the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe an operative one, Kosovo must find its public balance based on the contemporary European values - multiethnic co-existence, democratization, effective democratic institutions and respect for the human rights of everybody living in the area.¹¹³

Bulgaria tried to be a mediator between the parties of the conflict in Kosovo. The Government held an informal meeting "without coat and ties"¹¹⁴ of the Prime Ministers of the states bordering Yugoslavia in which participated Sergio Balanzino, the deputy Secretary general of NATO and Javier Solana, the EU foreign policy and security

¹¹³ Kostov, Ivan, Speech at the Parliament on February 4, 2000. Available (Online): [<http://www.bulgaria.govrn.bg/eng/index.html>]. 10 February 2000.

commissioner, to discuss the post-war problems of South-Eastern Europe and proposed changes for the sanctions against Yugoslavia. The meeting was unique as it enabled the Prime Ministers of the states neighboring Yugoslavia to discuss their positions with those of the representatives of the European Union and NATO. The Prime Minister Kostov said:

The countries of the region demonstrated their growing concern with the pace at which the Stability Pact goes. We are looking forward to the financing conference in March in Brussels.¹¹⁵

Bulgaria, being one of the most active partners in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe was well aware that the initiative, sponsored by the European Union was slow in advancing to concrete commitments and the amounts of economic aid planned were woefully incommensurate to the needs. The need for actual and timely actions on behalf of the states from the region was unquestionable. The Bulgarian policy makers knew that if Southeastern Europe does not advance towards integration with the Euro-Atlantic community, it risks being permanently exposed to renewed ethnic tensions and dangerous instabilities.

This foreign policy is apparently an indicator that Bulgaria possesses substantial capacity as a strategic player in the "common foreign and strategic policy of the EU" and is an indivisible strategic part of the "new European strategic architecture". The visits to

¹¹⁴ Karoleva, Svetla, "Javier Solana for the Fourth Time in Bulgaria", *Democracy*, Number 15, 18 January 2000. Available (Online): [http://www.digsys.bg/bgnews/show_story.html]. 24 January 2000.

¹¹⁵ Prime Minister Kostov, Ivan, Press Conference of the Participants in the Meeting of the Prime Ministers of the States Neighboring to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, 21-23 January 2000. Available (Online): [<http://www.bulgaria.govrn.bg/eng/index.html>]. 10 February 2000.

Bulgaria of the British Prime Minister Mr. Toni Blair, Prince Charles - Successor to the British Throne, the German Chancellor Mr. G. Schroder, of the President of the US Mr. Clinton and many other prominent politicians and EU and NATO officials, who stated their support for the Bulgarian position, stand to adequately demonstrate the efficiency of the Bulgarian statecraft. Bulgaria proved that it could play a substantial role as a NATO member and can strengthen the regional flank. Equilibrium has yet to be found in the Balkans and there may well be more violence to come. The lessons from Kosovo are still to be learned, but the message it sent horrifies the diplomats. A spillover of a new ethnic conflict might drag in all neighboring states - Serbia, Albania, Macedonia, Greece, Turkey and shift to the Aegean Sea. Such clash will weaken NATO's southern tier and definitely involve Russia and US. The policymakers must play the game skillfully to prevent more violence. Rather than on redrawing maps, all efforts should be concentrated on curing two crucial Balkan failings: a deficiency of democracy, and disastrous economic policies. The US and the leading EU countries are already aware that Europe should possess a capacity for collective military action that is separable from the ordinary structures of NATO, and thus not always dependent on the military leadership of the United States. The concept of the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) is seen as part of the deepening of NATO. In that respect, it can serve as a complement to the broadening of the Alliance.

As incentives for the efforts and the good achievements, NATO and the EU have to intensify their support and to incorporate Bulgaria and other region's fragile states as full members at a faster pace. The wide gap between Central Europe's fast-track aspirants for integration with the West and the slow-moving states from the South and the East

must be narrowed. Bulgaria, which was formally invited to start membership negotiations in EU on the 14 December 1999 Helsinki EU Summit has its important place in the European policy and security architecture and has to become a full NATO member as soon as possible in order to accomplish the framework of the European identity.

