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## **Germany's Interests in Future NATO Enlargement**

This analysis shows that since Germany's main interest in NATO enlargement lies in creating a stable European security order while preventing a confrontation with Russia, Ukraine and Georgia should not join the Alliance from the German perspective. The Alliance should focus on the Western Balkan states and support their ongoing domestic reform processes, because their accession to NATO further stabilizes Europe and contribute to its security. In case of Ukraine and Georgia, Germany should try to prevent steps which might lead to a closer connection with NATO and support statuses other than NATO membership, for example a status of official neutrality.

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## **1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The question of NATO enlargement remains crucial for the Atlantic Alliance. Just this year, Albania and Croatia joined NATO and the discussion about membership of Georgia and Ukraine is far from being finally decided. At the moment, further discussion of the issue of enlargement becomes necessary, since the consultation phase of NATO's New Strategic Concept within the Alliance's capitals started in December 2009. Furthermore, the strategic-political situation after the Russia-Georgia War in 2008, the foreign policy of the Obama administration – especially the so-called 'reset' of US-Russia relations – and the Ukrainian presidential elections in early 2010 add some importance. Unfortunately, the enlargement issue lost importance within the German discussion about NATO successively since 1999. This is unfortunate, because the question which states should join the Alliance will have tremendous consequences for both the cohesion and the "Funktionsverständnis"<sup>2</sup> of NATO. For this reason, one of the biggest member states should have a sophisticated concept and strategy how to deal with the question of further enlargement.

Hence, this analysis answers the question which states should join NATO in the future from the German perspective. Especially the question of Ukrainian and Georgian membership is of prime importance. To answer this question, the paper bears the specific German interests as well as the German "Funktionsverständnis" of NATO in mind. The analysis on hand will also bridge a gap in the current status of research, which still lacks a comprehensive discussion of the German position on NATO enlargement.

In the following, the first part of this paper shortly discusses the current state of NATO's enlargement process and identifies the most-likely potential candidate countries. The second part is a catalogue that explicates the German interests concerning further enlargement against the background of NATO's accession criteria. The catalogue develops some general criteria, which should be valid for all potential candidate countries of the foreseeable future. The third part applies these criteria to the current candidate countries and the last part discusses the dilemma of Georgian and Ukrainian membership.

## **2 The Current State of NATO's Enlargement Process**

NATO has no determined body of rules and regulations for the accession process, mainly because of the diversity of the potential candidate countries, and the political interest of the Allies to keep a maximum of control over the process. Also, there is no comprehensive catalogue of benchmarks a candidate country has to meet in order to get access to the Alliance.

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<sup>1</sup> This work is dedicated to Kathrin Seelig.

<sup>2</sup> That is, which functions NATO should have in the foreign policy of a member state

The Study on NATO Enlargement of 1995, however, lists the following criteria a potential member should meet:<sup>3</sup>

- Functioning democracy, including rule of law, free elections, and personal freedom
- Functioning market economy
- Functioning civilian control over the military
- OSCE-standardized minority rights
- Peacefully solving all severe international disputes the state is involved in
- Meaningful political and military contributions to the Alliance

Additionally, the Study points out that EU and NATO enlargement are not contrary rather than complementary processes and that special relations with Russia should accompany the enlargement process. Although there is no official ranking among these criteria, in practice political and strategic considerations are way more important than military capabilities. This is reflected in the fact that most of the criteria are political and almost identical with the accession criteria of the European Union ('Copenhagen Criteria').<sup>4</sup>

However, the first step towards membership is in any case the membership in the Partnership for Peace program (PfP) to establish connections and political-military cooperation between NATO and the potential member. Classically, PfP membership is followed by the implementation of an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) and an Intensified Dialogue (ID). Finally, the last step before an invitation to begin accession talks for full NATO membership is the Membership Action Plan (MAP) and the cooperation with NATO within the European Atlantic Partnership Council, especially the Planning and Review Process (PARP).<sup>5</sup> Experiences with the last enlargement rounds suggest that, from the moment MAP-status is granted, a state still needs between five to ten years until it becomes a full member.

After Albania and Croatia joined NATO in April 2009, six states are currently connected with NATO through the instruments mentioned above. These are Macedonia, Georgia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. All six countries are members in the PfP. Georgia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro implemented IDs with NATO and all of them (except for Ukraine) also IPAPs.

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<sup>3</sup> Study on NATO Enlargement (<http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/enl-9501.htm> valid: September 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Copenhagen Criteria

([http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/enlargement/ongoing\\_enlargement/114536\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/enlargement/ongoing_enlargement/114536_en.htm) valid: September 2009); Peter Schmidt (2001), *Die nächste Runde der NATO-Erweiterung: Ziele, Kandidaten, Bedingungen*. SWP-Studie S 31, 16; Edwin J. Pechous (2008), "NATO Enlargement and Beyond", *Connections Quarterly Journal* 2, 57; Thomas Szayna (2001), *NATO Enlargement, 2000-2015: Determinants and Implications for Defense Planning and Shaping*, Rand-Studie MR-1243, 17.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed description of the accession process, compare Eunika Frydrych (2008), "The Debate on NATO Expansion", in: *Connections* 4.

Macedonia and Montenegro are the only candidate countries with MAP-status at the moment and Macedonia can join NATO as soon as its name dispute with Greece is finally settled.<sup>6</sup> In 2008, Greece successfully vetoed a planned invitation to join the Alliance at the Bucharest summit in 2008, in spite of an interim agreement between Macedonia and Greece from 1995, which should allow Macedonia to join international organizations. It remains unclear, when the dispute will be dissolved and Macedonia can join NATO.

Serbia stands at the very beginning of a possible accession process and implemented successfully its first Individual Partnership Program with NATO. But even though NATO suggested Serbia an application for an IPAP, Serbia seems to be just modestly interested in deepening cooperation with NATO.<sup>7</sup> This does not hold true for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which showed interest in gaining MAP-status in the future.<sup>8</sup> But because of its domestic situation, it will still need some time to achieve this goal, and full membership of the country cannot be expected at least in the next ten years.

