



THE LAND WARFARE PAPERS

No. 77 SEPTEMBER 2010

New NATO Member States: The Benefits and Drawbacks of Enlargement

Christine Le Jeune

A National Security Affairs Paper
published on occasion by

**THE INSTITUTE OF
LAND WARFARE**

ASSOCIATION OF THE
UNITED STATES ARMY
Arlington, Virginia

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AN INSTITUTE OF LAND WARFARE PAPER

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LAND WARFARE PAPER NO. 77, September 2010 New NATO Member States: The Benefits and Drawbacks of Enlargement

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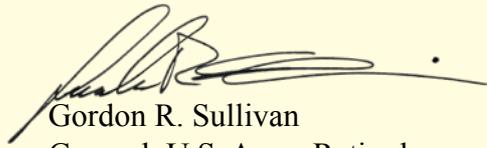
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Foreword

The U.S. Army is not alone when it comes to facing important questions about current and future force requirements. Its NATO allies have also been forced to rethink military spending on personnel and equipment, while questioning the nature of future conflict and how to adapt to its uncertainties. NATO's purpose as a military alliance has never come under more examination than at the present; such questions primarily concern the types of missions NATO should be conducting in accordance with its fundamental purpose of Article 5—collective self-defense—and the contributions of allies to these missions.

This fall, NATO will unveil a new Strategic Concept, launched in 2009 at its sixtieth anniversary summit in Strasbourg and Kehl. This will mark the first time that a Strategic Concept has been formulated by a NATO that has enlarged to include 28 members and finds itself engaged in a mission beyond its traditional Euro-Atlantic boundaries. Within this framework, this paper discusses the functions of NATO's new member states to ask whether enlargement has benefited or handicapped the alliance.



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September 2010

New NATO Member States: The Benefits and Drawbacks of Enlargement

Introduction

At NATO's 3–4 April 2009 60th Anniversary Summit in Strasbourg and Kehl, the heads of state and government of NATO member states tasked the NATO Secretary General to develop a new NATO Strategic Concept. The current Strategic Concept dates back to 1999, when only 19 member states belonged to the alliance, and the same year that NATO completed its first round of enlargement to include Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. With Albania's and Croatia's admission on 1 April 2009, the number of NATO member states currently totals 28.

The new NATO Strategic Concept, scheduled for release in November 2010, will address the alliance's fundamental purpose of collective defense within the context of new and emerging threats. During the Cold War, the threat was clear: a potential Soviet land offensive that would threaten the security of Europe and its closest ally, the United States. With the end of the Cold War and the increasingly irregular form of conflict that has taken its place, member states have sought answers to the question of the type of role NATO should play in providing for collective defense. The 2010 Strategic Concept is an attempt by NATO members to establish a framework for when, why and how member states should collectively respond to the new range of irregular threats that require nonconventional action in increasingly "out-of-area" geographical locations. While a new Strategic Concept will redefine on paper NATO's position in the 21st century, what assets do its member states have to contribute? Have NATO's newest member states adequately transformed their defense structures in ways that allow them to be of value to the alliance?

Regardless of how NATO is defined by the 2010 Strategic Concept, the alliance is only as strong as its members. A decisive factor for NATO's role in the future is the ability of its member states to contribute to the collective security capabilities required for NATO to remain a credible defensive alliance. NATO cannot assume new responsibilities to counter new threats without the ability to draw upon the material resources possessed by its members. A longstanding point of contention between the United States and its European partners has been the capabilities gap, as from the American viewpoint "present-day Europeans have become altogether stingy when it comes to raising and equipping fighting armies."¹ While this criticism is not entirely unfounded,² it is difficult to compare contributions from European members directly with that of the United States, especially

when considering some of the smallest members such as Slovenia, a country roughly the size of New Jersey with a population only slightly over two million. To ensure that new member states contribute to NATO's core functions of common defense and do not serve as factors of insecurity, all new member states have been granted admission only after fulfilling the alliance's membership criteria.

As NATO has extended membership and partnership programs to Eastern states, it has emphasized the importance of building capabilities suitable to addressing the current nontraditional and global forms of security threats.³ Thus the armed forces of NATO's newest member states have undergone transformation and modernization aimed at reducing in size and professionalizing the conscript forces that traditionally characterized Eastern European and Warsaw Pact armies. Initial discussion on the need to improve NATO's operational capabilities began at the Washington, D.C. Summit in April 1999;⁴ the Prague Summit expanded upon this objective in November 2002, identifying the need for NATO to adapt its military structures and concepts to most effectively address emerging irregular threats and the operational challenges that accompany them. The decision to create a NATO Response Force (NRF) was made official in Prague, with the intent that the NRF would function as "a catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance's military capabilities."⁵ Following a leaner and more efficient approach to military command structure, NATO formed Allied Command Transformation (ACT),⁶ a strategic command headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, to focus solely on transformation. Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), the central command of NATO military forces (based in Casteau, Belgium), has since 2003 served as headquarters for Allied Command Operations (ACO) and functions as NATO's other strategic command responsible for all Allied operations worldwide.⁷ The 2002 Prague Summit also produced the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC), whereby NATO leaders committed themselves to improving the individual and collective operational capabilities of their armed forces.⁸ The PCC resulted from the realization by NATO Defense Ministers⁹ that efficient, effective execution of future alliance missions would revolve around four fundamental areas:¹⁰

- defending against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks;
- ensuring command, communications and information superiority;
- improving interoperability of deployed forces and key aspects of combat effectiveness; and
- ensuring rapid deployment and sustainability of combat forces.

By recognizing the need to improve collective NATO capabilities, alliance leaders pledged to enhance individual national capabilities. Initially, progress on reforms varied widely among member states due to a lack of benchmark setting; however, the 2002 PCC established deadlines for achieving national targets for reforms and thus resolved the disparities.

The Prague Summit did not only establish military and defense transformation goals for existing NATO members. Aspiring Alliance members were also expected to adhere to timelines for reform. In Prague, NATO Heads of State and Government extended

invitations to Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia to begin accession talks. While the Prague Summit Declaration stated the belief that the addition of these seven new states as members would contribute to the security and stability of the alliance, the aspiring members were expected to adhere to individual and realizable timetables for reform laid out during the process of accession talks, in letters of intent, and in accession protocols.¹¹

Requirements of New Members

NATO has functioned as a catalyst for defense reform in Westward-looking Eastern European states seeking to root themselves in the Euro-Atlantic community. The alliance has gained 12 new members¹² since the January 1994 Brussels Summit, when allied leaders confirmed that membership would be open to any European state. The decision¹³ to maintain an open-door policy for membership resulted in the 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement*, which set the goals for aspiring NATO members. These goals can be divided into two categories: political and military.