The Secretary General of NATO Lord Robertson during his visit in Sofia evaluated the Bulgarian relations and contribution to NATO as:

Bulgaria's actions during the Kosovo crisis seriously enhanced your European credentials. NATO prevailed because it could count on the active and unflinching support by its Partner countries, Bulgaria among the foremost.

I salute Bulgaria for its support -- and for its courage. Yours support was more than help in an emergency. It was a resounding vindication of a concept of Europe as a zone of shared values -- a sign that Europe is truly becoming a common security space.

Bulgaria's strong stance in the Kosovo crisis did not go unnoticed. If anything, it has given further proof of your country's determination to achieve its full integration into Europe. Today, Bulgaria's European vocation is beyond doubt.¹¹⁶

Bulgaria is definitely a part of Europe and its foreign policy aims prove that the southeastern region is not an accursed part of the continent.

The Bulgarian quest towards NATO and EU is influenced and interacts with the foreign policy and interests of the two other main players - the US and Russia. These relations are considered of great and defining importance and will be analyzed in the next sections.

¹¹⁶ Speech by Lord Robertson, the Secretary General of NATO at the Bulgarian National Assembly, 10 February 2000. Available (Online): [<http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2000/s000210a.html>]. 20 February 2000.

B. FOREIGN RELATIONS WITH THE US AND RUSSIA

For more than 45 years after the partition of the world between the Great Powers at the end of World War II the Bulgarian foreign and security policy were acting definitely under the auspices of the Soviet Union¹¹⁷ and as integral part of the Soviet strategic interests. With the end of the Soviet Empire Russia was not anymore in a position to dictate and dominate the decisions of the Bulgarian policymakers. Taken out of the context of common ideology the relations between the two states deteriorated and until now remained vague. Russia was engaged with its internal problems and spent minimum efforts to keep Bulgaria as ally. Russia tried to project political influence based upon economic tools but its shrunk and unstable market, drowned by inflation and ruled by Mafia structures was not able to keep the old positions. Though heavily dependent on oil supplies from Russia Bulgaria was firm on pro-western political orientation and definitely shared the democratic values of Western Europe. The Russian supplier of oil and gasoline "Gazprom" raised several times the prices. At the end of January 1998, at the height of the conflict between Bulgaria and Russia about the gas, the chief of the company Rem Vyakhirev, said: "If we stop gas deliveries, the Bulgarian government will be swept away by the freezing people." ¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Crampton, R., *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century - and After*, p.. 240-254, Routledge, New York, NY, 1997.

¹¹⁸ Fileva, Lilia, "Will there be a " Political" Agreement with Gazprom", Capital, 6 December 1999. Available (Online):[<http://www.capital.bg/>]. 15 February 2000.

Bulgaria was forced to seek another source. This oil dispute although solved in 1998 was among the numerous other turning points for the Bulgarian policy.

The political conflict between the two states was especially sharp on the issue of Kosovo when Bulgaria refused to allow Russian military airplanes to fly through its airspace and over its territory thus opposing the Russian scenario for partitioning the Balkans into new spheres of influence.

While receiving a rapturous welcome on November 22, 1999 for the first visit of the President of the US to Bulgaria Mr. Clinton acclaimed the Bulgarian policy and:

the pivotal role the government played largely behind the scenes in securing NATO's primacy, and Russia's virtual exclusion, in the struggle for influence over post-war Kosovo.¹¹⁹

The equation Europe, the US and Russia needs to be well balanced in the foreign interests of Bulgaria.

The new Russian National Security Concept and Military Doctrine adopted by the government of Vladimir Putin at the very beginning of year 2000 included the use of nuclear weapons in case of any attack with conventional weapons, if all other measures are exhausted. The new Doctrine defines the enlargement of NATO as a threat for Russia and states the strategic Russian interests concerning the Balkans and the Baltic regions.

The concept sees greater military threats to Russia, particularly from the expanding NATO alliance; and views a weakening of the United Nations

¹¹⁹ "Clinton Props up the Old World", *The Economist*, November 1999. Available (Online): [http://www.economist.com/editorial/justforyou/library/index_surveys.html]. 25 December 1999.

and lack of integration of former Soviet states to be threats to Russia's security.¹²⁰

The concept vividly reflects Russia's more antagonistic view of the world and recognizes that its conventional forces are in disorder and the nuclear deterrence is most likely possible option.