Membership of Georgia and Ukraine is highly controversial among the Allies, although they announced future membership of the two states at the Bucharest summit in 2008 and reaffirmed this announcement at the NATO summit 2009.<sup>9</sup> While especially the United States, the United Kingdom and the Eastern European countries (except for Hungary) supported NATO membership of Georgia and Ukraine, the continental Western European states opposed it, with Germany playing a key role in the opposition. Both states have established special relationships with NATO through the NATO-Ukraine respectively NATO-Georgia Commission and Annual National Programmes (ANPs). These programs replace the former IPAPs and should support Georgia and Ukraine to reform their security sectors and military forces.

But because of the missing consensus within the Alliance, membership of both states cannot be expected anytime soon.

Besides Georgia, the other trans-Caucasian countries Armenia and Azerbaijan may be potential members. But both states have currently no ambition to achieve full membership, although they are members of the PfP. Armenia's security policy focuses more on cooperation with Russia and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and cooperation with NATO remains of little importance. For Azerbaijan, full membership is a long-term goal at

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<sup>6</sup> Strasbourg / Kehl Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg / Kehl on 4 April 2009, No. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Frydrych, 2008, 21.

<sup>8</sup> Strasbourg / Kehl Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg / Kehl on 4 April 2009, No. 25-26.

<sup>9</sup> Bucharest Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008, No. 23 and Strasbourg / Kehl Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg / Kehl on 4 April 2009, No. 29.

best, but at the moment it is more interested in integration in and cooperation with the Euro-Atlantic institutions below the level of membership.<sup>10</sup>

An application for membership of one of the 'neutral' states in Europe (Switzerland, Austria, Ireland, Sweden and Finland) is not likely anytime soon either, primarily because of strong domestic opposition. While for Austria, Switzerland and Ireland NATO membership is no big issue, the matter is discussed more widely in Finland and Sweden. But even though concerns about Russia's prospective ambitions increased, neither a domestic majority nor an application for membership seems likely in the foreseeable future.<sup>11</sup> The potential membership of Moldova and Belarus plays no role in the current discussion and speculations about membership of Israel and Russia are more academic exercise than real options and will not be discussed in the following.

Moreover, mainly American observers recommend an opening of NATO for democracies all over the world like Japan, South Korea, Australia etc.<sup>12</sup> These projects will also not be discussed in this paper, first, because they do not necessarily claim full membership for the affected states and second, because of the missing consensus among the Allies to pursue these ideas, especially since some of them make a modification of the Washington Treaty necessary to make the accession of non-European states to NATO possible.

To sum up, the main focus of NATO enlargement that might reach consensus lies on the Western Balkans.<sup>13</sup> And although NATO officially follows an 'Open Door' policy, enlargement that goes beyond the Western Balkans remains unlikely.

### **3 German Interests in Further Enlarging NATO**

To understand the German position on NATO enlargement, it is important to clarify the specific German NATO Funktionsverständnis, that is which function NATO should primarily

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<sup>10</sup> Martin Malek (2008), „NATO and the South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia on Different Tracks“, in: *Connections* 3, 31-51 and Alberto Priego (2008), „NATO cooperation towards South Caucasus“, in: *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, 1.

<sup>11</sup> BBC Monitoring Europe: Ulf Bjereld (2009), „Now Opposition Against NATO Membership Decreases“, in: *Dagens Nyheter*, 04.04.2009; „Bildt does not believe Sweden will join NATO any time soon“, in: *Baltic News Service*, 30.03.2009; Matti Vanhanen (2009), *Finnish Security and Defence Policy: Government Report VNS X/2009*, 23.01.2009; BBC Monitoring Europe: Yrsa Grune (2008), „Finland's Defence Concept is Right“, in: *Hufvudsadsbladet*, 22.08.2008 and Dan Steinbock (2008), „NATO and Northern Europe: From Nordic Balance to Northern Balance“, in: *American Foreign Policy Interests* 30, 205-206.

<sup>12</sup> For example: Ivo Daalder / James Goldgeier (2006), „Global NATO“, in: *Foreign Affairs* 5 and *Conference Call Briefing: April 2009 NATO Summit* des Council on Foreign Relations, Washington D.C. ([http://www.cfr.org/publication/18950/conference\\_call\\_briefing.html?breadcrumb=%2F](http://www.cfr.org/publication/18950/conference_call_briefing.html?breadcrumb=%2F) Valid: September 2009).

<sup>13</sup> „Western Balkans“ is a term used by the European Union to label Albania and the Yugoslavian successor states except for Slovenia.

play from the German perspective in its foreign and security policy. From this understanding follow the German interests in NATO and NATO enlargement in particular.

Based on this assumption, it is possible to create a catalogue of additional German expectations, interests, and preconditions concerning NATO enlargement:

- 1) NATO enlargement should lead to additional stabilization and democratization within the potential member state and the Euro-Atlantic region.
- 2) Further enlargement should not decrease the cohesion within the Alliance or negatively influence the relations between Europe and the US or the EU and NATO.
- 3) Further enlargement must not decrease the security of the Federal Republic or of NATO in general.
- 4) The friendly Russo-German relations should not be harmed through enlargement, although Germany has to maintain the credibility of NATO in the face of the Russian use of military force against a membership applicant in 2008.
- 5) Additional financial costs for Germany in NATO should be avoided as far as possible.
- 6) NATO's decision-making process must still be able to work effectively.

