

BALKANIZING SECURITY

ROMANIA, BULGARIA, AND THE BURDENS OF ALLIANCE

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Executive Summary

Alliances, as George Washington famously warned, can be troublesome. They can entangle. Analyses of events ranging from World War I to the Iraq war have noted the costs and gains of alliances to the predominant or most powerful actor in the alliance. Often these derive from the burdens on the smaller allies, who are expected to conform to modal alliance behavior and who bear the burden of producing the security that an alliance promises at the “front lines”. Currently, with post-Cold War alliance structures much more fluid and, some would say, eroding into something quite different, there is a need to pay attention to how such changes are affecting the security and policy choices of alliance members. This is especially true of the Balkans, given its history and its renewed prominence in the strategic perspective of several powerful actors, including the United States, the European Union, and Russia.

This paper offers a discussion of the nature of the alliance challenges for Romania and Bulgaria especially as regards the intersection of the issue of Turkish membership in the European Union and these states’ ties with the United States. The two states form a useful comparative set because of their similar but not identical recent histories and similar but again not identical patterns of participation, domestic politics, and expectations that are likely to affect their alliance contributions.

Introduction

Alliances, as George Washington famously warned, can be troublesome. They can entangle. Analyses of events ranging from World War I to the Iraq war have noted the costs and gains of alliances to the predominant or most powerful actor in the alliance.¹ Often these derive from the burdens on the smaller allies, who are expected to conform to modal alliance behavior and who bear the burden of producing the security that an alliance promises at the “front lines”. Currently, with post-Cold War alliance structures much more fluid and, some would say, eroding into something quite different,² there is a need to pay attention to how such changes are affecting the security and policy choices of alliance members. This is especially true of the Balkans, given its history and its renewed prominence in the strategic perspective of several powerful actors, including the United States, the EU and Russia.

This paper offers a discussion of the nature of the alliance challenges for Romania and Bulgaria especially as regards the intersection of the issue of Turkish membership in the European Union and these states’ ties with the United States. The two states form a useful comparative set because of their similar but not identical recent histories and similar but again not identical patterns of participation, domestic politics and expectations that are likely to affect their alliance contributions.

During the Cold War both Romania and Bulgaria were members of the Warsaw Pact and the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). Both had been left on the Soviet side of the line dividing postwar Europe but Soviet troops were not a major presence in either country. (They were withdrawn from Bulgaria soon after World War II and from Romania in 1958.)

¹ See, for example, Rajan Menon, *The End of Alliances* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), Chs 2 & 3; David A. Lake, *Entangling Relations: America's Foreign Policy in its Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

² Andrew Michta, *The Limits of Alliance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006).

During the 1960's Romania began to develop a somewhat different foreign policy from that of Moscow--initiating relations with West Germany, for example, and accepting Most Favored Nation (MFN) status under a US Congressional review process that all the other communist states rejected. Generally Bucharest was careful not to challenge Moscow directly, though it did oppose the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia and maintained amicable relations with fiercely anti-Soviet China. Bulgaria on the other hand was supportive of Soviet views and initiatives and maintained the proper level of hostility toward the US and NATO.³

The changes of 1989 occurred differently in the two states. While the upheavals were unexpected in both cases, that in Romania was accompanied by deadly violence and the execution of the longtime tyrant, Nicolae Ceausescu. In both places, the ruling communists managed to restyle themselves and maintain their hold on power at least for a while. A substantial constituency was evident, especially on the countryside, for a continuation of the socialist legacy. Unlike Romania, however, Bulgarian society did not bring with it into the post-communist period the same level of hostility toward the former Soviet hegemony nor the strong sense of the illegitimacy of the Soviet-imposed regime as was the case in Romania.⁴

Both new regimes proclaimed their desire to move toward joining the European Union and, as a first step, joined the Council of Europe. Both signed Association Agreements with Brussels and then formally applied to join in 1995. Neither was among those anointed in the first round of negotiations begun in 1997 but were invited by the Helsinki European Council in 1999. When the rest of Central Europe (plus Malta and Cyprus) joined in 2004, Romania and Bulgaria were not included, having numerous serious issues unresolved, represented by the various

³ J. F. Brown, *Eastern Europe and Communist Rule* (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1988, Chs. 8 and 10.

⁴ On this point see, Blagovest Tashev, "In Search of Security: Bulgaria's Security Policy in Transition" in Tom Lansford and Blagovest Tashev, eds., *Old Europe, New Europe and the US* (Hampshire: Ashgate Pub., 2005), pp. 141-42.

chapters of the *acquis communautaire* that remained to be closed. After several other critical reports and delays, both were finally admitted at the start of 2007 but their admission was attended not only by various “safeguard clauses” which had applied to other new members, but also unprecedented “accompanying measures”. According to these measures, both states must meet performance standards in the fight against organized crime and corruption and in strengthening the independence of the judiciary. In these areas as well as in several key financial dimensions, e.g. use of agricultural and structural funds, both states were threatened with reduction or loss of funds for noncompliance.⁵

The two countries' approaches to NATO differed. In Romania both the government of the National Salvation Front and later the Social Democratic Party of Romania pushed for admission and moved quickly to try to ensure itself a place of entry in the first cohort. Romania was the first East European state to sign on to the Partnership for Peace Program in 1994; supported and joined the NATO-led peacekeeping effort in Bosnia in 1995; and initiated reform of the military. All of this was pursued under a left-of-center government headed by former communist leader Ion Iiescu. Bulgaria was also led by the Socialists during this time but moved much more slowly on reform, reflecting that party's hostility to NATO. With the election of Ivan Kostov in 1997 the country began to take more vigorous steps toward NATO.⁶ Like Romania, it supported the US-led bombing of Serbia in 1999 and contributed to the peacekeeping force in Kosovo.

Both countries also supported US-led military action in Afghanistan; provided bases for transshipment; and sent and maintained small numbers of troops there. As a result of behaving like “de facto allies”, both countries were invited to join NATO in 2002, which they did in 2004.

⁵ “Monitoring Report on the State of Preparedness for EU Membership of Bulgaria and Romania,” Communication from the Commission, Brussels, 26/09/2006.

⁶ Tashev, “In Search of Security,” pp. 127-50.

The Burdens of Having Allies

As involvement in Afghanistan showed, even before formally joining NATO, Bulgaria and Romania were asked to contribute to the collective defense effort led by the United States. The operation in Afghanistan was not formally a NATO action, despite the fact that NATO had invoked Article 5, offering collective defense in support of the United States. Instead, unhappy with the "war by committee" utilized against Serbia in 1999, the US chose to form a "coalition of the willing" to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.⁷

Nevertheless, NATO allies and eventually the alliance itself took over the rotating leadership of the International Security Force in Afghanistan and gradually expanded its area of operation.⁸ In this case, members of the other alliance these two states pined after, the EU, were united and supportive of the action in Afghanistan. Thus the costs of joining this action were relatively low.⁹ Even Russia, the former Cold War adversary, did not object to US deployment of US forces in and around Afghanistan, even in former Soviet republics in Central Asia.