Political cohesion among member states is vital to ensuring that a larger alliance will maintain its unity and effectiveness in reaching collective decisions. Most notable, members must be democracies that encourage and support democratic reforms, respect individual liberty and the rule of law, have no unsettled territorial disputes, and maintain civilian and democratic control over the military.¹⁴ A majority of the public must support their nation's aspirations for NATO membership. Still, these common political foundations have not prevented diverging political views on the reasons for and purposes of NATO, thereby calling into question the direction in which it will evolve in the future.¹⁵ Western European states have come to view the alliance as having moved beyond its Cold War existence to become a broader organization for the management of crises and security cooperation between the United States and Europe,¹⁶ while Eastern European members—although acknowledging these evolving functions—still continue to define NATO according to its traditional role as a defensive military alliance, and as a safeguard against a potentially aggressive Russia.

Military readiness is the second category of goals for aspiring member states. As a result of the less than satisfactory state of Polish, Czech and Hungarian military affairs following each state's admission to NATO during the first round of expansion in 1999,¹⁷ more attention has been paid to the military and defense capabilities of potential members.¹⁸ NATO launched the Membership Action Plan (MAP) in April 1999 to serve as a framework within which to “assist other countries that wish to join the Alliance in their preparations by providing advice, assistance and practical support on all aspects of NATO membership”¹⁹ so that aspiring members adhere to their timetables for meeting goals that strengthen their candidacy. Chapter four of the *Study on NATO Enlargement* specifies how NATO must maintain military credibility throughout enlargement, citing criteria from eight primary categories that aspiring member states must meet in order to fulfill NATO military obligations:²⁰

- **Collective Defense:** In addition to reaping the benefits of NATO's collective defense umbrella, alliance members are also expected to contribute.

- **Command Structure:** All members should participate appropriately in the integrated command structure.
- **Conventional Forces:** New members are expected to participate in joint exercises, which will be held regularly on the territory of new members.
- **Nuclear Forces:** New members must accept the role that nuclear deterrence plays in NATO's defense strategy, and to share in the accompanying benefits and responsibilities.
- **Force Structure:** New members must participate in the force structure; how this will be achieved will be unique to each country.
- **Intelligence:** All new members will be able to participate fully in the NATO intelligence process.
- **Finance:** All new members must be aware of the significant financial obligations accompanying membership, and will be expected to contribute appropriately to the alliance's jointly funded programs.
- **Interoperability:** New members must meet NATO interoperability standards, primarily in the areas of command, control and communication equipment, and are required to integrate the alliance's standard operational procedures.

Given the varying histories of NATO's newest East European member states, there has been much disparity in the degree of transformation necessary to achieve membership. The following factors have proven vital in determining the ease of integration for new NATO member states:

- domestic political and public support for commitment to membership;
- economic strength; and
- the condition of defense and military affairs.

The success with which new member states have integrated into NATO structures and contributed to its collective defense can be measured by the above three factors. While aspiring members closer to possessing the appropriate criteria traveled an easier path to membership, those still needing to overcome these hurdles have also achieved membership.

In the following pages, the two Southeast European states of Slovenia and Bulgaria²¹ are examined and their military contributions to NATO assessed. Both admitted during the 2004 round of expansion, Slovenia and Bulgaria have been chosen as case studies for a number of reasons. For both countries, geographical location combined with the post-9/11 security atmosphere proved a significant door-opener to timely membership. Geographical proximity to recently volatile neighbors also influenced foreign and security policy priorities, albeit with differing conclusions reached in each state. Historical ties with regional powers also resulted in alternate approaches to NATO membership: As a small alpine country with Italy to its west, Austria to its north, Croatia to its south and Hungary to its east, Slovenia sought to disassociate itself from being categorized as a southeastern Bal-

kan state. Instead, it developed a highly pro-Western foreign policy and sought to solidify this position through membership in Western institutions such as NATO and the European Union (EU). By contrast, Bulgaria's historically strong ties and alignment with Russia functioned as a constraint on the country's advancement toward NATO membership. For the better part of the 1990s, Bulgarian political leaders paid lip service to prospective accession but did not follow through with definitive action in this direction. These and other factors influencing the path to NATO membership are examined within the context of the benefits and drawbacks each country has brought to the alliance.

Slovenia: A Model Scenario?

For the Republic of Slovenia, the carrot of NATO membership has served as a key incentive for defense reform and modernization. Beyond its aspirations for NATO membership and the deadlines associated with achieving that goal, Slovenia lacked concrete internal motivations for ambitious defense planning. Following the end of the Wars of Yugoslav Succession and given the rising democratic trends in states to Slovenia's southeast, Slovenian policymakers focused increasingly on nontraditional threats²² and global security risks, largely ruling out localized ones. This security threat assessment is reflected in Slovenia's June 2001 National Security Strategy (NSS). Without strong incentives for defense modernization other than the external pressure of NATO membership, Slovenia's leaders pursued this as a primarily political objective. As early as 1994, the Republic of Slovenia adopted NATO membership as a main goal²³ and joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in the same year. Although its aspirations of receiving an invitation to join NATO at the 1997 Madrid Summit were not realized, Slovenia continued the process of building and restructuring the Slovene Armed Forces (SAF). Along the path to membership, Slovenia actively participated in PfP and received a MAP from NATO in 1999.



Domestic Political and Public Support. With regard to developing democratic structures, Slovenia can be viewed as a model Eastern European state. In contrast to Bulgaria, Slovenia has remained firmly oriented toward the West since achieving independence in 1991. The country's government maintained a large degree of stability due to the leadership of the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) party, which focused on achieving NATO and EU membership. Outside of the LDS, all mainstream political parties in Slovenia supported the country's Westward orientation, which was evident in its foreign policy goals of achieving

membership in NATO and the EU. However, public opinion on NATO membership suffered as a result of the Iraq war and led to a low in public support for membership despite Slovenia's 2002 invitation by NATO to join the alliance. To counter these negative trends, the government launched a public diplomacy and information campaign to inform citizens of the details and facts of what Slovenian membership in NATO would entail. The joint EU-NATO referendum held in March 2003 proved the public campaign successful, with 66 percent of votes in favor of NATO membership.²⁴

Although the public ultimately supported Slovenian membership in NATO,²⁵ it diverged with political leaders on the direction of military reform needed to obtain this goal. Slovenia's 10-day clash with Serbia over independence, culminating in a rapid political resolution and few casualties, made public confidence in the SAF's capabilities soar. In the public's mind the proven functionality of the SAF, coupled with a reduced regional threat to Slovenia's territorial integrity, made military reform unnecessary. In reality, however, the state of the SAF was dire.

Economic Strength. Slovenia is known for its robust economy, which is arguably the strongest of all southeastern states. Yet Slovenia was not excluded from the financial crisis that peaked in 2009,²⁶ and as a result its defense budget has been cut accordingly. The country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted by 7.8 percent in 2009 and, according to the Slovenia Defense and Security Report 2010, the 2009 defense budget was lowered from 608 million Euros to 589 million Euros. This "will affect procurement levels for equipment urgently needed to continue Army reform and modernization."²⁷

In July 2010, Slovenia announced plans to downsize procurement of armored fighting vehicles (AFVs) through the Finnish company Patria. An agreement had been signed in 2006 for 135 AFVs by 2014; however, Slovenia may cut the order back by as much as 50 percent.²⁸ Although the decision to reevaluate the Patria procurement was opened initially as the result of an investigation into allegations of potential corruption, Slovenian Minister of Defense Ljubica Jelusic said in a statement to Parliament on 19 July 2010 that the country's weakened economic situation warrants a reevaluation of and cuts to defense spending.