### **3.1 Stabilization and Democratization through NATO Enlargement?**

Among the most prominent arguments for further NATO enlargement are those that promise stabilization and democratization effects for the potential member states and the Euro-Atlantic Region. For the Federal Republic the stabilization and democratization of the European region remains the main argument for NATO enlargement. The objective of expanding NATO is therefore the creation of a “pan-European security-order” and to guarantee the democratic transformation within the candidate countries as well as the necessary reform procedures.<sup>14</sup> However, as this chapter argues, some of these effects are also the result of the simultaneous enlargement of the EU, and that interconnectedness of both processes will create the best stabilizing and democratizing effects. Also it should be mentioned that all new members must have achieved a certain standard of democracy and stability before their accession, since NATO enlargement was mainly a success in the past, because it did not include fragile or weak states.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Manfred Knapp (2004), *Die Haltung Deutschlands zur zweiten Runde der Osterweiterung der NATO*, in: August Pradetto (Ed.), *Die zweite Runde der NATO-Osterweiterung: Zwischen postbipolarem Institutionalismus und offensiven Realismus*, Frankfurt am Main, 175 and Marco Overhaus (2008), *Zwischen kooperativer Sicherheit und militärischer Interventionsfähigkeit – Die deutsche Sicherheitspolitik im Transformationsprozess der NATO vom Ende des Kalten Krieges bis zum Kampf gegen den Terrorismus*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Trier, 191 and 193-194 as well as Timo Noetzel / Benjamin Schreer (2009), “Does a multi-tier NATO matter? The Atlantic alliance and the process of strategic change“, in: *International Affairs* 2, 217.

<sup>15</sup> Edwin J. Pechous, “NATO Enlargement and Beyond“, in: *Connections* 2/2008, 56.

The anticipated stabilizing and democratizing effects of NATO enlargement can be categorized into two dimensions: first an external dimension and a second internal, domestic one.

### *The External Dimension of Stabilization through Enlargement*

In the external dimension, stabilization can be achieved through democratization, the integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions, and peaceful conflict solutions of contingent conflicts the potential member state is involved in before its NATO membership.

Especially the question of democratization through NATO enlargement is important for two reasons: First, because of the theory of democratic peace. This theory argues that democracies never fought a war against each other in history. Some students of democratic peace even argue that democracies are more peaceful in general.<sup>16</sup> Second, some scholars argue that states in the process of democratic transformation with still weak democratic institutions are relatively often involved in armed international conflicts.<sup>17</sup> According to these findings, the spread of democracy through NATO expansion is a preferable outcome, because it shortens the transformation phase of the candidate countries and therefore decreases the risk of armed conflict in Europe and even almost eliminate this risk after the potential members became full-grown democracies.

The integration in Euro-Atlantic institutions increases stability, because these institutions denationalize to a certain degree the defense and security policies of its member states. This denationalization helps to prevent regional conflict as well as to reduce uncertainties over intentions between the Allies.<sup>18</sup> Such a reduction of uncertainty begins even before full membership because of the involvement into cooperation mechanisms like the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council or the Partnership for Peace program. As a result, it becomes harder for nationalist movements within the candidate countries to exaggerate foreign threats and exploit them politically. In the past, such behavior has often been a trigger or intensifier for conflicts.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, the membership in the Alliance increases the success rate of conflict mediation through the member states, in case one of them is involved in an international conflict.<sup>20</sup>

Another related argument for stabilization effects of NATO enlargement is connected to the accession criteria of the Alliance. Because of the criteria, a candidate country has to peaceful-

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<sup>16</sup> James L. Ray (2000), *On the Levels: Does Democracy Correlate with Peace?*, in: John A. Vasquez (Ed.), *What Do We Know About War?* Lanham, 300-302 and Bruce M. Russett / John J. Oneal (2001), *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*. New York.

<sup>17</sup> Mansfield / Snyder (2002), *Democratic Transitions*, 297-337.

<sup>18</sup> Christian Tuschhoff (1999), *Alliance Cohesion and Peaceful Change in NATO*, in: Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane / Celeste Wallander, *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space*. Oxford, 160 and Rachel Epstein (2005), "NATO Enlargement and the Spread of Democracy: Evidence and Expectations", in: *Security Studies* 1, 63-64.

<sup>19</sup> Mansfield / Snyder (2002), *Democratic Transitions*, 299.

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Gelpi (1999), *Alliances as Instruments of Intra-Allied Control*, in: Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane / Celeste Wallander, *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space*. Oxford, 107-139.

ly solve all its international and minority conflicts before full membership becomes an option. So NATO can prevent entrapment into unsolved conflicts of its new members. However, the EU also demands peaceful conflict solutions from its candidate countries. That means that not only the desire for NATO membership, but also for EU membership can affect stabilization.

#### *The Internal Dimension of Stabilization through Enlargement*

On the internal side, supporters of NATO enlargement argue that the desire for NATO membership will lead to democratic reforms in the candidate countries, including the rule of law, human and minority rights, and a functioning market economy.<sup>21</sup> Once a state is a member of the Alliance, so the argument, democracy and stability will be virtually irreversible.

Until now, the democratization record of the last enlargement rounds looks quite well for NATO. All new member states have developed more or less stable democracies and meet the criteria. But it is questionable, if these effects are really the outcome of NATO enlargement and membership, because all enlargement rounds since the accession of Spain in 1982 were accompanied by enlargement rounds of the European Union within the following five years at the latest. So it is nearly impossible to say, which institution holds responsible for the transformation processes – besides of course the genuine desire for democratic reforms in the relevant states.<sup>22</sup> This holds especially true as the criteria of EU and NATO are congruent for the most part, whereas the membership criteria of the European Union are formulated more detailed and obligatorily. Moreover, the EU has a larger repertoire of relevant sticks and carrots at its disposal than NATO, for example visa restrictions or economic aid. This is why the EU can exert a much higher degree of influence on domestic procedures in the candidate countries than the Alliance.<sup>23</sup>

The claim for democratic control of the military forces remains NATO's only genuine and exceptional democratization criterion. This is of some importance, because studies show that the military apparatus in transformation states with weak democratic structures is quite often responsible for conflicts these states are involved in.<sup>24</sup> But on the other hand, NATO's requirements in this matter are relatively low<sup>25</sup> and an EU membership without democratic con-

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<sup>21</sup> Schmidt, 2001, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Schmidt, 2001, 16.