The real challenge to these states' capacities and willingness to bear a collective burden came with the US-led effort to invade Iraq in 2003. Once again it was not a NATO action, but once again the US asked for and received political, logistical, and troop support from Romania and Bulgaria. This time, however, Europe was itself divided on the issue, with both long-time US allies (Germany) and long-time skeptics (France) strongly opposed to the US action. The latter even went so far as to criticize those EU applicant countries in the East who supported the

⁷ Michael Mihalka, "Conclusion: Values and Interests: European Support for the Intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq," in Tom Lansford and Blagovest Tashev, eds., *Old Europe, New Europe and the US* (Hampshire: Ashgate Pub., 2005), pp. 188-90.

⁸ On the evolution of NATO involvement in Afghanistan, see Menon, *The End of Alliances*, pp. 191-94.

⁹ On the costs of supporting NATO, see Ronald H. Linden, "Twin Peaks: Romania and Bulgaria between the EU and the United States," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 51: 5, September/October 2000, pp. 45-55.

US, saying they had “missed an opportunity to be quiet.”¹⁰

Domestically, supporting the war in Iraq was a simpler matter for Romania than Bulgaria. In the latter a tradition of positive feeling toward Russia, a strong Socialist Party challenge to the government, and public skepticism about NATO, the US, and George Bush made participation in the war unpopular.¹¹ Nevertheless, Bulgaria did support the US in Iraq and, like Romania, has allowed the US to use some of its military facilities. This provoked some demonstrations in Bulgaria though not in Romania, where the contingents passing through the Mikhail Kogalnicenau airbase near Constanta were expected to be somewhat larger, along with the attendant expenditure of US funds.

Supporting the US effort in Iraq is somewhat more problematic for these two new NATO members precisely because it is not a NATO action. It is a US policy, opposed by several of these countries’ NATO and EU allies and, in the Bulgarian case, by a substantial part of the public.¹² Thus to actively remain in Iraq not only puts the countries’ soldiers in harm’s way but more closely aligns the two states with the United States. Domestically this has produced some conflicting and sometimes contradictory actions. In Bulgaria, President Georgi Parvanov, formally not a member of a political party but most recently the leader of the Socialist Party, declared the war “unacceptable” even while a center-right government sent troops there.¹³ Bulgarian troops were withdrawn, in 2005, but later sent back.¹⁴

In Romania a center-right coalition won the parliamentary elections in 2004 and the

¹⁰ “Chirac Lashes out at ‘New Europe,’” CNN, www.cnn.com (February 18, 2003).

¹¹ Linden, “Twin Peaks,” p. 48.

¹² Rossen Vassilev, “Public Opinion and Bulgaria’s Involvement in the Iraq War,” *East European Quarterly*, XL: 4, December 2006, pp. 467-87. See also the discussion in Janusz Bugajski and Ilona Teleki, *Atlantic Bridges: America’s New European Allies* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), Ch. 6.

¹³ “Address to the Nation and the Members of the Bulgarian Assembly by Georgi Parvanov, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, 20-03-2003,” available at <http://www.president.bg/en/news.php?id=32&st=0>.

leader of one of the parties, Traian Basescu of the Democratic Party, won the presidency. However the coalition fractured almost immediately over numerous issues, especially the pace of reform and drive against the country's chronic corruption. Foreign policy has been one domain of this struggle. In 2006 and again in 2007, the Prime Minister, Calin Popescu-Tariceanu, called for the withdrawal of Romanian troops from Iraq while the president insisted they would stay.¹⁵ As has happened in other East Central European states since 1989, the battle is as much over the powers of the presidency as it is over the specific policies. While it would be incorrect to see foreign policy as the major axis of the intensely personal battle between Tariceanu and Basescu, the President is seen as hewing much closer to the US line in international affairs. His proclamation after he was elected that “The Washington-London-Bucharest axis will be a foreign policy priority for Romania's president”¹⁶ was often challenged by the government.¹⁷ The Prime Minister once headed Romania's effort to integrate into the EU and is seen as more favorable toward European concerns.¹⁸

Those concerns have placed a special burden on both Romania and Bulgaria. As noted, their acceptance into the alliance was slow, even grudging, and in the view of some, subject to harsher conditions than those imposed on the class of 2004.¹⁹ In Romania the membership process of the EU placed the issue of corruption at the forefront of the political battles and may

¹⁴ “Last Bulgarian Troops Leave Iraq Bulgaria,” RFE/RL, December 27, 2005; “Iraq Coalition Troops,” at: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_orbat_coalition.htm.

¹⁵ Reuters, June 29, 2006 [Boston.com, June 29, 2006]; RFE/RL.org, June 29, 2006. Novinite Sofia News Agency (www.novinite.com), March 26, 2007. See also Tariceanu's statement doubting “that a massive military presence could ever solve the problem in Iraq.” Rompres, Jan. 11, 2007 [*World News Connection*, Jan. 11, 2007].

¹⁶ Quoted in Eugen Tomiuc, “Romania: Basescu Wins Presidential Vote, Vows To Fight Corruption,” RFE/RL, December 13, 2004.

¹⁷ Calin Stoica Diaconovici, “Basescu's Axis Changing Course Toward Berlin,” *Evenimentul Zile* (Internet Version), August 31, 2006 [*World News Connection*, August 31, 2006].

¹⁸ Interview with Laurentiu Stefan-Scalat, Dept. of Political Science, University of Bucharest, Bucharest, April 12, 2007.

¹⁹ David Phinnemore, “Beyond 25—the Changing Face of EU Enlargement: Commitment, Conditionality, and the Constitutional Treaty,” *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, April 2006, esp. pp. 15–19.

have hurt President Basescu. He challenged the Romanian “oligarchs” who in addition to holding substantial economic interests also dominate the Romanian media.²⁰ The Justice Minister, Monica Macovei, in particular, was attacked in parliament for her efforts to secure meaningful reform although it was clear her efforts impressed the European Union.²¹ When the coalition fractured and Basescu was suspended in April, 2007 by a parliament dominated by the opposition, Macovei was replaced.²² Though Basescu handily won an obligatory referendum and thus retained the presidency, the underlying fissures between him and both his government and the parliament remain.

In Bulgaria, the impact of Brussels was, if anything, even greater. The ruling coalition came into being solely as a vehicle to take the country into the EU. Even by the weak standards one might apply to such a political marriage of convenience, the unlikely coalition of the Socialists, the NDSV (the National Movement Simeon II, the party of the former king) and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), the Turkish party, has worked badly. With little to knit them together ideologically and different constituencies, the coalition's governing capacity quickly disappeared.

Moreover, it has been challenged on the right by a populist anti-Turkish, Anti-EU and anti-US party, Ataka, which gained nearly nine percent in the 2005 parliamentary elections;²³ and by a political movement, Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (GERB)

²⁰ Laurentiu Stefan-Scalat, Department of Political Science, University of Bucharest, unpublished manuscript on “Oligarchs.”

²¹ Christopher Condon and George Parker, “Justice Minister's Corruption Crusade Puts Romania Back on Road to EU,” FT.com, May 15, 2006

²² Claudia Ciobanu, “ROMANIA: What are Intellectuals Doing with Politics?” Inter Press News Service Agency, May 8, 2007, <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=37591>.