As a result of the cuts, Slovenia will once again fail to reach the 2 percent of GDP for defense spending set by NATO since 2002. Since 1998 the country has, however, maintained a consistent 1.4–1.6 percent of GDP for defense spending, with 1.49 percent in 2008, 1.66 percent in 2009 and approximately 1.47 percent in 2010. Due to a traditionally strong economy²⁹ and the small size and high degree of professionalization of the SAF, defense spending below the 2 percent mark has not proven detrimental to Slovenia's defense capabilities.

The Condition of Defense and Military Affairs. To assist Slovenian leaders with the necessary steps toward achieving NATO membership, the United States provided a defense review of Slovenia in 2000.³⁰ Termed the Garrett Report, this document provided feedback and guidance on capacities required for a modernized Slovenian land force.³¹ Unlike other former republics of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), the SAF developed in 1991 out of the Slovene Territorial Defense Force, which prior to independence fell under direct command of the FRY during wartime only. As a result, the Territorial Defense Force

answered to Slovenian authorities. The origins of the SAF as evolving from the mainly Slovene-organized Territorial Defense Force allowed Slovenia a smoother transition to NATO membership requirements than other FRY states. As stated by then Slovenian Defense Minister Anton Grizold in 2002, Slovenia maintained a comparative advantage over other NATO aspirants in that it could immediately build up its defense system, which was “easier than bringing fundamental changes to systems, downsizing the defense and military complex, and changes to the practices of years.”³² Slovenia’s 2004 Strategic Defense Review (SDR) describes the primary aim of defense reforms as “to form and provide trained, motivated, combat-ready and interoperable defense forces” that will “effectively pursue clear strategic goals.”³³

Section 3.2.1.2 of the 2004 SDR addresses the steps Slovenia had taken and still planned to take in response to the MAP it was granted at the 2002 Prague Summit:

- **Sufficient budgetary resources:** Slovenia would maintain the budgetary resources necessary for fulfillment of its membership obligations.
- **Unanimity:** Slovenia recognized the importance of consensus in reaching collective decisions and would strive to meet this end.
- **Defense reform timetable:** Implementation of defense reforms would be continued on an accelerated basis, and additional obligations relevant to collective defense and cooperation with NATO members had been added.
- **Legislation:** The legislation necessary to lay out the manner of collective defense cooperation had been adopted, and defense resource management had been improved to include a two-year annual budget.
- **Military capabilities:** Slovenia set a timeframe for achieving the necessary NATO-compatible capacities. By the end of 2006, a motorized infantry battalion would be provided; by the end of 2009, a fully deployable and supported battalion combat group; by 2012, a fully deployable and supported battalion combat group with rotation capability.
- **Airspace sovereignty:** Operations center capabilities were being upgraded to allow for interoperability with NATO’s Integrated Air Defense System.
- **Defense spending:** Slovenia would maintain an appropriate level of defense spending to allow for continued implementation of defense reforms.

En route to NATO membership, Slovenian defense planners marked SAF restructuring as a top priority. Political support for a transition from conscription to an all-volunteer force received widespread support from Slovenia’s major political parties,³⁴ primarily because it was perceived as the most natural direction for Slovenian defense development and as the model best suited to NATO membership.³⁵ Slovenian leaders worked to downsize the force, which was viewed as costly and bulky. The Ministry of Defense has pointed to the transition from a larger conscript to a smaller professional force as a firm endorsement of Slovenia’s “reorientation to the collective defense concept.”³⁶ From 2003 to 2005, the SAF

underwent significant restructuring from a conscript army focused on territorial defense to a professionalized military that is readily deployable and interoperable with NATO. The reduction of manpower, increase of professional soldiers and acquisition of modern, NATO-interoperable equipment set it on track to fulfill the objectives for force restructuring. Conscription ended in October 2003, and compulsory service is scheduled to end this year (2010). At the start of reorganization in 2003, the SAF consisted of approximately 4,500 professional active duty soldiers and 34,000 conscripts and reservists.³⁷ At the time of Slovenia's entry into NATO in 2004, professional soldiers numbered approximately 6,900, with 12,000 reservists. In 2009, Slovenia's active army numbered 7,200, with a reserve of 3,800.³⁸ As of March 2010, the SAF totals 9,219–7,557 on active duty and 1,662 in reserve.³⁹ The changes in number and professionalism of Slovenian soldiers accompanied a reorganization of tactical and operational functions into NATO-compatible groupings: reaction forces, main defense forces and supplementary forces.

In addition to force restructuring, Slovenian Ministry of Defense (MoD) planners saw the modernization of tactical capabilities as a key SAF priority. Slovenia recognized that capability gaps must be filled in order to operate within the requirements of NATO's Article 5, but defense budget planners faced competition from other socioeconomic factors that took precedence when determining the allocation of national budget funds.

Slovenia's defense budget process differs from that of other Western governments in that the MoD does not receive all funding by way of a defense appropriations bill. Instead, acquisition is partially funded by the Basic Development Program (BDP), a special legislative program funded by the Ministry of Finance that provides additional funds to Slovenian Military Forces. These funds are not considered a part of the MoD's regular budget. Yet funding through the BDP was not sufficient to sustain the acquisitions necessary for SAF modernization; therefore, the government proposed an alternate long-term development program that was approved by parliament in 2001. This secured an additional \$273 million to be spent on defense projects from 2002 to 2007 (see table).⁴⁰

In contrast to other new and aspiring members, Slovenia did not rely heavily on U.S. Foreign Military Financing (FMF) funds⁴¹ and after 2001 did not apply to NATO for funding of its PfP activities.

Slovenian Defense Projects 2002–2007

Areas of Expenditure and Percentage of Special Funds

Area of Expenditure	Percentage
Infantry	10.0%
Artillery systems	4.6%
Armor systems	12.3%
Engineer systems	3.7%
Command, control, communications, computers and intelligence (C4I) systems	18.0%
Air force-related systems	13.6%
Air defense systems	27.4%
Naval systems	1.3%
Nuclear-biological-chemical defense systems	2.1%
Logistical support systems	7.0%

Despite current economic hardships, Slovenia has remained committed to its obligations as a NATO member. The SAF is currently participating in NATO missions in Afghanistan, with approximately 990 soldiers in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and in Kosovo, with approximately 145 in the Kosovo Force (KFOR).⁴² The current status of SAF equipment is as follows:

- main battle tanks – 70;
- armored personnel carriers – 124;
- artillery – 140;
- anti-tanks, missiles and self-propelled artillery – 24;
- man-portable air defenses:
 - Soviet Anti-Tank Missile (AT-3 Sagger) – 1;
 - Russian Guided Anti-Tank Missile (AT-4 Spigot) – 1.⁴³

Bulgaria: A Security Consumer Only?