<sup>23</sup> Compare Andrew Moravcsik remarks on this issue at the symposium *NATO at 60* of the Council on Foreign Relations.

([http://www.cfr.org/publication/18714/panel\\_iv\\_of\\_a\\_council\\_on\\_foreign\\_relations\\_nato\\_at\\_60\\_symposium.html?breadcrumb=%2Fpublication%2Fpublication\\_list%3Ftype%3Dtranscript](http://www.cfr.org/publication/18714/panel_iv_of_a_council_on_foreign_relations_nato_at_60_symposium.html?breadcrumb=%2Fpublication%2Fpublication_list%3Ftype%3Dtranscript) valid: September 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Edward D. Mansfield / Jack Snyder (2002), "Incomplete Democratization and the Outbreak of Military Disputes", in: *International Studies Quarterly* 4, 530-532 und Edward D. Mansfield / Jack Snyder (2002), "Democratic Transitions, Institutional Strength, and War", in: *International Organization* 2, 299-302.

<sup>25</sup> Stefan Sarvas (1999), "Professional Soldiers and Politics: A Case of Central and Eastern Europe", in: *Armed Forces and Society* 1, 99-118 and Thomas Szayna (2001), *NATO Enlargement, 2000-2015: Determinants and Implications for Defense Planning and Shaping*, Rand-Studie MR-1243, 55.

trolled armed forces unthinkable. However, NATO's democratization efforts through democratize the military forces of the candidate countries during the last enlargement rounds were quite successful.<sup>26</sup>

In the end, rather than NATO, the European Union and preparations for EU membership are mostly responsible for democratization effects within in the candidate countries. So besides positive effects of reforms aiming at a democratic controlled military, NATO's contribution to spread democracy by expansion seems quite small.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, it remains controversial if NATO membership preserves the democratic structures of its members. Historically, the democratization process of members of the Alliance remained reversible, as long as they were not members of the European Communities as well. Examples are the military dictatorship in Greece between 1967 and 1974, the coups in Turkey in 1960, 1971 and 1980 as well as the attempted coup in Spain 1982 just a few months before its NATO accession.<sup>28</sup> On the contrary, there is no example of a member of the European Communities that made such a regression from its democratic achievements.

### *Conclusions*

Taken together, it is at least questionable, if NATO enlargement really spreads and preserves democracy. But NATO enlargement adds to the stabilization of Europe by integrating potential members quite early into Euro-Atlantic cooperation mechanisms and therefore denationalizes defense and security policy and decrease the risk of international conflicts. Furthermore, just like the EU enlargement process, it fosters peaceful conflict solutions through mediation and its accession criteria. But the EU enlargement process has arguably a stronger impact on the domestic reform process within the potential member states.

That means that the connection between NATO and EU enlargement will lead to the best democratization and stabilization results, while the EU helps to stabilize the candidate countries 'internally', whereas NATO stabilizes mainly 'externally'.

Since the stabilization and democratization of Europe are the most important issues concerning NATO enlargement from the German perspective, the findings of this chapter lead to two results. First, to gain as much stabilization and democratization from the process as possible, Germany should preferably support the accession of states into NATO that have also a perspective for EU membership,. Second, Germany should not allow NATO to make compromis-

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<sup>26</sup> Rachel Epstein (2005), "NATO Enlargement and the Spread of Democracy: Evidence and Expectations", in: *Security Studies* 1.

<sup>27</sup> Ronald D. Asmus (2008), "Europe's Eastern Promises: Rethinking NATO and EU Enlargement", in: *Foreign Affairs* 1; Dan Reiter (2001), "Why NATO Does Not Spread Democracy", in: *International Security* 4, 66 and Timothy Edmunds (2003), "NATO and its New Members", in: *Survival* 3, 145-149.

<sup>28</sup> During the Cold War the democratic condition was just secondary compared to possible military contributions and strategic position of the potential members.

es concerning the democratic standard of its candidate countries, because NATO membership alone is a rather weak guarantee for further democratization.

### **3.2 NATO Enlargement and the Cohesion of the Alliance**

It seems reasonable to assume that for Germany, as for any other NATO member, it is important that NATO enlargement does not endanger the cohesion of the Alliance. In the German case, two main issues deserve closer attention. The first one is the question of asymmetric membership of NATO and EU, the second one the differences concerning the NATO Funktionsverständnis of Germany, the USA, as well as the new members and its repercussions for NATO's cohesion.

#### *Asymmetric Membership of NATO and EU*

Although all of the candidate countries for NATO membership aim also for membership in the EU, only Croatia and Macedonia might achieve membership soon. It can be expected that the European Union will take a consolidation break after the accession of Croatia and maybe Macedonia, since even states like Germany, which strongly supported EU enlargement in the past, are becoming more critical.<sup>29</sup> This will lead to a new situation for NATO, because the current potential members have no perspective for EU membership in the medium term (like most of the states of the Western Balkans) or no real perspective for membership at all at the moment (like Ukraine and the Transcaucasian countries).

So if NATO continues to expand while the EU takes a break, the asymmetry of membership of both institutions will further increase. This future asymmetry can have negative consequences for the relationship between EU and NATO. On the one hand, non-EU NATO members could delay or blockade key agreements that regulate EU-NATO relations, like Turkey did in the case of the EU-NATO cooperation agreement. Another example are the strong Turkish concerns against the so-called 'Berlin-plus' agreement of 2002, which settles the potential usage of NATO assets and capabilities through the European Union.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, with any non-EU NATO member the number of potential veto players concerning Berlin-plus increases and might hamper the usage of NATO capabilities in the framework of the ESDP. For Germany, strengthening the ESDP and an interconnected division of labor between NATO and ESDP are core interests of its security policy. That is, the asymmetry of both institutions should be kept as small as possible. From this it follows that Germany should preferably support the NATO accession of states with medium-term EU membership perspective.