²³ Venelin I. Ganev, “Ballots, Bribes, and State Building in Bulgaria,” *Journal of Democracy*, 17: 1. January 2006, esp. pp. 86-88.

headed by the mayor of Sofia, Boyko Borisov.²⁴ With regard to the EU, the major effect of this weakness has been to increase pressure on the government to try to renegotiate the entry arrangement with the EU under which it was obliged to close four nuclear reactors at Kozloduy.²⁵ In the country's first elections for the European Parliament, in May of 2007, GERB, whose leader Boyko Borisov has been critical of the government's negotiations, gathered the most votes.²⁶

A New Arena: The Black Sea

For Bulgaria and Romania, issues relating to the Black Sea region, many of which are new or newly recognized, have become part of the context of these countries' new alliance environment. As members of NATO since 2004 and the EU beginning in January 2007, these states are not free agents in responding to opportunities and dangers in this region. Instead, their unilateral preferences are structured by the expectations of their fellow allies as well as by their differing perspectives on how both those allies and the adversaries in the region are perceived.

The Black Sea is home to a remarkably diverse set of states and societies as measured along virtually any dimension of political and economic change.²⁷ Now center stage on a variety of strategic dimensions, the Black Sea is increasingly recognized by the EU, NATO and the

²⁴ Krassen Nikolov, "Mayor with Charisma Bids for Power in Bulgaria", Bulgarian National Radio, Dec. 04, 2006, http://www.bnr.bg/RadioBulgaria/Emission_English/Theme_Politics/Material/bbdr.htm.

²⁵ See President Parvanov's statement to this effect before the European Parliament, "Address by President Georgi Parvanov to the Members of the European Parliament 01-02-2007, (Brussels)", available at: <http://www.president.bg/en/news.php?type=3> and the proposal by Energy Minister Rumen Ovcharov, "Rumen Ovcharov Proposes a Plan for Saving Kozloduy npp Units 3 and 4," Published on January 26, 2007, Updated on January 30, 2007, available at http://www.bnr.bg/RadioBulgaria/Emission_English/Theme_BulgariaES/Material/rovchplan.htm. For Ataka's position on Kozloduy, see its website at http://www.ataka.bg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Item=29; for GERB's view, see the interview with Boiko Borisov, *Standart*, Feb. 2, 2007. [Translated by Deyan Peykov].

²⁶ Boiko Borisov, "Kuneva Should Protect Us from Expensive Electricity," *Standart*, February 2, 2007 [Meglena Kuneva was Bulgaria's Minister for Europe and European Commissioner for Consumer Protection]. Trans. by Deyan Peykov].

²⁷ Ronald H. Linden, "Balkan Geometry: Turkish Accession and the International Relations of Southeast Europe," *Orbis*, 51: Issue 2, Spring 2007, esp. pp. 332-34.

United States as an important strategic area.²⁸ While the region includes three NATO members, these states' views of what the US and NATO should be doing in the Black Sea differ sharply. Romania and Bulgaria--the only littoral countries who are members of both the EU and NATO--find themselves at the spear's point of any policies these respective organizations formulate to meet challenges emanating from this region. These include traditional military security, dangers of terrorism, and threats represented by trafficking in drugs, weapons and people²⁹ as well as the need for better cooperation in border management, energy, transport and economic development.³⁰ As members of NATO since 2004 and the EU beginning in January 2007, these two states' unilateral preferences are structured by the expectations of their fellow allies as well as by their own differing perspectives on the region.

While Bulgarian political leaders have been cautious,³¹ Romania's approach involves substantial activism and a clear preference for a strong "Euroatlantic strategy" in the region.³² Romania prefers a prominent US and NATO role; for example, Bucharest would prefer to see NATO's antiterrorist "Operation Active Endeavor" extended from the eastern Mediterranean to the Black Sea--an action strongly opposed by both Russia and Turkey.³³ In an attempt to raise its own profile, Romania took the lead in the Black Sea Border Initiative on proliferation in

²⁸ European Commission, "Black Sea Synergy - A New Regional Cooperation Initiative," COM (2007) 160. Brussels. See NATO Istanbul Summit Communiqué, June 28, 2004 at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm>; Mark Pekala, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, "Remarks at the 'Economic Development and Security in the Black Sea Region' Conference," Washington, DC, Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 31, 2006.

²⁹ Eugene B. Rumer and Jeffrey Simon, "Toward a Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region," National Defense University, Occasional Paper, 3, April 2006, p. 22.

³⁰ "Black Sea Synergy"

³¹ See "Interview with Bulgarian Prime Minister Sergey Stanishev" *Standart News* (Internet Version) May 15, 2007 [*World News Connection*, May 15, 2007], "Stanishev: There Is Politics of Tough-Guy Posturing," *BGNEWS*, April 27, 2007 [*World News Connection*, April 27, 2007].

³² Romania Presedintele, "Strategia de Securitate Nationala a Romaniei," [Romanian National Security Strategy], Bucharest, 2006, pp. 19-22. As of mid-2008 the Bulgarian parliament has not yet approved a new national security strategy.

2004; hosted a Black Sea Forum in 2006; and together with the German Marshall Fund, sponsored the creation of a public/private Black Sea Trust, all of which earned fulsome praise from the United States.³⁴ Indeed President Basescu's original "axis" notion of cooperation with Washington and London was explicitly explained in terms of "Romania's position in the Black Sea area."³⁵ Bulgaria is not so eager for a prominent US role and shows more concern over offending Russian sensibilities³⁶ than can be found in Romania, where suspicion over Russian designs are longstanding.

For their part, both Turkey and Russia have long seen the Black Sea as falling within their countries' spheres of interest. Moscow, for example, has been decidedly cool to EU initiatives on the Black Sea.³⁷ Despite the fact that Turkey is a NATO member while Russia, of course, is not, neither are welcoming of a large NATO or US presence.³⁸ Russia and Turkey are the predominant naval powers in the region³⁹--in 2004 Turkey launched its own naval operation,

³³ Interview with US embassy officials, Bucharest, April 10, 2007; Stephen Blank, "Black Sea Rivalry," *Perspective*, Vol. XVII, No. 2 (March-April) 2007, available online at: <http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol17/blank.html>.

³⁴ Pekala, "Remarks". Romania also took up organizational arrangements pushed by the United States. It hosts the headquarters of both the Southeast Europe Brigade, a 25,000-person force that has sent troops to Afghanistan, and the Southeast European Cooperation Initiative with a broad mandate in economic, environmental and anti-crime activities. See Jeffrey Simon, "Preventing Balkan Conflict: The Role of Euroatlantic Institutions," *Strategic Forum*, No. 226, April 2007.

³⁵ "Romania's Basescu Says 'Prioritizing' US-UK-Bucharest Axis 'Justified,'" *Rompres*, January 11, 2005 [*World News Connection*, January 12, 2005].

³⁶ While in Moscow in April, 2007, Prime Minister Stanishev was careful to publicly reassure Russia that in Bulgaria war memorials, commemorating both the Russo-Turkish war and World War II, would be maintained. ITAR-TASS, May 8, 2007 [*World News Connection*, May 8, 2007].

³⁷ Andre Rittman, "EU's new Black Sea Policy Faces Russian Misgivings," *euobserver.com*, Feb. 16, 2007; "Russian Federation Distances Itself From Black Sea Euro-Region Project Proposed by Romania," *Rompres*, March 31, 2006 [*World News Connection*, March 31, 2006].

³⁸ Blank, "Black Sea Rivalry"; Suat Kiniklioglu, "Struggling was the Black Sea," *Turkish Daily News*, June 16, 2006; republished by German Marshall Fund at http://www.gmfus.org/publications/article.cfm?id=194&parent_type=P. At the Black Sea Forum in 2006 most attendees were represented by Presidents or Prime Ministers. Bulgaria sent the Foreign Minister, Turkey sent a Minister of State and Russia was represented by an observer, its ambassador to Romania. Vladimir Socor, "Black Sea Forum Seeking Its Rationale," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, June 8, 2006, available at http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2371162.