In contrast to Slovenia, it was not always certain that Bulgaria would become a NATO member. In the early 1990s, Bulgaria's decidedly Eastern orientation and disconnect with the West led European and American leaders to disregard it entirely as a potential ally, much less a NATO member. After encountering a number of political and economic hurdles en route to NATO membership, Bulgaria only belatedly began to make up for lost time in the late 1990s. The reversal in Bulgarian domestic political circumstances and its demonstrated will to engage in a constructive partnership with Western states led allied leaders to support Bulgaria's bid for membership for fear that if it was not integrated, the country's latest flirtations with the West would become an exception rather than the rule.



By happenstance, two major events also worked to Bulgaria's advantage as a NATO applicant: the opportunity to contribute troops to NATO's Kosovo Force during the 1999 Kosovo crisis, and Bulgaria's heightened geostrategic importance with regard to potential regions of concern following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C.

Domestic and Political Support. Until the late 1990s, little domestic support existed among Bulgarian political leaders and the general public for membership in NATO. Domestic political infighting and domination by the communist-successor Bulgarian Social-

ist Party (BSP) prevented an overhaul of Moscow-centric foreign policies that had characterized the country throughout its communist past.

Following the collapse of communism, Bulgaria's two main political parties, the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF)⁴⁴ and the BSP, held opposing views of Bulgaria's transition out of communism and its foreign policy orientation. During the early 1990s, the country's socialist leaders⁴⁵ took steps toward closer relations with NATO but did not follow through with the defense reforms necessary for membership consideration. Following NATO's offer to cooperate with former communist European states in June 1990, Bulgaria began diplomatic relations with the alliance a month later. In November 1994, Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister Todor Chourov accepted the PfP Individual Partnership Program, which had been developed jointly by NATO and Bulgaria. The following summer, Bulgaria hosted a joint NATO-PfP exercise and in 1996 began an Intensified Dialogue.⁴⁶ Yet despite these signals and prodding from then President Zhelyu Zhelev of the UDF, Bulgaria's socialist-dominated government⁴⁷ decided in 1996 not to seek membership in the alliance. Due to the lack of policies and action on military reform, the period from 1990 to 1997 has been termed Bulgaria's "seven lost years."⁴⁸

Only after President Petar Stoyanov of the UDF assumed power in 1997 did Bulgaria emerge as a serious candidate for NATO membership. The incumbent government proceeded to reverse Moscow-centric policies and from 1998 to 1999 released a series of documents aimed at establishing a roadmap for Bulgarian membership in NATO by 2004: the 1998 National Security Concept (NSC), the 1999 National Military Doctrine (NMD) and the 1999 Plan for the Organizational Development of the Ministry of Defense by the Year 2004 (Plan 2004).

The NSC identified Bulgaria's national interests and threat perceptions, and took a decidedly Western approach by stating that only EU and NATO membership could guarantee national security. Due to its geographical location and history of relations with neighboring Balkan countries, Bulgaria maintained regional threat perceptions that influenced its focus on defending territorial integrity. Yet like Slovenia, Bulgaria also recognized threats as primarily soft and indirect in nature, and therefore not always resolvable through military means. The NMD established Bulgaria's primary operational objectives:⁴⁹

- to guarantee Bulgaria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity
- to achieve favorable military-strategic and political-military conditions in the surrounding region;
- to prepare for and join international security and collective defense organizations; and
- to protect the population of Bulgaria from natural disasters, accidents, and catastrophes.

To implement these objectives, a National Military Strategy (NMS) was adopted for the Bulgarian Armed Forces (BAF) in 2002.

A number of other documents have also been used to pave the way prior to and following Bulgarian accession to NATO. Plan 2004, one of Bulgaria's influential military reform documents (adopted officially in October 1999), was based on a U.S. defense assessment.

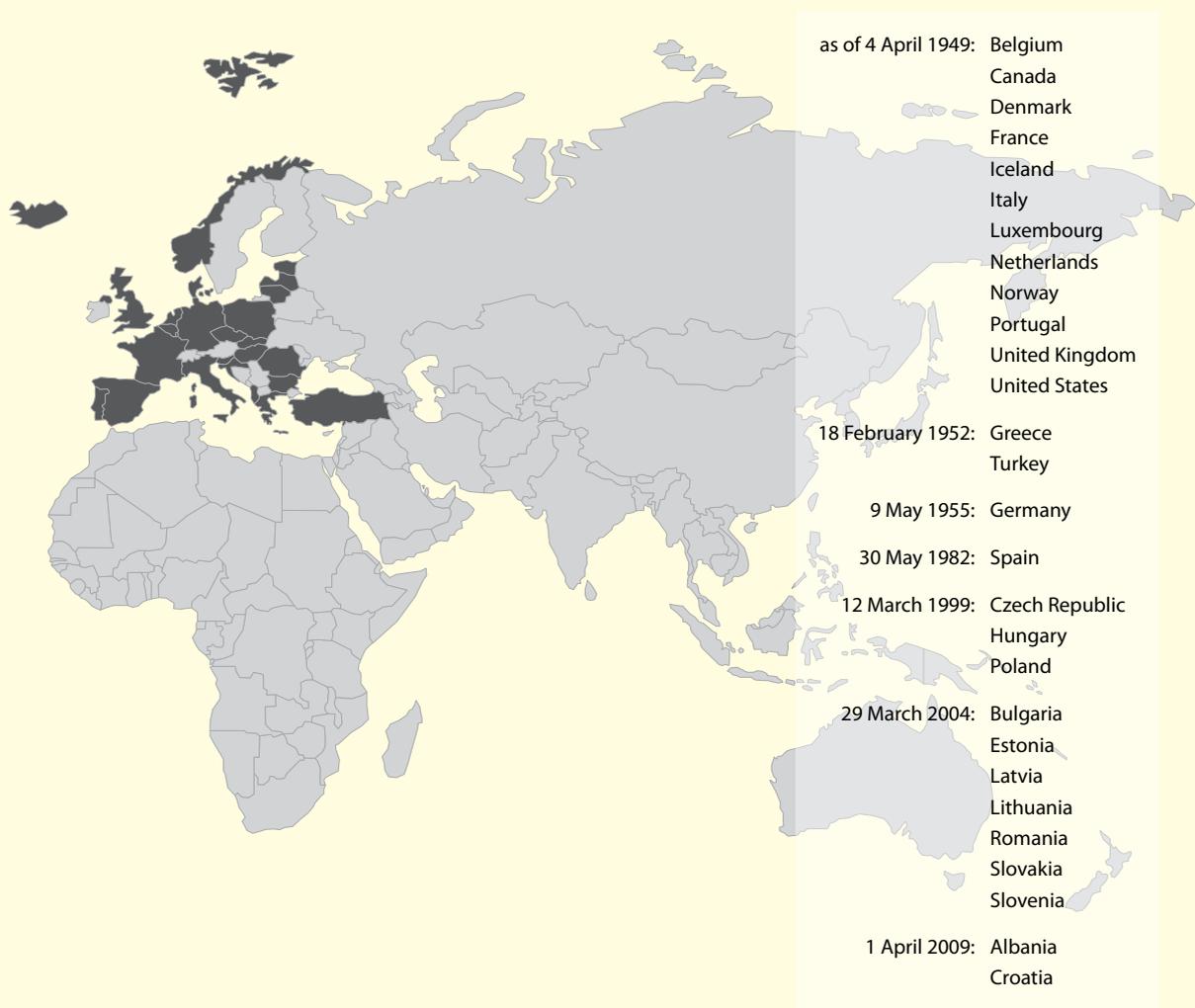
Similar to Slovenia's Garrett Report, the Kievenaar Report was submitted to Bulgarian government officials in 1999; it highlighted priorities and recommended courses of action for the Bulgarian MoD en route to restructuring and reforming the defense system for NATO compatibility. The document specified two main goals: increasing BAF fighting capacity and preparing for NATO membership. To achieve the latter, Plan 2004 called for a reduction in the endstrength of armed forces, partial privatization of the military to relieve financial problems, and revision of training programs to achieve a shift from an offensive to a defensive posture. Prior to Bulgaria's membership in NATO, Plan 2004 functioned as the primary document on military reform. The 2004 Strategic Defense Review (SDR), begun in 2003 and adopted by the Bulgarian National Assembly in 2004, became the key document establishing the framework for ongoing Bulgarian military and defense reform subsequent to the country's accession to NATO in April 2004. The SDR assessed risks and threats to national security and addressed alternatives to manage them, in accordance with NATO standards. The document also detailed a timeline up to 2015 for the conversion of the BAF from conscription to a professional army: a reduction of troops from 45,000 to 39,800 by the year 2015, as well as a reduction in the number of tanks from 600 to 170. The concepts developed in the 2004 SDR led to a more detailed document guiding BAF transformation. The 2004 "Long Term Vision for the Development of the Bulgarian Armed Forces until year 2015" focused on deployability, usability, interoperability and modernization of the entire armed forces. Recent documents on BAF development have reflected guidance received from NATO. The 2008 "Updated Implementation Plan for the Development of the Bulgarian Armed Forces" reflects the need for Bulgaria to successfully fulfill its NATO and EU commitments while continuing to develop capabilities within realistic financial means. The 2009 "Law on Defense" served to further integrate political and military leadership within the Bulgarian MoD, and placed Bulgarian military schools⁵⁰ under MoD administration.