Such position along with the expressed Russian opposition for Bulgarian membership in NATO¹²¹ is another convincing factor for the foreign policy of Bulgaria, which seeks to find in its alliances the balance not the so-called "bandwagoning"¹²² and to build security not confrontation. Though recently Bulgaria has more deep relations with the US it has to make clear its relations with Russia and find the proper way to improve and warm them thus it could play more efficiently its role of regional stabilizing factor.

For the US and its policymakers, which has to reconsider its role as the only superpower after the Cold War Bulgaria gained more strategic importance with the unfolding of the conflict in the Balkans. Security of the region became an important consideration for the American interests and especially with NATO engagement in Kosovo. For the US was clear the importance of the geostrategic position of Bulgaria and its quick and stabile pace of democratic development.

¹²⁰ American Foreign Policy Council, *Russia Reform Monitor* No. 737, Washington, D.C., 14 January 2000. Available (Online): [<http://www.afpc.org/rrm/rrm737.htm>]. 10 February 2000.

¹²¹ Domuschieva, Rada, "Russia: NATO in Bulgaria? NO!", *168 Chasa*, 03 December 1999. Available (Online): [<http://www.zone168.com/>] 15 December 1999.

¹²² Bandwagoning for the alliance-formation theory refers to alignment with the source of danger. See Walt, Stephen M., *The Organizations of Alliances*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1995.

The possible building of the pipeline for transfer of Caspian oil through Bulgaria's territory increases additionally its strategic importance for the Western partners, especially for the US.

On February 10, 1998 President Clinton, in a meeting with President of Bulgaria - Petar Stoyanov, announced a new Action Plan for Southeast Europe¹²³. The Action Plan envisaged further dynamism to U.S. cooperation with the stable democracies of Southeast Europe. It aimed at helping states in the region to consolidate reforms, develop regional cooperation, and advance their integration into the European and transatlantic communities. The U.S. Action Plan for Southeast Europe was to be implemented along three tracks: 1) expanding US bilateral political, economic, military and civil cooperation between US and the states of Southeastern Europe, 2) promoting greater regional cooperation and 3) the efforts of the United States, bilaterally and multilaterally, particularly through closer cooperation with members of the European Union, to embed the countries of the region into the evolving architecture of European and transatlantic institutions. The Action Plan was an evolving framework for the achievement of U.S. goals in the region.

The Plan included intellectual, technical and financial support for the Bulgarian military reform, concrete projects and further enhancement of the cooperation in security matters.

¹²³ Action Plan for Southeastern Europe, announced by the White House on the occasion of Bulgarian President Stoyanov's visit to the United States, p. 4, 10 February 1998.

In order to implement the Plan the Bilateral Working Groups on Defense Matters explored opportunities for further cooperation and the particular result were the Bulgarian Defense Ministry's program 2004 and the report of the US general Kivenaar, which served as a basis of the plan for Bulgaria's accession to NATO¹²⁴. The enlargement of the scope for Bulgaria of the International Military Educational Training program was yet another aspect of the plan.

The noticeable positive change in the US foreign policy and diplomacy towards Bulgaria, especially after the Kosovo crisis, and the firm engagement and interests of the US with Bulgaria were once again demonstrated during the visit of President Clinton to Bulgaria on the 22 of November 1999 as the first US President to visit Bulgaria¹²⁵. The political aim of the visit was to reveal that the security in Southeastern Europe remains a major priority for Washington despite the obligations of the European Union and that Bulgaria plays important role in this priority. President Clinton did not set a date for Bulgaria's accession in NATO but he hinted at the fact that the possibility for this to happen is closer than ever. Obviously the officials in the White House have realized the fact that the criteria which the future NATO member countries must meet should encompass something more than simply covering standards. Bulgaria's position did not go without notice in view of the fact that during the war in Kosovo the NATO members,

¹²⁴ Assenova, Margarita, "US Assists Bulgaria in Military Reform", *Capital*, 8 February 1999, Available (Online): [<http://www.capital.bg/1998-06/9-6-3.html>]. 20 February 2000.

¹²⁵ "Clinton Props up the Old World", *The Economist*, Available (Online): [http://www.economist.com/editorial/justforyou/library/index_surveys.html]. 25 December 1999.