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<sup>29</sup> Barbara Lippert (2009), *EU-Erweiterungspolitik: Wege aus der Sackgasse*, SWP-Aktuell 46, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Stephanie Hofmann / Christopher Reynolds (2007), *Die EU-NATO Beziehungen: Zeit für „Taufwetter“*, SWP-Aktuell 37.

### *NATO's Cohesion and Different Funktionsverständnisse of Member States*

The political cohesion of alliances like NATO depends on the compatibility of the Funktionsverständnisse of its members. Generally speaking, one can identify three main groups within NATO, standing for three different approaches what NATO should mainly do.<sup>31</sup> The first group includes the Anglo-Saxon allies, which can be characterized as 'reformers'. Under the leadership of the United States, they see NATO as an (military) instrument for their grand strategies and global interventions. The second group is 'reversal'-oriented and includes mainly the Eastern and Central European Allies like Poland and the Baltic states. These countries see NATO in a more 'classical' way as a guarantor of their security, based on the military power of the USA and Article V of the Washington Treaty. From the potential members, Georgian and Ukraine fit into this group as well. However, the states of group two depend on the USA for their defense, so they widely accept the understanding of NATO from the reformer group. Examples are the Polish policies during Operation Allied Force 1999 and the invocation of Article V 2001, both supported by Poland to demonstrate its loyalty to the Americans.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, a third group, including the European continental powers like France and Germany, can be seen as 'status-quo'-oriented. These powers do not approve a globalization of NATO and do not share a primarily militarized view on NATO. For them, NATO is first and foremost a political alliance.

The states of the Balkans stand a little bit offside, because they see NATO primarily as a guarantor for political stability<sup>33</sup>, but they are also prepared – just like the 'reversal'-oriented group – to except the American understanding of NATO's functions. Examples are the military reforms in the so-called 'Adriatic-3' states Croatia, Albania, and Macedonia. All three states re-organize their forces into highly deployable expeditionary forces, what makes no sense without the possibility to use NATO and/or American assets and capabilities.<sup>34</sup>

Because the United States is by far the most important ally for the potential and new members of NATO and their most important advocate, the American influence within the Alliance will further increase with each new enlargement round. Furthermore, for the USA, NATO en-

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<sup>31</sup> See Timo Noetzel / Benjamin Schreer (2009), "Does a multi-tier NATO matter? The Atlantic alliance and the process of strategic change", in: *International Affairs* 2.

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Bobinski (2003), *Polish Illusions and Reality*, in: Anatol Lieven / Dmitri Trenin (Eds.), *Ambivalent Neighbors: The EU, NATO, and the Price of Membership*. Washington D.C., 240-241.

<sup>33</sup> David Greenwood (Ed.)(2005), *The Western Balkan Candidates for NATO Membership and Partnership*. (<http://www.cess.org/publications/harmoniepapers/pdfs/HarmPap.18.colour.pdf> valid: September 2009), 34.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Bobinski (2003), *Polish Illusions and Reality*, in: Anatol Lieven / Dmitri Trenin (Eds.), *Ambivalent Neighbors: The EU, NATO, and the Price of Membership*. Washington D.C., 240-241; Greenwood, 2005, 38, 51-53, and 72-73; Vincent Morelli (2008), *NATO Enlargement: Albania, Croatia, and Possible Future Candidates*. CRS Report for Congress, 5-15.

largement has always been a means to increase its influence in Europe.<sup>35</sup> That means that in the future it could become harder for Germany and other continental European allies to influence or avoid American initiatives within NATO and in return it may become easier for the United States to isolate opponents, like for example in preposition of the Iraq War 2003.

However, arguably the Obama administration will not continue the policy of its predecessor and pay so much attention to Central and Eastern Europe. It remains to be seen which influence for example the so-called ‘reset’ of US-Russian relations and the shift of the missile defense program will have on the relations between the Eastern Europeans and the United States. If politicians in Eastern Europe seriously feel let down by the USA, this might change the security policy of these countries to look more to Europe for their security.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, it could decrease the U.S. influence within NATO. Other observers say that the “pro-American instinct” especially of the Poles and Balts concerning their security remains determinately strong.<sup>37</sup> Anyway, probably potential NATO members on the Western Balkans will still support the Americans, since they are not as affected by an American policy shift towards Russia as the Central and Eastern European states.

### *Conclusions*

To diminish the possible negative consequences of an increasing asymmetric NATO and EU membership, Germany should especially support the NATO membership of states with an EU accession perspective. To balance the expected increasing U.S. influence, Germany could try to primarily support the NATO membership ambitions of candidate countries with EU membership perspective, because of the great German influence in this institution.

### **3.3 Russo-German Relations and NATO Enlargement**

Traditionally, Germany tries for friendly relations with Russia, mainly based on common energy and economic interests, a long common history and cultural ties.<sup>38</sup> So it seems reasonable to assume that Russian objections against NATO membership of Ukraine and Georgia were one of the main reasons for Germany to veto the according U.S. ambitions.

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<sup>35</sup> Noetzel, Timo / Schreer, Benjamin, „Does a multi-tier NATO matter? The Atlantic alliance and the process of strategic change“, in: *International Affairs* 2/2009, 217; Richard Betts (2009), *The Three Faces of NATO* (<http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=20944>, valid: October 2009), 2; Pechous, Edwin J., “NATO Enlargement and Beyond”, in: *Connections* 2/2008, 56f.

<sup>36</sup> See for example statements of the Polish Foreign Minister Sikorski in “Sikorski: Polen muss umdenken“, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24.09.2009.

<sup>37</sup> Kai-Olaf Lang (2009), *Das Ende des neuen Europa*. SWP-Aktuell 55.

<sup>38</sup> Christopher Chivvis / Thomas Rid (2009), “The Roots of Germany’s Russia Policy“, in: *Survival* 2.