Beyond official political measures, a general public majority in favor of NATO membership was required. Yet the Bulgarian public was slow to shed its favorable perception of Russia as its "Slavic big brother." Internal political strife following the collapse of communism created a public constituency for domestic reform and structural change that led to the replacement of the Eastern-oriented BSP with the Western-leaning UDF in 1997. The 1999 Kosovo crisis put Bulgaria's commitments to the test and demonstrated a turning point in its willingness to make decisions and take actions supportive of NATO. Toward the end of the crisis, Bulgaria refused Russia permission to fly over its airspace to supply Russian troops stationed in Pristina. And despite lingering public sympathy toward Russia's ally Serbia as a fellow Slavic nation,⁵¹ Bulgaria allowed NATO to fly over its territory en route to Kosovo.⁵² Having loosened its ties with Russia by demonstrating its right as a sovereign state to independently pursue its own foreign policy, Bulgaria planted its feet firmly on the Western doorstep. The country continued in this direction by becoming one of the first to offer assistance to the United States in Afghanistan following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. As of 2010, Bulgaria maintains a force of approximately 460 troops in NATO's ISAF in Afghanistan. Moreover, the focus after 11 September 2001 on unstable regions as potential terrorist threats increased the value



of Bulgaria's geographical location for NATO allies. Strategically located with the Black Sea, Turkey and Greece to its east and south, Bulgaria declared itself willing to provide the territorial support necessary for the counterterrorist operations under development. Bulgaria's geographical support was of particular importance given the inclination by its southern neighbors, NATO members Greece and Turkey, to place restrictions on cooperation.⁵³ As a result of these events, Bulgaria's chances for achieving NATO membership increased significantly within only a few short years.

One vital factor influencing NATO's willingness to overlook Bulgaria's immediate shortcomings and accept it into the Alliance in 2004 was the fear that if it did not secure its Western orientation through membership, Bulgaria would eventually backslide into Russia's sphere of influence. When Allied leaders decided in favor of NATO expansion in 1994, the case was made that the alliance could function as an important tool for the spread of democracy in Eastern Europe.⁵⁴ Thus the West became increasingly open to potential Euro-Atlantic integration of southeast European states.



Economic Strength. Bulgaria’s economy suffered greatly following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, and has since been a source of continuous strain. Like its political ties, Bulgaria’s economy was closely intertwined with that of the Soviet Union. This close connection resulted in a fall in the Bulgarian standard of living by approximately 40 percent during the early 1990s.⁵⁵ As a result, Bulgaria lacked the necessary budgetary resources and political support for a major overhaul of defense and therefore relied heavily on outside funding from the United States and NATO. Although the country has consistently surpassed the NATO-recommended floor of 2 percent spending of GDP on defense, Bulgaria’s overall low GDP⁵⁶ means that this is not much of an achievement or even useful for calculating the ability to fund its defense system. The country has most notably lacked the funding necessary to support thorough personnel and hardware transformation.

From the 1920s through the Cold War era, Bulgaria’s profitable military industrial complex specializing in light weaponry and small arms functioned as a vital cornerstone of the country’s economy. At its height, approximately 10 percent of the Bulgarian GDP stemmed

from the defense sector. But immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the industry was stifled by its dependence on Russia and other former Warsaw Pact clients in the region, who had accounted for approximately 70 percent of Bulgarian arms sales.⁵⁷ Moreover, Soviet-era debts held by Russia were not repaid via monetary means. Instead, Russia repaid its debt with military hardware that would hold little value for Bulgaria once it took steps to integrate into NATO structures. It is ironic that the country's traditionally strong defense industry has crumbled as the result of a welcomed turn in political events. No longer sustained by an artificial market, Bulgaria has struggled to create alternative clients and develop other industries.

Despite recent setbacks, the Bulgarian economy made remarkably rapid recovery following the 1997 economic crisis. The economy as a whole rebounded with growth of 3.8 percent in 1998, and maintained growth of 2.5 percent in 1999 despite hurdles resulting from the 1999 Kosovo crisis and Russia's 1998 financial crisis. Due to increased trade with EU countries, Bulgaria's economy continued to grow in the early 2000s, although it was affected slightly by financial slumps in the United States and in the Euro currency region. Domestically, fiscal reforms focusing on tax cuts, pensions and other measures aimed at stimulating consumption bolstered economic growth.