³⁹ Hryhorii Perepelytsya, "Military and Naval Balance in the Black Sea Region," in Oleksandr Pavliuk and Ivanna Klymush-Tsintsadze, eds., *The Black Sea Region: Cooperation and Security Building* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2004), pp. 191-210.

Black Sea Harmony, designed to duplicate (and make unnecessary) Operation Active Endeavor in the Black Sea.⁴⁰ In addition, Russia and Turkey play a crucial role in the global distribution of energy from the region (see below).

For both Romania and Bulgaria the issue of how to contribute to the security environment of the Black Sea is likely to become more, not less, prominent. Since 2001, the US has dramatically shifted its strategic interests toward the Middle East and southwest and central Asia.⁴¹ This shift, exemplified by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, brought with it expectations that the states of the “new Europe”--especially those geographically closer to key regions--would make contributions to these struggles.

For Romania, there will be special complications. The Black Sea region has been home to several “frozen conflicts:” until recently, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, and Transnistria in Moldova, all of which are accompanied by significant Russian involvement. The leadership in Bucharest has been eager to see Russian influence and troops removed from the self-declared “Transnistrian Republic” in eastern Moldova, for example, and will not want to give Moscow any pretext for either obstructing a settlement or, even more worrisome, taking more aggressive action there. With Vladimir Putin already demonstrating his willingness to challenge US influence, Romania's eagerness to embrace Washington is unlikely to make Moscow more forthcoming on Moldova.

⁴⁰ Eugene B. Rumer and Jeffrey Simon, “Toward a Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region,” National Defense University, Occasional Paper, 3, (April), 2006, p. 22. Mevlut Katik, “Geopolitical Competition Heats up in Black Sea,” Eurasianet.org, March 10, 2006.

The Energy Tangle

An important aspect of the heightened significance of the Black Sea region is its rise to prominence as a source of Europe's energy. Fully 25% of Europe's oil comes from Russia, much of that shipped from Novorossiysk and other ports by tanker across the Black Sea and into the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus. Roughly 28% of all of Russia's oil exports reach market via the Black Sea.⁴² These straits are controlled by Turkey--the same Turkey that has been endlessly and occasionally bluntly put off for EU membership.

Moreover, the increasing traffic, environmental concerns, and limitations of the Russian state-controlled energy system and the physical limitations of Novorossiysk make this an increasingly fragile route.⁴³ But Turkey is also crucial as the terminus of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, which pumps Caspian Sea oil and bypasses both the Bosphorus and Russia. Europe is also substantially dependent on Russia for natural gas, receiving roughly 50% of its imports from Russia. Newer members are even more dependent; Bulgaria, for example, meets 85% of its domestic needs with Russian gas. Most of the gas arrives in Europe via the pipelines through central or northern Europe but it was learned in 2006 that supplies to the West could be disrupted by disputes between the chief supplier and states that are not even part of the EU, such as Ukraine.⁴⁴

The EU has belatedly begun to move toward "harmonizing" an energy strategy, a process that involves the contradictory goals of trying to secure Russia as a reliable supplier while also supplanting it with other sources. Judging from the German-Russian deal on a pipeline under the

⁴¹ Amy Myers Jaffe and Ronald Soligo, "Re-evaluating US Strategic Priorities in the Caspian Region: Balancing Energy Resource Initiatives with Terrorism Containment," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17: 2, July, 2004, pp. 255-68.

⁴² Energy Information Administration at: http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Russia/Oil_exports.html.

⁴³ Bernard A. Gelb, "Russian Oil and Gas Challenges," *CRS Report for Congress*, January 3, 2006.

⁴⁴ Energy Information Administration (<http://www.eia.doe.gov>) *Country Analysis Briefs, Russia*, pp. 10-11.

Baltic, and another one from Burgas, Bulgaria to Alexandroupoulos, Greece, the immediate result may be an increase in Europe's dependence and division among the alliance members.⁴⁵ Still, new efforts like the recently signed “Pan-European” oil pipeline stretching from Constanta, Romania to Trieste, Italy hold out at least the promise of bypassing both the Bosphorus and Russian supply.⁴⁶ But this agreement took five years to go from proposal to agreement and will take four more to be completed.⁴⁷ At the same time, a gas pipeline aimed at bringing Caspian gas via Turkey and Central Europe to the west, the Nabucco pipeline, had, until recently, been stalled over the apparent Hungarian preference for a Gazprom-led consortium that would extend the existing “Blue Stream” pipeline, bringing gas from Russia to Turkey, into West Europe.⁴⁸ Finally, the recent war in the Caucasus has not improved the security or financial environment for Caucasus-based transit pipelines.

This geographical and supplier dependence has implications for NATO, the EU and the new allies. Will the countries of these alliances, heavily dependent on energy supplied by an increasingly assertive, nationalistic and quasidemocratic Russia, be aggressive, or even firm, in asserting their values or protecting their the new allies when the energy spigot is controlled by the very authorities they are trying to push? Some critical observers suggest that Europe's less than fulsome response to Russia's “bullying” of Estonia over the relocation of a monument to

⁴⁵ Vladimir Socor, “Baltic Seabed Gas Pipeline Project: Far from a Done Deal,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, May 22, 2007; “A bear at the throat.” *Economist.com*, April 12, 2007, p. 2; “Russia Clinches Balkan Oil Deal,” *BBC News*, March 15, 2007.

⁴⁶ “Commission Gives its Support to a Pipeline which will Limit Oil Pollution Risks in Black and Mediterranean Seas,” Brussels, April 3, 2007. “Black Sea Oil pipeline to Start Flowing by 2012,” *Euractiv.com*, April 4, 2007, updated May 11, 2007. See the discussion in Vladimir Socor, “Constanta-Trieste Pipeline Proposal for Kazakhstan’s Oil,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, August 3, 2006.

⁴⁷ “Croatia, Romania, Serbia Sign Pan-European Oil Pipeline Agreement,” *SETimes*, 23/04/008
http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2008/04/23/feature-01.

⁴⁸ Ariel Cohen, “Russian Energy: US Ponders Counter-Moves,” *Transitions Online*, April 6, 2007. In September 2007 the Hungarian government switched its position to announce its “total support” for the Nabucco pipeline. *Financial Times*, Sept. 18, 2007, p. 2.

fallen Soviet soldiers provides the answer.⁴⁹

This puts all of the new NATO allies in a similar bind. But for Black Sea littoral countries Romania and Bulgaria, the situation is especially delicate. Both countries have stated their desire for greater diversity in their energy suppliers--though Romania has once again been much more assertive on this point.⁵⁰ And both countries are, in theory, in a position to do something about this as both could be home to pipelines bringing oil or gas from Central Asia to west Europe.

But both are also in competition to offer Bosphorus bypass routes for Russian oil. As noted, Bulgaria has already signed such a deal for the construction and operation of a pipeline running from Burgas to Alexandroupoulos. This was signed with much fanfare as it was expected to secure Bulgaria's place as a transit country and its access to a steady supply of fuel at stable prices.⁵¹ However the fuel it is processing and shipping will come from Russia; the pipeline will be built and majority-owned by Russia and the profits will go--disproportionately in the minds of at least some Bulgarian critics,--to Russia.⁵² And the deal does nothing to reduce Bulgaria's virtually total dependence on Russia for its energy imports.