For Russia, NATO membership of Georgia and especially Ukraine is unacceptable and would mark a huge geopolitical shift in Europe.<sup>39</sup> Although Russia sees NATO not primarily as a military threat, it firstly considers Georgia and Ukraine a part of its primary sphere of influence, the so-called 'near abroad' and secondly any interference from NATO in this sphere a threat.<sup>40</sup> In case Ukraine and/or Georgia would join NATO, Russian observers and officials have threatened the West with severe consequences, from a major political crisis over destabilizing the countries to military intervention.<sup>41</sup> It is doubtful, if it is in Russia's interest to follow through with these threats or if Russia had the capabilities to do so. But also it should be clear that nobody can expect Russia to simply 'swallow' NATO membership of Ukraine and Georgia like in the case of the Baltic States 2004. Especially Ukraine is for many Russians an important part of the Russian nation and identity. Extreme examples are statements of the former president Putin or the Russian ambassador at NATO that Ukraine is not a sovereign state and Russian politics concerning Ukraine basically a Russian domestic issue.<sup>42</sup> This strong Russian rejection puts Germany in a real fix: On the one hand, Germany cannot and probably will never risk its good relations with Russia to allow states like Georgia or Ukraine to join NATO. On the other hand, it is exposed to expectations from its NATO allies, especially the United States, Great Britain and the Eastern European countries not to put its relations with Russia over its alliance loyalty. The August War 2008 showed that for some of the Eastern European Allies Russia remains threatening and should be contained by NATO.<sup>43</sup> This puts Germany even more under pressure, because not supporting NATO membership of Georgia and Ukraine in the face of a perceived Russian threat and after the war 2008 could create the impression that Russia successfully prevented the accession of the two countries to NATO by military means.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> "Russia calls NATO plans 'colossal' shift in Europe", in: *The New York Times*, 07.06.2006.

<sup>40</sup> Hannes Adomeit / Frank Kupferschmidt (2008), *Russland und die NATO*, SWP-Studie S 21, 16-19; Peter Schmidt (2001), *Die nächste Runde der NATO-Erweiterung: Ziele, Kandidaten, Bedingungen*. SWP-Studie S 31, 22.

<sup>41</sup> The Commission on U.S. Policy toward Russia (2009), *The Right Direction for U.S. Policy toward Russia*, 8; Morelli, 2008, 24-25, Dmitry Rogozin (2009), "Your Call, NATO", in: *The New York Times*, 07.05.2009; Ruslan Pukhov (2009), *Sizing Up Russia – NATO Relations*, Moscow Defense Brief 1.

<sup>42</sup> James Sherr (2009), "Russian and American Strategic Rivalry in Ukraine and Georgia", in: Stephen J. Blank, (Ed.), *Prospects for U.S.-Russian Security Cooperation*, (<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/Pubs/display.cfm?pubID=892>, valid: September 2009), 302 and "Dear Viktor, you're dead, love Dmitry", in: *The Economist*, 22.08.2009.

<sup>43</sup> Kai-Olaf Lang (2008), *Die alte Angst der neuen Europäer*, in: Hans-Henning Schröder (Ed.), *Die Kaukasus Krise: Internationale Perzeptionen und Konsequenzen für deutsche und europäische Politik*. SWP-Studie S 25.

<sup>44</sup> Tony Karon, *The Georgia Crisis: A Blow to NATO*, 2009, (<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1832988,00.html>, valid: September 2009), 1.

Less problematic for Russia is NATO membership of the Western Balkan states, maybe with the exception of Serbia in the long-term.<sup>45</sup> Probably it will not approve NATO enlargement in this area either, but because of the geographic distance it cannot bring credible security concerns to bear.

Just taking Russo-German relations into account, it is not in the German interest to support the NATO membership of states that would alienate Russia. However, apart from this assumption are states that could contribute a great deal to the other areas of German 'NATO interests'. That would be the case, if NATO membership of a certain state within the Russian sphere of influence would be essential for European stabilization or its membership would increase the Alliance's cohesion and/or Germany's over-all security significantly.

### **3.4 Effects of Enlargement on German and Allied Security**

The probably most important criterion and ground rule for NATO enlargement is that the accession of new states must not decrease the security of the Alliance or of single members. Therefore, all potential members have to peacefully solve their international conflicts with their neighbors and domestic conflicts with minorities or separatists before they can join NATO. In doing so, NATO avoids that unsolved conflicts are brought into the Alliance and the Allies would be entrapped into these conflicts.

First and foremost, the Alliance is concerned about unsolved conflicts potential members have with Russia, since a severe political or even military conflict with Russia is in nobody's interest. And obviously, Europe is more secure if Russia is a strong partner than an alienated rival. For this reason, NATO membership of states which unnecessarily displeases Russia is not in NATO's and Germany's interest. This does not mean to give Russia the right to veto NATO's decisions concerning membership, because this assumption is based on a simple calculation: The potential members that have conflicts with Russia or are part of the Russian 'sphere of influence', could not contribute to Allied security in the same way, in which they would decrease it by alienating Russia.<sup>46</sup>

This raises the question how potential members can currently contribute to allied security anyway. Some possibilities are: first, military contributions to allied missions and defense; second, decreasing the length of NATO's frontier with non-NATO states; third, the allocation

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<sup>45</sup> „Von Washington besessen“, Süddeutsche Zeitung, 31.03.2009 (<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/847/463455/text/> valid: September 2009).

<sup>46</sup> To be clear: that does not mean the military contribution of those countries are unimportant. On the contrary, these contribution are quite impressive and a clear commitment of these states to the Western Alliance.

of territory for the deployment of NATO forces or over flight-rights, and fourth, not decreasing the credibility of NATO's security guarantees and deterrence.