Unfortunately, Bulgaria has not escaped the latest financial crisis. The poor economy has negatively impacted procurement⁵⁸ and halted an already slow attempt to catch up with the standards set by Western European and American forces. In the upcoming year, Bulgaria's MoD plans to cut defense spending by 30 percent by engaging in vigorous reform of the BAF. And in early April 2010, Bulgarian Defense Minister Anyu Angelov announced that "the Defense Minister is attempting to reduce the scope of some arms supply contracts in order to save money."⁵⁹ Specifically, the government has been forced to reduce the procurement number from five to three Spartan airplanes from Italian firm Alenia Aeronautica and plans to "ask the supplier to accept advance payments on the fourth and fifth planes in order to cover the money the Bulgarian government still owes for the third plane."⁶⁰ Furthermore, Bulgaria has announced plans to downsize a 2005 deal made with Eurocopter, an EADS company. The original agreement for purchase of 12 Cougar and six Panther helicopters has been cut to a total of 12 Cougars and three Panthers. In addition, Angelov addressed the ongoing investigation into a 2008 contract, signed by former Defense Minister Nikolay Tsonev, for construction of a military optic cable system. Given that Bulgarian forces already possess a working communications system, the need to spend additional funding on a new system was questionable. In June and July 2010 the Bulgarian Parliament debated a revision of the nation's budget law—the first since the 1997 economic crisis—to compensate for the negative effects of the global financial crisis and the need to optimize state spending while also carrying out vital structural reforms. During the July debate, Defense Minister Angelov argued in favor of upholding the deal with Eurocopter for all 18 helicopters, stating that Bulgaria has already paid three million of the five million Euros agreed upon and would only lose the funds already spent by pulling out of the agreement altogether. Angelov supported

negotiations with Eurocopter to strike an arrangement that would allow Bulgaria to pay off the entire amount.

In short, Bulgaria's inconclusive economic development and the recent impact of the global financial crisis have stymied attempts to pursue a viable, energetic pace of reform. Even prior to recent financial difficulties, Bulgaria's low GDP meant that, despite respectable defense spending, the BAF remained "not all that impressive or able to be deployed anywhere."⁶¹ In a July 2010 discussion at the Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C., Defense Minister Angelov stressed that, at a time when commitment by other allies is wavering, Bulgaria will remain committed to the NATO operation in Afghanistan. Despite its troubled financial situation, Bulgaria has continued to spend 10 percent of its defense budget on its presence in Afghanistan and other expeditionary operations, even contributing an additional three Operational Mentor Liaison Teams to train and develop the Afghan National Army.⁶² Although such statements and actions are commendable, Bulgaria's past and present economic situation demonstrates that its contributions to NATO will remain limited and in this regard not essential to the alliance. This indicates that Bulgaria's worth as a member lies primarily in its geographical location and in the political symbolism of its commitment to the West.

The Condition of Defense and Military Affairs. Unlike Slovenia, Bulgaria was saddled with the remnants of a large, bulky force based on Warsaw Pact-era posturing whereby the BAF dominated all other military branches. Plan 2004 foresaw a professionalization of the BAF by the end of 2004, and downsizing force size from 98,000 to about 45,000 was identified as the most necessary but also most difficult part of the fundamental restructuring of the BAF.⁶³ The complexities surrounding size reduction focused primarily on the need to cut personnel⁶⁴ and move them into alternative employment positions; the MoD appropriately developed assistance and reeducation programs to facilitate this process. Based on the Cold War viewpoint of Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey as potential enemies, the BAF was largely concentrated to the south and southwest of the country. In light of NATO membership aspirations, however, Bulgarian defense planners reorganized army forces into two corps: a NATO-interoperable rapid reaction force (RRF) headquartered in Plovdiv and a general staff headquartered in Sofia.⁶⁵

During the Soviet era, Bulgarian military structure was intertwined in domestic politics, and officers were often affiliated with political parties. Traditionally, Bulgaria had maintained good military relations with Russia, and the Bulgarian army was tightly integrated with Soviet forces—more so than that of any other Eastern European state. Many Bulgarian generals were educated by the Soviets, and the old mentality they maintained slowed Bulgaria's military reform. Bulgaria lacked a substantial pool of civilian defense experts, and professional military personnel did not highly regard the viewpoints of civilians. The lack of understanding between civilian and military components led to conflict between the two,⁶⁶ thus impeding constructive cooperation on reforming the BAF. Each side's disinterest in understanding the other stymied the progress of reform toward true civilian control of the military, as required for NATO membership.

The prospects of NATO membership did, however, give the BAF a clear incentive for reform. Bulgaria set a goal of invitation to NATO by 2002 and took the appropriate steps to achieve this. Force structure was restructured into smaller, more potent units; military property was partially privatized to reduce financial costs; and the offensive posture of the Cold War era was replaced by a defensive approach.⁶⁷ Similar to Slovenia, Bulgaria recognized the need to downsize and professionalize its army. Bulgaria's 2004 Strategic Defense Review set a timeframe for reduction of the BAF from 45,000 to 39,800 by 2015. This goal was reached well beforehand, and as of 2009 the current active total stands at 34,975.⁶⁸ In addition to personnel changes, the BAF has seen a reduction in the amount of hardware and a focus shifted toward the quality and mobility of new procurements. The BAF's modernization has been primarily supported by the U.S. Foreign Military Financing program, and Bulgarian forces have undergone joint training exercises with the U.S. military. Aside from the United States, however, Bulgarian forces have not often engaged with other states on joint exercises.

Criticism for Bulgaria's small role in NATO missions also exists. According to recent numbers, BAF forces engaged in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan total a mere 460, with 119 engaged in Operation Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina and a handful of troops engaged in other deployments.⁶⁹ As this demonstrates, the BAF continues to contribute only marginally to NATO missions, despite significant defense spending and programs aimed to bolster the deployability of the force. The fact that NATO leaders continue to push for modernization of the Bulgarian military demonstrates that "in Brussels' eyes, Bulgaria still has to prove why it has been accepted into the alliance."⁷⁰ The impact of the 2009 global financial crisis has raised the question of Bulgaria's capability to continue along the already troubled path toward military modernization. Currently, the status of BAF equipment is as follows:

- main battle tanks – 362;
- advanced infantry fighting vehicles – 185;
- armored personnel carriers – 1,393;
- artillery – 817;
- anti-tanks:
 - missiles – 24;
 - man-portable air defenses – 436;
 - guns – 400
- land radars – 5:
 - GS-13 Long Eye;
 - SNAR-1 Long Trough;
 - SNAR-10 Big Fred;

- SNAR-2/-6 Pork Trough;
- Small Fred/Small Yawn.⁷¹

Implications for the NATO Alliance

Subsequent to the 2004 round of enlargement that admitted Slovenia and Bulgaria, NATO completed one additional round of enlargement at Strasbourg and Kehl in April 2009. Not only did the Strasbourg and Kehl Summit admit two additional member states, it also announced NATO's resolve to redefine its fundamental purpose of collective defense within the context of new and emerging threats. Yet developments in Afghanistan have exposed the limitations of the NATO alliance: despite urging from the United States, NATO allies have demonstrated that their finite resources—and the public's willingness to accept military engagement for the purposes of collective action under Article 5—can stretch only so far. By sending an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan, the mission has essentially become Americanized. The United States has continued to push for additional support from already overstretched NATO members; however the response has been weak, with any additional contributions more symbolic than substantive.