Moreover, at the same time this deal was signed, Bulgaria agreed to purchase two Russian built nuclear reactors which, presumably, will help replace the nuclear power Bulgaria

⁴⁹ Vladimir Socor, "Russian Strategy, EU Drift in Estonia," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, May 8, 2007. At one point Estonian President Toomas Ilves accused unnamed EU members of pursuing an "appeasement policy" toward Russia. EUBusiness.com, July 12, 2007.

⁵⁰ "Romanian President Accuses Russia of Using Energy to Achieve Political Aims," *Interfax*, Nov. 17, 2006 [*The World News Connection*, Nov. 17, 2006]. Vladimir Socor reports that in a speech to the Jamestown Foundation in August, 2006 Basescu declared that Gazprom was "more efficient than the Red Army used to be." *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, November 21, 2006.

⁵¹ Interview with Bulgarian Prime Minister.

⁵² Interview with Ilin Stanev, Editor, Foreign Desk, *Capital*, Sofia, April 17, 2007; Ivan Kostov, former Prime Minister and leader of an opposition party in parliament, Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria, was especially critical. See "Ivan Kostov: The Bulgarian Energy is Dependent on Russia and this is Becoming More Irreversible," BTV, Feb. 5, 2007. For the government's defense, see "We Expect \$35 Million per Year from Burgas-Alexandroupoulos," *Sega*, Feb. 8, 2007 [both translated by Deyan Peykov].

lost when it was obliged by the EU to shut down four reactors at Kozloduy. The movement of Bulgaria, an EU and NATO member, toward much closer cooperation with Russia was a cause for some criticism and protests during the January 2008 visit to Bulgaria of Russian president Vladimir Putin.⁵³

While not as dependent on Russia as Bulgaria is--especially with regard to natural gas--Romania too wants to be a transit country. President Basescu has been especially frank in urging Europe to secure its independence from Russian energy.⁵⁴ The Constanta-Trieste pipeline plan was a major success in oil and the Nabucco gas pipeline, with Romania as a key link, could be as well.

The energy part of the equation puts Romania and Bulgaria in competition with each other, their new EU allies, e.g. Hungary, Greece, and their new NATO ally Turkey. For the latter, Romania has a different picture of its preferred strategic environment in the Black Sea, one with a more prominent US and NATO role than Turkey prefers. Thus on both energy and overall strategic objectives, the expectation of inter-alliance cooperation with Turkey is likely to be low. All of this is in play even before the issue of EU membership for Turkey.

Turkey and the EU

The issue of Turkish membership in the EU itself is beyond the scope of this paper⁵⁵ but there are ramifications for Romania and Bulgaria of the most recent Turkish attempts to realize a

⁵³ "Bulgarians Protest Russia's Energy Policy," *International Herald Tribune*, January 18, 2008, <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/01/18/europe/EU-GEN-Bulgaria-Putin-Protests.php>. Elitsa Grancharova, "Anti-Putin Protest on Sofia's Orlov Most," *The Sofia Echo*, January 17, 2008.

⁵⁴ FT.com, January 19, 2007

⁵⁵ The literature on the subject is substantial and growing rapidly. Useful discussions can be found in Burak Akcapar, *Turkey's New European Era* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield 2007); Ziya Onis, "Turkey's Encounters with the New Europe: Multiple Transformations, Inherent Dilemmas, and the Challenges Ahead," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, 8: 3, December, 2006, pp. 279-98; Steve Wood and Wolfgang Quaisser, "Turkey's Road to the EU: Political

long held dream of joining Europe. The nature of EU commitments to these two states may have pushed the EU's "absorption capacity" to the breaking point, at least judging by recent EU leadership rhetoric and negative votes in France and Holland on the proposed EU constitution.

Even though Russia and Bulgaria weathered a longer and more exacting process than other central and eastern European states, they were not particularly welcomed by the European public. The EU itself may have been trapped, as Frank Schimmelfennig argues,⁵⁶ by its own rhetoric and accepted these two candidates before they were fully ready. Evidence for this is the adoption of the "accompanying measures" by which the EU continues to monitor Romanian and Bulgarian behavior.⁵⁷ It is also possible that the scrutiny which these two states endured was in part a signal to Turkey that its behavior would also be subject to special examination.⁵⁸

Before formal admission, leadership in both countries showed some apprehension that if they failed, they would be left behind among "problematic" countries, like Turkey. Nevertheless both, officially at least, still support Turkish membership, eventually. For Romania, Turkish membership presents few challenges. Turkey is already a major investor and trading partner for Romania; there is only a small and uninfluential Turkish minority in the country⁵⁹ and Romanian history tells a story at least as fearful of domination by Russia as by Turkey. Nor do Romanians indicate much concern about a putative "Turkish plumber" coming to take Romanians jobs if free movement of labor is allowed. Still, Bucharest has been careful to hew

Dynamics, Strategic Context and Implications for Europe," *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 10 (2005).

⁵⁶ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

⁵⁷ Sensitive to the fact that Romania and Bulgaria are now EU member-states, the unprecedented process under which these two countries submit reports is called the "Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification for Romania and Bulgaria." A description of the process and the first reports can be accessed at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/cvm/index_en.htm.

⁵⁸ Linden, "Balkan Geometry," p. 344.

⁵⁹ Ervin Ibrahim, Head of Turkish Community in Romania, estimates the Turkish minority in Romania at 100,000, ninety percent of whom live in the Dobrogea region. Interview, April 11, 2007, Bucharest.

closely to the EU line on Turkey even as it moves toward greater caution.⁶⁰

For Bulgaria, however, it is a different story. Bulgarian history into the twentieth century is one of challenges to and repression by Ottoman rule. The "Turkish yoke" is an almost automatic phrase that emerges in any discussion of Bulgarian-Turkish relations. A substantial ethnically Turkish and religiously Muslim population currently estimated at seven to eight hundred thousand lives in the country. During the communist period, the regime of Todor Zhivkov undertook a brutal "name-change" assimilation campaign accompanied by broader repression and pressures to leave, policies that were reversed only when the regime fell in 1989.⁶¹

Ethnically Turkish Bulgarian citizens live primarily in the southeastern part of the country where the party of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) led by Ahmed Dogan is a formidable and well organized political force. While not formally an ethnic party, which would be illegal under Bulgarian law, the party is overwhelmingly Turkish and has been dominated by Dogan for years. It has been part of governments of the left and the right and is currently part of the hydra-headed coalition that includes the King's party and the Socialists. With a virtual monopoly on the Turkish vote, the party holds enormous power to create and dissolve governments, especially since in recent times the center-right, once dominated by the Union of Democratic Forces, has disintegrated. Critics accuse the MRF of undemocratic and corrupt practices⁶² and its leader is locked in a bitter feud with its one-time ally, former Prime Minister Ivan Kostov.

⁶⁰ "Turkey Has Right to Join EU When it Meets its Standards,' Says President Basescu," *Rompres*, Feb. 15, 2007 [*World News Connection*, Feb. 15, 2007]

⁶¹ Diaz Anagnostou, "Nationalist Legacies and European Trajectories: Post-communist Liberalization and Turkish Minority Politics in Bulgaria," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 5: 1, January, 2005, pp. 89-111.