Greece, the Czech Republic and Hungary took a stance different from the expected one as to their military obligations not giving access to their territory for the NATO troops.

The long-term involvement of the foreign policy of the US with Bulgaria is yet to be revealed. To a great extent it will depend on the internal interests of the both states and the future results of the Bulgarian democratic reforms. Bulgaria needs the support of the US to strengthen the democratic statecraft and the free market. In this context it has to be considered that NATO is the main vehicle legitimizing the American presence in Europe¹²⁶, though the only organization with the means, mainly American, to act in crisis. Europe also is the major economic partner of the US and the peace and stability in the continent is of vital importance for both¹²⁷. For that the US needs the support of every state there, especially the support of reliable partners as Bulgaria.

¹²⁶ Kaplan, Lawrence, *NATO and the United States*, p. 184, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1994.

¹²⁷ Serfaty, Simon, *Stay the Course, European Unity and Atlantic Solidarity*, p. 85, Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT, 1997.

V. CONCLUSION

The historic opportunity at the dawn of the 21st century for Bulgaria is to change the paradigm and to participate in the creation of unified Euro-Atlantic zone of security and stability without dividing lines and permanent gray zones in the heart of Europe. The European identity is built, based on the premise that shared interests and challenges obligates common settlements with collective and cooperative deeds on behalf of every democratic state¹²⁸.

Analyzing the Bulgarian quest to the Euro-Atlantic membership one can see that it addresses the grand question that goes beyond Bulgaria. This is the issue of the future of "Europe" and the credibility of its institutions versus the inherited values of the nation-states and the different cultures. The evidence that the EU, NATO and the European Ideal are productively evolving stands for all to see though both NATO and the European Union need to work harder about the present pace, direction, and scale of their further enlargements.

The Kosovo crisis of 1998-99 revealed many defects in European institutions, but the member states seem willing to correct them. The process of the enlargement of EU and NATO now intensifies and new members want to venture into that "elite project". Europe is preparing the day when it will become a nation in itself and there must not be

¹²⁸ Moravcsik, Andrew, editor, *Centralization or Fragmentation? Europe Facing the Challenges of Deepening, Diversity and Democracy*, p. 182, Brooking Institution press, New York, NY, 1998.

states-outsiders. NATO as the European collective defense and security core is the vanguard tool for promoting this idea and a guarantor for its future.

The government of Bulgaria responded positively to the NATO appeal for cooperation during the conflict in Kosovo and suffered substantial economic losses as a result, now it has high expectations. Bulgaria strongly seeks to join NATO and is on its way to negotiate the membership to the European Union. The early entry of Bulgaria into the EU is already ensured and serves as a potent example for other southeast European states.¹²⁹ The positive results of the dedicated efforts of Bulgaria to gain its long-term aspiration for full membership in NATO, which are another potent example for the other aspirants, should be and are also positively recognized by the NATO states. But still there is not firm message for the time frame of the entrance though Bulgaria considers the early entrance vital.

The ongoing democratic reforms in Bulgaria like most of the states from Southeastern Europe - Romania, Macedonia, Albania and Slovakia are fragile. Retrograde forces might replace the trend of the reforms, if the expectations for economic assistance and security assurance, which the West raised, are quashed. In this sense the inattention of the European institutions is unacceptable. Moreover the time is perfect to "demythologize" the essence of the "Balkan hatred".

The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and the NATO initiatives should start effectively to give results.

¹²⁹ Leonard, Dick, "Bulgaria Aims for EU", *Europe*, Number 392, p. 4, December/January 1999-2000.

However, good intentions and good results in the Balkans are not enough. NATO must be engaged in the changing world around it or risk irrelevance. Meeting today's challenges and preparing for tomorrow's is the fundamental business of the Alliance. This, in turn, will require contributions and commitment from all of us.¹³⁰

Bulgaria has already demonstrated its firm desire and commitment to support NATO as a reliable partner and advanced in the processes of reforming its security and military institutions. The main goal of the reform is to achieve interoperable and capable forces, ready to fulfill their constitutional obligations and to contribute to NATO. The reform again might be compromised if there is no positive response from the Alliance.