Some of these points need some further explanation. Concerning the potential military contribution of the potential member states, it is important to point out how small these countries are in comparison to the United States or Germany. In 2008, the combined GDP of all eighteen states that joined NATO since 1999 and all potential members (Western Balkan states, Georgia and Ukraine), came up to 46% of the German GDP and 87% of the German defense expenditures, whereas Poland and Ukraine accounted for the lion's share.<sup>47</sup> In so far, it would be naïve to expect the contribution of significant military capabilities to NATO's current missions or Allied defense. According to this, the question of military capabilities is only secondary in the process of NATO enlargement, especially for Germany. But despite these limited resources, some of the new or potential members were able to deploy impressive contingents abroad, like Poland and Georgia in Iraq, and the ISAF deployments of the Adriatic-3 are stronger than those of some 'larger' old members. In general, these smaller Allies tend to develop so-called 'boutique-capabilities' and specialize their forces for interventions abroad. However, taken together it is questionable if these still limited military contributions increase Allied security in a significant way, which could outweigh a ruined relationship with Russia. Moreover, the question of credibility is of special importance for an alliance like NATO. It is absolutely necessary that NATO's deterrence – based on the guarantee to collectively defend an attacked Ally and defeat the attacker – remains credible.<sup>48</sup> NATO is at its core still a military alliance to defend its members.<sup>49</sup> The Russo-Georgian War in 2008 brought this fact back to mind, as in the aftermath especially Eastern European countries raised the question, if NATO focused too much on its missions overseas and neglected its core function: collective defense. However, two preconditions are essential for a credible deterrence: First, NATO must have the capabilities to actually defend the attacked Ally. This means deployable forces and ideally a certain infrastructure within the attacked country. Second, it must be clear for everybody that NATO does not differentiate between the security of the old members and the security of the new members. The indivisibility of Allied security is one of the pillars of the

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<sup>47</sup> Calculations based on *The Military Balance 2009*.

<sup>48</sup> Because it is not clear, if non-state actors can be successfully deterred, this argumentation focuses on attacking states.

<sup>49</sup> Declaration on Alliance Security Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg/Kehl on 4 April 2009 ([http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_52838.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52838.htm) valid: September 2009).

Alliance. NATO takes serious damage, if it is incapable to deter an attacker or, and that would be the worst-case scenario, if it fails to successfully defend an Ally.<sup>50</sup>

So NATO has to make sure that it has credible capabilities and the credible will to defend any new Ally against any potential aggression. If one of these two preconditions is not given, NATO cannot allow the accession of the particular potential new member.

Taken together, it is not in NATO's and Germany's interest to accommodate countries, which are involved in international or minority conflicts; whose contribution to Allied security would not outweigh the loss of security their accession causes; and that are not defensible in case of an aggression and would so lower NATO's overall credibility and security.

### **3.5 Financial Costs of Further NATO Enlargement and Burden-sharing**

Financially, NATO enlargement must meet two conditions from the German perspective: First, it should not cause additional costs as far as possible; second, the future members should not become free-riders and keep their defense expenditures on a high level.

Figures based on the experiences from the enlargement rounds in 1999 and 2004 suggest that the cost expectations of enlargement critics in the run-up of every round were way too high. Because most of the underlying assumptions are still valid, these findings should hold true for future enlargement as well. In fact, NATO estimates that the accession of Albania and Croatia will cost the Alliance some 60 Mio. USD over the next ten years and minimally decrease their share in NATO's common funds of the old members.<sup>51</sup> In fact, the German share of NATO's military budget decreased by 0.22% and in the infrastructure budget by 7.63% between 1999 and 2005.<sup>52</sup> Given that NATO will keep a certain standard concerning its new members that is comparable to former enlargement rounds, an unreasonably high additional financial burden for the Alliance caused by new members cannot be expected.

A comparative look at the defense expenditures of the ten Allies that joined NATO between 1999 and 2004 with regard to the free-rider issue suggests that these concerns are ungrounded. In the Alliance, a state that spends less than 1.5% of its GDP on its military is considered a

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<sup>50</sup> Compare the dispute over the German, France and Belgium refusal to allocate air defense systems to Turkey in 2003 for political reasons. Stanley Sloan (2005), *NATO, the European Union, and the Atlantic Community: The Transatlantic Bargain Challenged*. Oxford, 221-222 and Annalisa Monaco (2003), "16-to-3: The Allies at Loggerheads over Iraq", in: *NATO Notes* 2, 1-2 ([http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2008\\_artrel\\_128\\_2003\\_archives\\_17\\_nato\\_notes\\_v5n2.pdf](http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2008_artrel_128_2003_archives_17_nato_notes_v5n2.pdf) valid: September 2009).

<sup>51</sup> Joseph A. Christoff (2009), "GAO Report on NATO Enlargement: Albania and Croatia", in: *Connections* 2, 86; Vincent Morelli et al. (2008), *NATO Enlargement: Albania, Croatia, and Possible Future Candidates*, CRS Report for Congress, 5-16.

<sup>52</sup> Johannes Varwick / Wichard Woyke (1999), *NATO 2000*. Munich, 65 und Arnd Hoepffner (2005), „Kostenteilungsschlüssel als Grundlage der gemeinsam finanzierten Haushalte der NATO“, in: *Europäische Sicherheit* 12, 20.

free-rider.<sup>53</sup> On average, these ten countries spend 1.66% of their GDP on the military, which is slightly less than the NATO average (without the US) with 1.71% in 2007. In 2004, they already spent 1.65% of their GDP. Overall, they produce 6.3% of NATO's GDP (without the US) and 6.1% of NATO's defense spending. Additionally, the absolute defense budgets of the mentioned states increased by 121% between 2002 and 2007, while the budget of the old NATO members (without the US) increased just by 68% during the same time. Based on these figures and experiences it seems unlikely that new NATO members will significantly decrease their defense spending after the accession and free-ride on the defense efforts of the older Allies.