⁶² Ognyan Minchev, *The Case of Turkey in the EU* (Sofia: Institute for Regional and International Studies, 2006), pp. 12-13; see also Ganev, "Ballots, Bribes and State Building in Bulgaria," pp. 84-87.

Thus, Bulgarian attitudes toward Turkish membership in the EU are closely interwoven with attitudes toward Dogan and the MRF. For example, Turkey is accused of using the MRF to exercise influence on Bulgaria from within.⁶³ In a nightmare--but fairly common--scenario, southeast Bulgaria would be “Cypriotized” and eventually dominated by or even taken over by Turkey using the Turkish minority as its wedge. A Bulgarian variant of the unrecognized Turkish Federal Republic of Cyprus would come into being.

Such arguments are not simply the purview of populist anti-Turkish parties such as Ataka⁶⁴ but are seen in more mainstream analyses. In his discussion of “Bulgaria and Turkey's Membership in the EU,” political scientist Ognyan Minchev writes,

If the Bulgarian state and civil society cannot succeed in breaking up the ethno-corporate political monopoly of the MRF, in a mid-term perspective Bulgaria will be subjected to the eroding effects of the combined influence of: a) growing territorial autonomy of ethnically mixed regions, b) an expanding Turkish-Muslim immigration wave, c) the increasing of a foreign agency's control in the institutions and d) growing weakening and paralyzing of the state from within in its efforts to resist the attempts of this slow, silent but increasingly difficult to reverse expansion. In a certain future, but not very distant moment, this expansion will openly serve the Turkish nationalist strategy for geopolitical retribution and hegemonic control over the Balkans. A supple immigration wave from our southern neighbor will rapidly transform ethnic proportions in Bulgaria, making them similar to those in Cyprus, and the ethno-political control of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms as “a state within a state” will lead to political “lebanonization”/“cypriotization” of the Bulgarian state.⁶⁵

Critics of the government's position, such as Kostov and Minchev, say that Bulgaria is particularly vulnerable to the demographic as well as political implications of Turkish membership. After reports of “voting tourism” by Bulgarian Turks living in Turkey, the

⁶³ “DSB: Bulgarian Interests to be 'Badly Harmed' by Turkey Premature EU Membership,” BTA, May 2, 2007 [*World News Connection*, May 2, 2006]; Interview with Ivan Kostov, April 13, 2007, Sofia.

⁶⁴ “After Parvanov, Turkey Gave a Medal to Dogan,” ATAKA, Jan. 16, 2007 [Trans. by Deyan Peykov].

⁶⁵ Minchev, *The Case of Turkey in the EU*, p. 15.

National Assembly at first passed a measure restricting voting in the 2007 elections for the European Parliament to those who had lived in the country for three months prior to the elections--effectively barring expatriate Bulgarian Turks from voting. But after the MRF, a part of the governing coalition, walked out of parliament, the residency restriction was dropped in favor of a citizenship requirement.⁶⁶

The labor argument is less persuasive to others, who point out that the country is in fact losing population, especially young workers, so Bulgaria should not fear but welcome Turkish workers. “Who will pay for our pension system?” asks former Prime Minister Filip Dimitrov.⁶⁷ In any case, Turkish workers are already in the country and are highly prized for the quality of their work.⁶⁸ Further, many suggest that it is in Bulgaria's interests not to be the “frontier of Europe” i.e., it would be better for Turkey to be that frontier.⁶⁹ Still, public support for Turkish membership is very low according to one recent poll, even though the public supports enlargement in general.⁷⁰

Thus in this case, the Bulgarian government may find itself in a potential squeeze with some of its allies due as much to domestic politics as to external factors. As an EU member, Sofia officially supports Turkish candidacy. That is the position of all the parties in the governing coalition. But two of the parties of the coalition are weaker than they had been assuming, as evidenced by the recent European Parliament elections. The Socialists fell from

⁶⁶ “MRF MP's Leave Plenary Hall after Second-reading Vote of MEP Election Bill”, BTA, Feb. 14, 2007; “No New Rules for Bulgarian Expats in MEP Polls,” *Dnevnik*, Feb. 23, 2007 [Bulgaria in EU Press Center].

⁶⁷ Interview with Filip Dimitrov, Deputy Speaker of Parliament, and former Prime Minister, UDF, April 13, 2007, Sofia.

⁶⁸ See “Interview with [Prime Minister] Sergey Stanishev,” *Sega*, March 7, 2007 in which he defends the government against attacks that EU project money was going to Turkish firms. [Trans. by Deyan Peykov.]

⁶⁹ This view was put forth by Mihail Mikov, Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the Coalition for Bulgaria, the Socialists' group, and Biliana Raeva of the NDSV, the King's party, both of whose parties are part of the current government coalition. Both interviewed in Sofia, April 19, 2007.

⁷⁰ Boriana Dimitrova, “The First Year in the EU – Delayed Optimism?” *Dnevnik*, Jan 1, 2008 (<http://evropa.dnevnik.bg/show/?storyid=410890>).

their 2005 National Assembly percentage of 34% to 21%, and the King's party, which had won nearly 22% in 2005, won just over 6% of the vote. On the other hand, the MRF, with 20%, improved their standing compared to their typical National Assembly support (14%).⁷¹ GERB, the leading vote getter, officially supports Turkish membership⁷² while the opposition DSB does not, and had called for a referendum on the issue. The DSB fared poorly, prompting Ivan Kostov to resign as its head. However, the election did not turn on the Turkish issue and was more a vote on Bulgarian parties' performance and on politics in general as reflected in a low turnout of 28%.⁷³ Antiestablishment, populist parties like GERB and Ataka (with 14%) together gained the votes of more than one-third of the electorate.

In such a weak position the government may decide, as it has done on Kozloduy, that favoring Turkish membership is not a winning position in the competition for votes.⁷⁴ A visit by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan in March 2008 was met with demonstrations organized by Ataka and in the same month Turkey froze its participation in an EU cross-border project after the Burgas city council passed a resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide.⁷⁵ Backsliding on this issue could put Bulgaria at odds with the United States, which is a strong supporter of Turkish membership in the EU. Along with doubts about the war in Iraq and wariness about a US presence in the Black Sea, disagreement on Turkey will not help alliance cooperation.

⁷¹ Official results are at: <http://www.izbori2007.eu/results/>.

⁷² Interview with Nikolay Mladenov, advisor to Boyko Borisov, leader of GERB, Sofia, April 17, 2007. In the May elections Mladenov was elected to the European Parliament.

⁷³ "Sofia's Mayor's Party Emerges Winner in Bulgaria's European Polls with 100% of Vote Talled," BNN, May 2, 2007.

⁷⁴ In 2008 GERB supported an amendment to the 2007 Progress Report on Turkey insisting that Turkey reopen negotiations with Bulgaria to compensate Bulgarians expelled from Thrace in 1913 after the Second Balkan War. The motion was supported by GERB. The resolution was introduced by Ataka but supported by GERB.

Kosovo

Probably no challenge to the new alliance members has been greater than that presented by developments in Kosovo. Both Romania and Bulgaria supported the US position in 1999 politically and logistically, allowing US overflights during the bombing attacks on Serbia and preventing Russian flights. Bulgaria even suffered an accidental American bombing. Both contributed to the NATO-led force that has been in Kosovo since the end of the fighting.

