

31/2012

30th May2012

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Chicago NATO Summit: OPEN
DOOR POLICY

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Chicago NATO Summit: OPEN DOOR POLICY

Abstract:

Chicago NATO Summit held on May 20-21 was not an enlargement summit but the Alliance was fully supportive, as it was in 2008, of the efforts of Georgia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro to become members of NATO.

Keywords:

NATO, Chicago Summit, Georgia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, MAP.

At the Chicago NATO Summit there has been reiteration for the support already provided in 2008 for the processes of accession of Georgia, Macedonia (FYROM¹), Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro into the Alliance.

The support for these four candidates was expressed in the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government on 10 May and in the statements of the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, during the meeting of NATO foreign ministers with their counterparts in Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Georgia. Hillary Clinton called these candidates “active allies” and welcomed the efforts made in order to fulfill the requirements and applauded the support provided, particularly by Georgia, for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

This open door policy has its origin and basis in the Washington Treaty, which states that democratic European countries will be welcomed into the Alliance if they meet certain conditions:

Article 10 - 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. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America. The Government of the United States of America will inform each of the Parties of the deposit of each such instrument of accession. (The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington D.C., 4 April 1949)

Since 1949, the number of NATO member countries has increased from 12 to 28 through six enlargement processes in 1952, 1955, 1982, 1999, 2004 and 2009. The latest additions were Albania and Croatia, which were invited to join the Alliance in 2008, at the Bucharest Summit, and their accession process formally finished on 1 April 2009.

In the *Study of NATO Enlargement* of 1995 it is stated that “there is no fixed or rigid list of criteria for inviting new member states to join the Alliance²”. However, in that same study some minimum requirements are established:

- A democratic system based on market economy
- Respect for the rights of minorities

¹ Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

² Study on NATO Enlargement issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, (Brussels, 3 September 1995), chapter 1.
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_24733.htm

- A commitment to peaceful conflict resolution
- The ability and willingness to participate militarily in NATO operations

Those countries that declare an interest in joining NATO are invited to participate in an Intensified Dialogue with the Alliance on their aspirations and the reforms they are willing to make in order to achieve eligibility for membership.

Once this first phase is completed, the candidate countries are invited to join the Membership Action Plan (MAP), which is the last membership stage that usually precedes the accession.

The numerous decisions that were taken regarding the NATO enlargement at Bucharest Summit of April 2008 were also addressed at this Chicago Summit.

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The accession process of Macedonia into NATO has not made any progress between the Bucharest Summit and the Chicago Summit. In both summits its accession into the Alliance was subject to the solution of its denomination issue.

Greece rejects the use of the name Macedonia since it is also the name of an historical Greek region. Greece fears that the use of this name by its neighbouring country will lead to territorial claims towards the region with the same name. After a commitment reached by both parties in 1993, they provisionally accepted the use of the term Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). To the date, this terminology conflict has caused the rejection of Macedonia's accession into NATO and into the EU (to which it has been a candidate country since 2005). After the failure at the New York meeting, under the UN auspices, which was celebrated in order to find a solution to this issue last January 2012, it seems difficult to put an end to this problem and, therefore, to complete the accession process of Macedonia into the Alliance.

MONTENEGRO

At the Bucharest Summit, Montenegro was invited to start the Intensified Dialogue. In December 2009 Montenegro entered the second phase: the MAP. At this Chicago Summit the commitment to the MAP, the political, economic and defence reforms carried out, its contribution to security in the Balkan region and its participation in ISAF have been welcomed.

Out of the four candidates discussed in this declaration, Montenegro is the only country with a clear prospect of early accession into NATO.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

After democratizing its defence structures and collaborating with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina started the Intensified Dialogue (2008) and it joined the MAP in April 2010. However, its accession is subject to the registration of all the properties that the Bosnian Government considers necessary for national defence in the name of the Ministry of Defence. At the Chicago Summit it has been acknowledged the significant progress made in the agreement reached in March 2012 with regard to the issue of properties and state assignment, but the practical implementation has not been carried out yet, which is an essential step for the country to start the MAP and become a member of the Alliance.

GEORGIA

With regard to Georgia, at the Bucharest Summit it was agreed, after beginning the Intensified Dialogue, just like Ukraine, that “they would become members one day”. In December 2008, Allied foreign ministers decided to increase the support provided to these two countries through two existing cooperation frameworks, the NATO-Georgia Commission and the NATO-UKRAINE Commission, without excluding future access to the MAP.

Regarding Georgia, at the Chicago Summit the desire to let the country become a member of the Alliance has been reaffirmed and it is encouraged to continue with the ongoing reforms. It has been stressed that the elections of 2012 and 2013 need to be free and fair and special thanks for its generous contribution to the ISAF have been expressed.

The support for Georgia’s territorial integrity has been reiterated and Russia has been asked to retract its recognition of the independence of Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

CONCLUSIONS

With regard to the enlargement of the Alliance, at this Chicago Summit there have been many kind words but very little action. The progress made is not significant. Of the four candidates for NATO membership, Montenegro is the candidate which seems most likely to be next. Macedonia still has to deal with the issue of its denomination, as bitter as it is irrelevant to the majority of the members, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, just like Georgia, still has to carry out the Membership Action Plan, which means that it has not yet

implemented the reforms and fulfilled the requirements needed to become a member state.

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