Although NATO enlargement within the context of ISAF does not shed a positive light on the future, the cases of Slovenia and Bulgaria have demonstrated that the carrot of NATO membership has proven effective in promoting defense reform and system upgrades in Eastern European states, at minimal cost. While the defense capabilities of NATO allies cannot be compared to that of the United States due to inherent differences in geographical size, population, GDP and other factors, increases in those capabilities can be measured over time. Despite the hurdles encountered by the newest NATO allies in particular, the prospect of NATO membership still catalyzed defense transformation, leaving these states in a better position than they had been prior to their NATO pursuits.

With ongoing operations in Afghanistan and the negative effects of the global economic crisis on defense expenditures, modernization of defense systems has been slowed in all NATO member countries. Concerns that countries having achieved full NATO membership may be looking for a free ride on the back of the alliance have been raised. Yet it is significant that NATO's newest member states have remained some of the staunchest supporters of ISAF, even if their contributions are minimal when compared with the entire mission. The global financial situation has led all allied governments to reevaluate defense spending, but an enlightened look at NATO enlargement is also necessary: Would the defense structures of NATO's newest member states have developed to such a degree without the carrot of NATO membership? In the cases of Slovenia and Bulgaria, the answer is no.

Endnotes

- ¹ Andrew J. Bacevich, “Let Europe Be Europe. Why the United States must withdraw from NATO,” *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2010, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/02/22/let_europe_be_europe.
- ² The majority of allied states regularly fail to meet the 2 percent of GDP spending set by NATO at the 2002 Prague Summit. However, differing viewpoints on how to deal with threats have also led to differing approaches by Europe and the United States: while Europe tends to manage security issues, the United States attempts to solve them. See Rob de Wijk, “European Military Reform for a Global Partnership,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2003–2004, p. 200.
- ³ As stated in NATO’s April 1999 Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI). See “NATO’s Defense Capabilities Initiative,” *NATO Handbook*, <http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb0205.htm>.
- ⁴ *Ibid.* At that time, the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) was launched, laying out areas where capabilities improvements were needed.
- ⁵ The NRF was intended as a “technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land, sea, and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed, as decided by the Council.” NATO, “Prague Summit Declaration,” <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>.
- ⁶ ACT was originally founded in 1952 as Allied Command Atlantic. With the end of the Cold War, its functions were reduced, although the basic structures remained intact. Following the decision during the Prague Summit to reorganize NATO’s military command structure, ACT was formally established on 19 June 2003.
- ⁷ At the Prague Summit, NATO leaders agreed to reduce the number of strategic operational commands from two to one.
- ⁸ Capabilities were to be improved in more than 400 areas. See NATO, “Prague Capabilities Commitment,” http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-69F6E0E6-534F56BC/natolive/topics_50087.htm.
- ⁹ During a June 2002 meeting in Brussels.
- ¹⁰ The following is from NATO, “Prague Capabilities Commitment,” http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-69F6E0E6-534F56BC/natolive/topics_50087.htm.
- ¹¹ See NATO, “The Prague Summit and NATO’s Transformation,” www.nato.int/docu/rdr-gde-prg/rdr-gde-prg-eng.pdf.
- ¹² See map, pp. 12–13.
- ¹³ The U.S. decision to favor an open-door policy for enlargement was supported by the argument that through the promise of membership, NATO offers a lucrative carrot for democratic reforms, peaceful resolution of disputes and a commitment to preserving stability. These points were discussed by Strobe Talbott in his article “Why NATO Should Grow,” *Balkan Forum*, December 1995.

- ¹⁴ See NATO, *Study on NATO Enlargement*, chapter 1, sections A and B, 3 September 1995, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_24733.htm.
- ¹⁵ It has been argued that NATO must first clearly and explicitly define itself and its purpose before member and aspirant states can be expected to effectively contribute resources to the alliance. The 2010 Strategic Concept will address the questions of NATO transformation and purpose in the 21st century. See Timothy Edmunds, “A New Security Environment? The Evolution of Military Roles in Post-Cold War Europe,” in T. Edmunds and M. Malesic, Eds., *Defence Transformation in Europe: Evolving Military Roles* (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2005), pp. 9–18.
- ¹⁶ To maintain its relevance in the post-Cold War world, NATO decided as early as 1991 to broaden its role to address crisis management and conflict prevention issues, and stated such in its 1991 Strategic Concept. See NATO, “The Alliance’s New Strategic Concept,” November 1991, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm.
- ¹⁷ In his 1996 article “NATO and the New Security Architecture,” then NATO Secretary General Javier Solana acknowledged that “undue emphasis on military aspects of enlargement” would not be placed on aspiring members. Javier Solana, “NATO and the New Security Architecture,” *Balkan Forum*, 4:2, June 1996, p. 8.
- ¹⁸ As noted by Zoltan Barany in his book *The Future of NATO Expansion: Four Case Studies* (Cambridge: University Press, 2003). Barany argues that NATO is a vital organization because it concerns itself with states’ domestic military affairs—a function covered by no other organization, and one that leads to “a causal link between NATO and domestic policy change.”
- ¹⁹ Note that the MAP neither guarantees future membership nor replaces the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. PfP was launched in January 1994 as a framework for providing bilateral cooperation between NATO and non-NATO partner countries on an individual basis. NATO, “The Prague Summit and NATO’s Transformation,” www.nato.int/docu/rdr-gde-prg/rdr-gde-prg-eng.pdf.
- ²⁰ The following is from chapter 4, section A, NATO, *Study on NATO Enlargement*.
- ²¹ Slovenia and Bulgaria have been chosen for their differing paths to membership. Both became NATO members during the second round of enlargement in 2004.
- ²² Such as social, political, economic and environmental threats.
- ²³ In January 1994, Slovenia’s National Assembly adopted the *Resolution on the Starting Points for a National Security Plan*. In the supplements to this resolution, the democratic political desire for Slovenian accession to NATO is stated.
- ²⁴ See Charles M. Perry and Dimitris Keridis, *Defense Reform, Modernization, and Military Cooperation in Southeastern Europe* (Dulles, Va.: Brassey’s, Inc., 2004), p. 32.
- ²⁵ Even with 80 percent of the Slovenian public against the U.S.-led mission in Iraq, public opinion in favor of joining NATO did not waver. A March 2003 Gallup Poll