In early 2007 after long and fruitless negotiations between the Albanian leadership of Kosovo and Belgrade, UN special envoy for Kosovo Martti Ahtisaari presented his plan to the UN Security Council for the future of the region. With Russia vigorously opposed to the UN plan and able to veto it, the Albanians reluctantly agreed to pursue one more set of negotiations over the future of the province. These talks ended in December 2007 without success and in February 2008 Kosovo declared its independence. Despite the lack of a new mandate from the UN Security Council--impossible because of a likely Russian veto--the EU is going ahead with a proposed 1800-person justice and police force for the province, designated as EULEX.⁷⁶ NATO will continue to provide security with KFOR.⁷⁷

For Romania and Bulgaria, Kosovo presents several thorny problems. The EU and NATO are the birth parents of Kosovo's independence and both organizations have reasserted their presence and institutional support. Several pre-accession EU members, including Spain and Greece, as well as newer members Cyprus and Slovakia have indicated they will not recognize

⁷⁵ A similar resolution was rejected at the national level.

⁷⁶ "Council Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP of February 4, 2008 on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULEX Kosovo" *Official Journal of the European Union*, 16.2.2008, pp. 1 42/92-98. "Council Conclusions on Kosovo," Brussels, February 18, 2008. The view of the EU is that the original resolution ending the war against Serbia in 1999, UN Security Council Resolution 1244, establishes the legality of their mission.

⁷⁷ NATO, "Statement by the North Atlantic Council after Kosovo's Declaration of Independence", Feb. 18, 2008 (<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-025e.html>); NATO, "Final Communiqué Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Held at NATO Headquarters." Dec. 7, 2007 (<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2007/p07-130e.html>)

the new state. Two of Kosovo's Balkan neighbors, Romania and Bulgaria, have their own historical and contemporary reasons to be concerned about Kosovo and the new situation their alliances helped create has not made their lives any easier.

Romania in particular is concerned about the precedent set in Kosovo insofar as it might apply to Transdnistria, the breakaway region in extreme eastern Moldova. Here, too, a minority in terms of the whole country (Russians and Ukrainians) have established *de facto* independence using as their pretext the claim that the Moldovan government's policies, especially that of a possible of union with Romania, threaten the Russian/Ukrainian minority. Led by a self-proclaimed government in Tirasopol, they fought a brief war against Chisinau and since 1992 have effectively ruled the territory. Moreover, they remain in power under the watchful eye and protection of the Russian 14th army, which has remained despite Moscow's pledges to withdraw it. If Kosovo can, with the blessings of the United States and the EU, achieve independence, then, its leaders ask, why not Transdnistria?⁷⁸

While explicitly rejecting the application of such a precedent, Romania has nevertheless expressed concern about an "avalanche" of separatist claims including Transdnistria.⁷⁹ Repeating this before the Romanian parliament, Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu also reasserted the longstanding Romanian position against the existence of "collective rights." He pointedly reminded "all citizens of Romania" that the country is a "unitary state"⁸⁰ This reflects the worry in Bucharest that some among the 1.9 million-strong Hungarian community, living

⁷⁸ "Kosovo Precedent for Transdnistria, says Pres." *The Tirasopol Times*, May 18, 2007, <http://www.tiraspoltimes.com/node/858>. Igor Smirnov, "We Have a Stronger Case for Statehood than Kosovo", *The Tirasopol Times*, March 6, 2007, <http://www.tiraspoltimes.com/node/624>.

⁷⁹ "Kosovo Issue Solution Should Not Set Precedent for Other Areas: Romanian PM", *Xinhua*, May 13, 2007 [*Romania International Media Watch*, May 13, 2007]; "Serbian Foreign Minister Pays Visit to Bucharest," *Rompres*, January 21, 2008. [*World News Connection*, Jan. 21, 2008].

⁸⁰ "Romanian President, Cabinet, Parliament Agree on Rejecting Kosovo Independence," *Rompres*, Feb. 19, 2008 [BBC Monitoring, Feb. 19, 2008].

mostly in Transylvania, might take international support for Kosovo as a sign that they can successfully create for themselves, if not independence, at least greater autonomy within Romania.

Indeed, in January 2008 when the National Council of the Szeklers, part of the Hungarian minority in Romania, announced that it would hold such a referendum, this set off alarm bells in Romania⁸¹; combined with concerns about Transdnistria, this explains the unusually unified position of the Romanian president, prime minister, and parliament against Kosovo independence.⁸² When independence was declared, President Traian Basescu labeled it “illegal,” a sentiment echoed by the Prime Minister.⁸³

Bulgaria also expressed concerns about the possible impact of Kosovo independence on the region's stability. Some worried that the Albanians of western Macedonia, who number roughly twenty-five percent of the country's population, would be given encouragement to fight for their own independence or to break away in order to join the newly sovereign Kosovo. A violent movement of Albanians in Macedonia raised this prospect in 2001 but since the signing of the Ohrid Agreement that year Albanians have been part of several Macedonian governments. By most accounts things have improved but grievances remain.⁸⁴ As Bulgarian Foreign Minister Ivaylo Kalfin envisioned in January 2008, “Another bad scenario would be if Kosovo’s

⁸¹ “Basescu: I Believe It Is out of the Question that Ethnic Hungarians Plan Independence,” *Rompres*, Dec. 19, 2007 [*World News Connection*, Dec. 19, 2007]; Eliza Francu, “Kosovo—Intravenous Serum for Nationalists,” *Gandul*, Dec. 12, 2007 [*World News Connection*, Dec. 12, 2007].

⁸² Both President Traian Basescu and Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu announced at the Brussels EU summit in December 2007 that Romania would not recognize an independent Kosovo. *Rompres*, Dec. 17, 2007 [*World News Connection*, Dec. 17, 2007]; *Rompres*, Dec. 14, 2007 [*World News Connection*, Dec. 14, 2007]. See also “Romanian President, Cabinet, Parliament Agree on Rejecting Kosovo Independence.”

⁸³ “Romania’s President Says Kosovo’s Declaration of Independence Illegal,” *SeeNews*, Feb. 18, 2008; “Romania Says Kosovo Independence ‘Illegal’: Report” *AFP*, Feb. 18, 2008; “Romanian President, Cabinet, Parliament Agree on Rejecting Kosovo Independence.”

⁸⁴ Armend Reka, “The Ohrid Agreement: The Travails of Inter-Ethnic Relations in Macedonia,” *Human Rights Review*, Vol. 9, 2008, pp. 55-69; “Edging Beyond Ethnicity,” *Transitions Online*, Sept. 4, 2006.

problems were to spill over into neighboring countries. Then we might have to start setting up new borders in the Balkans.”⁸⁵

Even if that does not happen, those in Bulgaria who retain the ideas that Macedonians are in fact Bulgarians; that the state was a communist fiction; and that at least some of that country should be part of Bulgaria, will be strengthened. While it is unlikely such views would characterize those in power or be put into practice, the last eighteen months have seen a growing prominence of nationalist sentiment in the country. The Ataka party, for example, went from not being represented at all in parliament to having twenty-one seats. In the 2007 elections for the European Parliament, Ataka won fourteen percent of the vote, some 45% higher than it had had in the national elections of 2005. Especially given the collapse of the center-right coalition and the exhaustion of political alternatives in Bulgaria, and the failures of the left, the right, and the King's party, an upsurge of nationalism focusing on Macedonia cannot be ruled out.