On the other hand the enlargement of NATO guarantees its survival as organization because thus NATO will have function for the immediate future to assure peace and order in Europe including with the guarantees under Article 5.¹³¹

Probably no one has a monopoly of creativity as to how Europe might develop because it is a matter of political consensus between the nation-states. No matter what were the initial egoistic intentions of the founders of the European Union and NATO, the European identity is making its way and its acceptance is our choice or destiny. Europe with its policy, security and future, is the area where Bulgaria will remain for a long time and has its definite place in the joint construction project of the European identity.

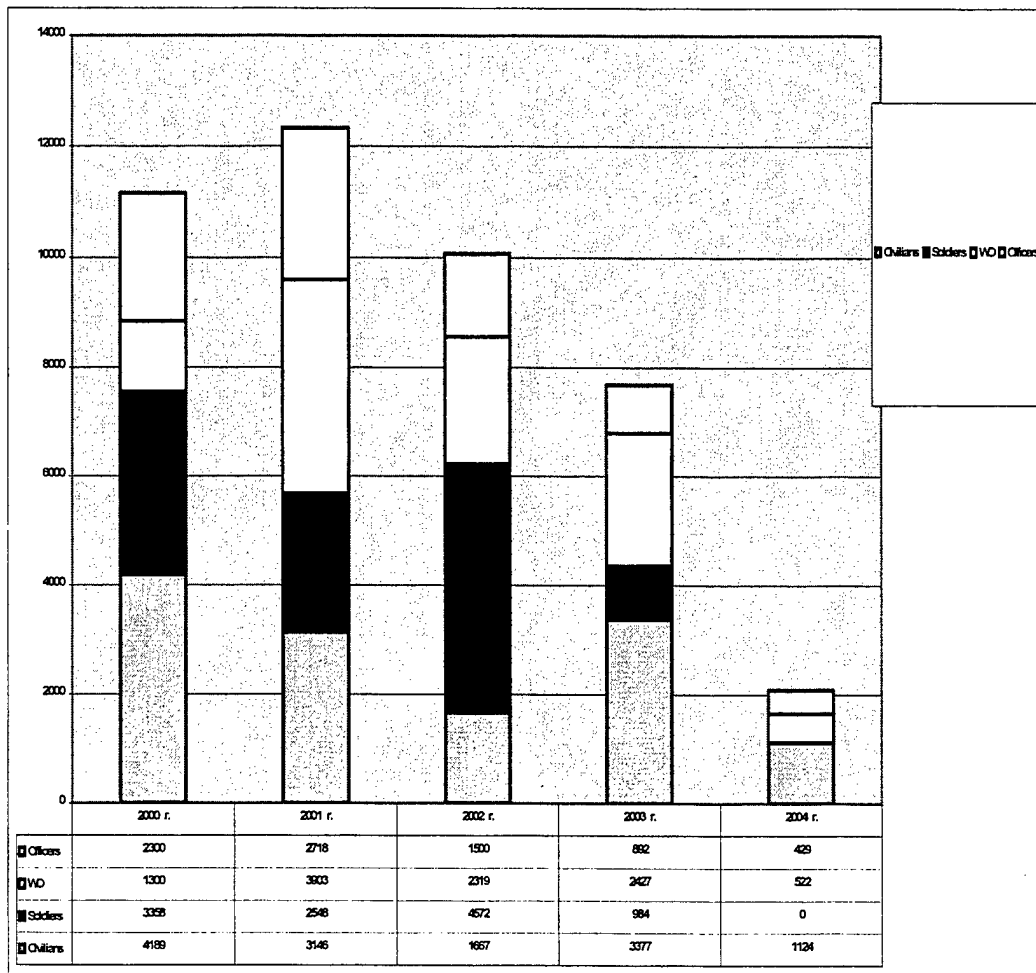
¹³⁰ Ambassador Vershbow, Alexander, U.S. permanent representative on the North Atlantic Council, "Preserving the Transatlantic Link," an address at Wilton Park, England. January 20, 2000. Available (Online): [<http://www.usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/eap/00012403.htm>]. 20 February 2000.

¹³¹ Kaplan, Lawrence, *The Long Entanglement: NATO's First Fifty Years*, p. 237, Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT, 1999.

APPENDIX A. [HUNTINGTON'S MAP]



APPENDIX B. [THE REFORM 2004]



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