- showed 62 percent of the population as pro-NATO. See Gallup Europe, "Slovenia," http://www.gallup-europe.be/epm/epm_slovenia.htm.
- ²⁶ Slovenia's GDP growth measured -4.7 percent in 2009, compared to 3.5 percent growth in 2008. See *The Military Balance 2010*, p. 159.
- ²⁷ According to the Slovenia Defense and Security Report 2010, Balkans.com Business News, <http://www.balkans.com/open-news.php?uniquenumber=47912>.
- ²⁸ *DefenseNews*. "Slovenia to Cut AFV Order to Patria," *DefenseNews*, 21 July 2010, <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=4718255&c=land>.
- ²⁹ Slovenia's GDP was \$54 billion in 2008 and \$53 billion in 2009.
- ³⁰ The United States has been the most influential contributor to Slovenian defense planning.
- ³¹ For example, the report advised that air power should be focused on rotary-wing forces only.
- ³² Anton Grizold, "Slovenia Revamps Its Security Policies in Anticipation of an Invitation to Join NATO," *Armed Forces Journal*, April 2002, <http://nato.gov.si/slo/novinarsko-sredisce/clanki/2002-04-16-armed-forces>.
- ³³ Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Defense, "Strategic Defense Review: Comprehensive Summary," May 2004, p. 7, <http://merln.ndu.edu/whitepapers/Slovenia-2004.pdf>.
- ³⁴ Including the Liberal Democracy Party of Slovenia, the Social Democrats, the Slovenian People's Party, the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia, the New Slovenia Party and the Youth Party of Slovenia. Even the Slovenian National Party supported increased development of a volunteer army. See Igor Kotnik-Dvojmoc and Erik Kopac, "Professionalism of the Slovenian Armed Forces," in Anthony Forster, Timothy Edmunds and Andrew Cottey, Eds., *The Challenge of Military Reform in Postcommunist Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 154.
- ³⁵ Based on the fact that other new NATO members and aspiring candidates also leaned toward this model.
- ³⁶ Ministry of Defence, Republic of Slovenia, *Defence Sector Strategic Review 2009 (DSSR): Summary of Key DSSR 2009 Conclusions*, 14 October 2009, p. 9, http://www.mors.si/fileadmin/mors/pdf/ministrstvo/SPOR_eng_izvlecek.pdf.
- ³⁷ Perry and Keridis, "Slovenia," p. 11. Slovenia's active duty component consists entirely of professional soldiers, whereas the reserve consists of civilians either conscripted or who have signed a contract for service in the reserve.
- ³⁸ *The Military Balance 2010*, p. 160.
- ³⁹ Slovenian Ministry of Defence, *Slovenian Armed Forces*, <http://www.slovenskavojska.si/en/about-the-slovenian-armed-forces/>.
- ⁴⁰ Perry and Keridis, "Slovenia," p. 13.

- 41 For example, for integrating its air sovereignty operations centers (ASOCs), Slovenia drew upon its national budget. See Perry and Keridis, "Slovenia," p. 17.
- 42 See *The Military Balance 2010*, p. 158. Slovenia is also participating in UN, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and EU missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Ivory Coast, Congo, Liberia, Nepal and Sudan.
- 43 From *The Military Balance 2010*, p. 160.
- 44 The UDF was founded in December 1989 out of a consortium of 11 political organizations opposed to communist rule.
- 45 Some of whom were former communist party members.
- 46 Intensified Dialogue is an additional stage after a prospective NATO member state receives an Individual Partnership Action Plan and before receiving a Membership Action Plan. At the 1997 Madrid Summit, NATO heads of state and government stated the intent "to continue the Alliance's intensified dialogues with those nations that aspire to NATO membership or that otherwise wish to pursue a dialogue with NATO on membership questions. To this end, these intensified dialogues will cover the full range of political, military, financial and security issues relating to possible NATO membership, without prejudice to any eventual Alliance decision." See press release, "Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation," 8 July 1997, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1997/p97-081e.htm>.
- 47 Although Bulgaria's president from August 1990 to January 1997 was Zhelyu Zhelev of the UDF, the party lacked the votes to function independently of the BSP. The UDF lost the 1990 elections to the BSP, and the UDF's attempt to form its own cabinet in November 1991 ended in a failed vote of confidence in September 1992.
- 48 As noted by Jeffrey Simon in "Bulgaria and NATO: 7 Lost Years," Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University Strategy Forum, No. 142, May 1998, <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Strforum/SF142/forum142.html>.
- 49 The following was listed in Charles M. Perry and Dimitris Kerdis, Eds., "Bulgaria," *Defense Reform, Modernization, and Military Cooperation in Southeastern Europe*, p. 46.
- 50 Such as the Defense and Staff College, National Military University, Naval Academy and Military Medical Academy.
- 51 Some particularly sympathetic Bulgarian citizens even crossed the border to fight for Serbia.
- 52 This significant breakthrough in Bulgaria's commitment to NATO was noted by U.S. President Clinton during his visit to Sofia in November 1999.
- 53 Strong anti-American sentiments in Greece limited its freedom to cooperate fully with the United States; Turkey, an Islamic state, could not guarantee unconditional support for operations targeting other Islamic countries.
- 54 Most strongly argued by U.S. political leaders in Washington, D.C.

- ⁵⁵ According to U.S. Department of State Background Notes on Bulgaria, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3236.htm>.
- ⁵⁶ Bulgaria remains one of the poorest countries in the European Union. Its GDP fell from \$49.9 billion in 2008 to \$45.9 billion in 2009.
- ⁵⁷ Beyond this, 20 percent of Bulgarian arms sales went to Soviet client states, with only 5 percent domestically consumed.
- ⁵⁸ As Bulgaria pursued its bid to join NATO, state leaders made a conscious decision to no longer procure material from Russia, as it would not be NATO-interoperable.
- ⁵⁹ “Bulgaria Military Shrinks Weapon Deals over Money Shortage,” Sofia News Agency, 6 April 2010, http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=114949.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁶¹ W. Alejandro Sanchez Cornejo Nieto, “A Drop in the Ocean: Bulgaria’s NATO Membership and Black Sea Geopolitics,” *European Security*, vol. 17, no. 4, December 2008, p. 523.
- ⁶² See “Bulgarian-American Strategic Defense Partnership,” Atlantic Council, 1 July 2010, <http://www.acus.org/event/bulgarian-american-strategic-defense-partnership>.
- ⁶³ See Robert K. Ackerman, “Politics, Finances Dominate Bulgaria’s Military Reform,” AFCEA International, October 1999, http://www.afcea.org/signal/articles/templates/SIGNAL_Article_Template.asp?articleid=809&zoneid=7.
- ⁶⁴ Cuts were made primarily to the officer corps.
- ⁶⁵ See map of Bulgaria, p. 9.
- ⁶⁶ Adding to the conflict was a disagreement between the General Staff (GS) and the Ministry of Defense (MoD) over the mandatory retirement age of professional officers. The MoD wanted to move the retirement age for professional officers to 50, but the BAF protested.
- ⁶⁷ As outlined in Plan 2004.
- ⁶⁸ Additionally, the reserve number totals 302,500. From *The Military Balance 2010*.
- ⁶⁹ According to *The Military Balance 2010*.
- ⁷⁰ W. A. Sanchez Cornejo Nieto, “A Drop in the Ocean,” p. 528.
- ⁷¹ From *The Military Balance 2010*, p. 122.