Sofia strongly supported the doomed Ahtisaari plan⁸⁶ and hoped for the creation of a common EU position toward Kosovo⁸⁷ and the effective movement forward of Serbia toward EU association and membership.⁸⁸ Before its declaration of independence Bulgaria indicated that it would be very cautious about recognizing Kosovo.⁸⁹ In any event, it acted rather

⁸⁵ “Interview with Bulgarian Foreign Minister Ivaylo Kalfin,” *24 Chasa*, Jan. 18, 2008 [*World News Connection*, Jan. 18, 2008].

⁸⁶ See for example, “Bulgaria Supports Ahtisaari’s Plan”, KosovaLive News Agency, Dec. 28, 2007 [*World News Connection*, Dec. 28, 2007].

⁸⁷ “Bulgaria, Hungary Call for Common EU Position on Kosovo,” AFP, Feb. 5, 2008 [*World News Connection*, Feb. 5, 2008].

⁸⁸ “Bulgarian Foreign Minister to Visit Belgrade, Pristina on December 18, 19” BTA, Dec. 10, 2007 [*World News Connection*, Dec. 10, 2007].

⁸⁹ In December Bulgarian Foreign Minister Kalfin said a declaration of independence by Kosovo would be “a bad move.” “Bulgaria, Serbia Maintain Dynamic Relations,” BTA, Dec. 18, 2007 [*World News Connection*, Dec. 18, 2007]; in January, 2008 President Georgi Parvanov said Bulgaria would “not be among the states to immediately recognize an independent Kosovo,” “Kosovo Independence Bid Eyed Warily by Several EU States,” AFP, Feb. 2, 2008 [*World News Connection*, Feb. 2, 2008].

promptly, recognizing Kosovo roughly one month after its independence was declared.⁹⁰ The decision was broadly unpopular--74% were opposed according to one survey⁹¹ and sharply criticized from a variety of angles. One commentator raised the specter of “pan-Albanianism”:

The Kosovo question is part of the so-called Albanian national question which became particularly prominent in the last decade of the last century and in the first decade of this century. It contains significant destabilizing potential which makes it a threat to Bulgarian national security, the regional security on the Balkans, and Europe's security as a whole.⁹²

Others accused the government of being “ruled by foreign forces”⁹³ and “behaving like a banana republic.”⁹⁴ In parliament Ataka tried to delay recognition of “another newly created Islamic state in Europe.”⁹⁵ Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev defended the government's action as consistent with Bulgarian national interests and peace and stability in the region. “The worst decision for Bulgaria,” he said, “would have been a frozen conflict without international presence and surveillance since this would mean instability in the region as a whole.”⁹⁶

Thus both Romania and Bulgaria find themselves pulled one way by international allies and another by national-level concerns. Both are EU and NATO members and US allies; Brussels and Washington have strongly supported Kosovo independence while both

⁹⁰ See the Bulgarian government statement, March 20, 2008, at <http://www.government.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0137&n=000575&g=>.

⁹¹ *Sega*, March 25th 2008 (<http://www.segabg.com/online/article.asp?issueid=2927§ionId=5&id=0000911>).

⁹² Alexander Boyanov, “Kosovo: The Most Expensive Failed Project,” *Sega*, March 27th, 2008 (<http://www.segabg.com/online/article.asp?issueid=2930§ionId=5&id=0001001>).

⁹³ Boiko Lambovski, “Tumors of Democracy” *Sega*, March 25th, 2008 (<http://www.segabg.com/online/article.asp?issueid=2927§ionId=5&id=0001101>).

⁹⁴ Svetoslav Terziev, “Kosovo Will Recognize Us for a Banana Republic,” *Sega*, March 20th 2008 (<http://www.segabg.com/online/article.asp?issueid=2921§ionId=5&id=0000902>).

⁹⁵ Galia Gorianova, “Kosovo Spurs Heated Debate in Parliament,” *Sega*, February 14th, 2008 (<http://www.segabg.com/online/article.asp?issueid=2886§ionId=2&id=0000302>).

⁹⁶ Bulgarian government statement.

Serbia and Russia have rejected it. Romania in particular finds itself in a squeeze, caught between fears about fragmentation of Moldova and growing Russian influence in the region, its concerns about a large national minority at home, and the clear preferences of both its international organizational partners, the EU and NATO, and its major ally, the US.

Reflecting the multiple cross-cutting pressures both countries face, the Romanian parliament in December 2007 passed a declaration saying that Romania's position on Kosovo "should take into account the precedent on a regional and international level as well as the responsibilities taken by Romania as NATO and EU member state."⁹⁷ Attempting to square this circle, Bucharest agreed to keep its contingent in Kosovo as part of KFOR, but said it would not increase it⁹⁸ though initially Basescu had said Romania would "not take part in peacekeeping in a country that it does not recognize."⁹⁹ In addition, the government agreed to take part in the EULEX mission on the grounds that "it was decided to send the EULEX mission to Kosovo before independence was proclaimed."¹⁰⁰

Thus, while Bulgaria has a much closer historical association with--and greater energy dependence on--Russia, it has nevertheless rejected Moscow's view and recognized Kosovo while, ironically, Romania, always eager to assure NATO, the EU, and the US that it is an enthusiastic and supportive ally, and much more suspicious of Russia, finds itself taking positions that are closer to those of Moscow than those of Brussels or Washington.

⁹⁷ "Romanian Parliament Passes Political Statement on Kosovo", *Rompres*, Dec. 20, 2007 [*World News Connection*, Dec. 20, 2007].

⁹⁸ "Romania Not to Increase Number of Servicemen in Kosovo", *Rompres*, March 18, 2008, [BBC Monitoring, March 18, 2008].

⁹⁹ "Romania Prepared to Send 175 Police Officers to Kosovo: President", *AFP*, Jan. 23, 2008 [*World News Connection*, Jan. 23, 2008].

¹⁰⁰ "Romania's Participation in EU Kosovo Mission is Not Independence Recognition--FM", *Rompres*, Feb. 21, 2008 [BBC Monitoring, Feb. 21, 2008].

Conclusion: Managing Allies

Recent events have thrust Southeast Europe and the Black Sea area to the forefront of concerns for US foreign policy. While not unanticipated, this research has focused on some of the continuing challenges that management of key allies in the region poses for the United States. To some extent this is the result of recognition of the growing energy and security significance of the area which began with the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and has only been heightened by the recent war between Russia and Georgia. But it is also a result of the enlargement of both NATO and the EU into a region that heretofore had been the focus of a largely static--or nonexistent--policy.

As is being belatedly recognized in both Washington and Brussels, there is no substitute for an informed, nuanced policy toward the varied states of this region. Though Romania and Bulgaria have achieved the alliance membership they coveted, the cross pressures--on the international level among allies and between the international and domestic levels--present a special geometry. For the United States the challenge is to effectively integrate these states into the alliance as well as into the broader compass of US policy without damaging ties with other allies in the region, e.g. Turkey, or unnecessarily provoking conflict in a key region, conflicts in which the US would hardly be in a position to exercise dominant influence.

This will require recognition of the unique combination of historical experience, recent history, and domestic and international orientation that these governments and societies bring to their challenges. The lesson they are learning--and that we must be cognizant of--is that, like the major powers, they may be able to act somewhat more freely "beyond the water's edge" for a while. But over time the combination of powerful external forces, including alliance demands and domestic dynamics, both contemporary and historical, can be ignored only at their own peril.