All the potential members – except for Ukraine and Bosnia – spent always more than 1.5% of their GDP on their military between 2004 and 2007. However, all potential members experienced significant economic growth during the last years and increased their absolute defense budgets significantly.<sup>54</sup> So these states, too, are willing to spend a certain amount of their resources on their military and are likely to continue to do so even after they joined NATO. From this it follows that – as long as NATO keeps its current standards – there are no significant financial counter-arguments against further NATO enlargement. On the other hand, the ongoing financial and economic crisis will definitely put restraints on the military budgets of all NATO members in the future. But at the moment, it is too early to precisely predict the full impact the crisis will have on NATO enlargement. For Germany, the state of reform of a candidate's military as well as its military spending are secondary to political questions and should not be an exclusive criterion.

### **3.6 NATO's Decision-Making Process and Enlargement**

NATO is – in addition with the European Union – the most important multilateral framework for German foreign and security policy. That means that Germany has a strong interest in a 'functioning' NATO with functioning decision-making procedures. Meanwhile, the anticipated negative consequences new Allies (that is additional veto-players) will have on the decision-making process are an important argument against further enlargement. Critics argue that, since NATO's decisions are always consensual, additional Allies can easily block and veto decisions and produce grid-lock.

However, this argumentation is not backed-up by experience and based on an incorrect understanding of NATO's decision-making procedures. In this regard, critics seem to confuse 'con-

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas Szayna (2001), *NATO Enlargement, 2000-2015: Determinants and Implications for Defense Planning and Shaping*, Rand-Studie MR-1243, 55.

<sup>54</sup> All figures based on *The Military Balance 2009, 2007 and 2005*.

sensual' (which means without active disagreement) with 'unanimous' (which means with active agreement). In fact, NATO usually tries to avoid votes based on unanimity. Instead, votes based on consensus are much more common. In this so-called 'silent-procedure' states have to actively show their disagreement with a topic and have to inform the Secretary General in written form about their disapproval.<sup>55</sup> Especially smaller Allies – and that includes all new and potential members since 1999 – does not have the capabilities and political power to veto decisions in the silent procedures, because they risk political isolation in NATO and other significant political costs.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, further NATO enlargement will not have significant influence on NATO's decision-making process, especially with the U.S. influence on the new and potential members in mind.

Former studies back this assumption empirically. They suggest that setbacks in the decision-making process were usually caused by the old members of the Alliance and just rarely by the new ones.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, in 2001 officials at the NATO headquarters did not expect grid-lock in the decision-making process, even if the Alliance increases from nineteen (2001) to twenty-two or twenty-six members.<sup>58</sup>

However, it is inevitable that decision-making procedures will take more time than in the past if the Alliance has twenty-eight or maybe more members. An increased number of participants, more necessary administration effort etc. are just some thinkable examples. But an increased tendency to grid-lock because of the accession of new potential members cannot be expected.

### 3.7 Summary

The previous chapter lists a set of conditions under which further NATO enlargement is in the interest of the Federal Republic of Germany.

First, it argues that for Germany NATO is in the first instance a means to stabilize its European surroundings. Related to this, it points out that NATO enlargement has in fact a stabilizing effect, which is strongest and most effective in connection with EU enlargement. Therefore, states that have a perspective for membership in the EU are from the German perspec-

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<sup>55</sup> See in length Paul Gallis (2003), *NATO's Decision-Making Procedure*, CRS Report for Congress, Order Code RS21510.

<sup>56</sup> Markus Kaim (2006), *Pragmatismus und Grand Strategy: Die NATO-Debatte in den Vereinigten Staaten*, SWP-Studie S 31, 18.

<sup>57</sup> Karl-Heinz Kamp (2006), *NATO-Erweiterung nach dem Gipfel von Riga*, Analysen und Argumente aus der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung 32, 2 and Bert Koenders (2001), *Report NATO Enlargement*, Committee Report of the Political Sub-Committee on Central and Eastern Europe, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 5.

<sup>58</sup> Interviews, NATO Headquarters Brussels October 2001, cited in Mark Webber (2003), *NATO Enlargement and European Defense Autonomy*, in: Jolyon Howorth / John T.S. Keeler, *Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy*. New York, 175.

tive the preferable new NATO members. Second, this also holds true if Germany wants to balance growing U.S. influence within NATO and prevent an increasing asymmetry in EU-NATO membership. Third, Germany has a strong interest in good relations with Russia, which should not be endangered because of reckless NATO enlargement, especially if the security gains for Germany in return are only small. Forth, NATO cannot accommodate countries with unsolved conflicts or if the accession of these countries diminishes NATO's credibility, deterrence and defense guarantees. Fifth, based on experiences from former enlargement rounds, there are no financial reasons for not enlarging NATO. Moreover, since NATO's decision-making process remained intact as well, this is not a valid counter-argument either.

#### **4 German Interests and the Candidate Countries**

This chapter applies the findings of chapter 3 to NATO's candidate countries. According to chapter 2, these are currently the Western Balkan states Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, as well as Georgia and Ukraine. Serbia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia did not make a clear commitment to join NATO yet and will not be discussed in the following.

##### **4.1 The Western Balkan States**

###### *Macedonia*

Among the Western Balkan states, Macedonia plays an extraordinary role. It can join NATO instantly, if Macedonia and Greece solve their ongoing naming dispute, because of which Greece vetoed Macedonia NATO membership in 2008.

According to indices of empirical democracy research<sup>59</sup>, Macedonia is a flawed democracy and a fairly stable country that overall improved impressively since begin of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but which also slightly lost momentum for democratic reforms during the last years. Its democratic indices are comparable to those of NATO allies like Albania, Turkey, or Romania.

Macedonia is also a candidate country for membership in the EU since 2005, but due to its state of reform and the institutional crisis the EU faces itself, the accession of Macedonia will remain a medium-term perspective, also depending on the economic conditions in Macedonia. However, in the long-run Macedonia might become a member of the EU.<sup>60</sup> For Macedonia, the perspective on membership in the Euro-Atlantic institutions is the crucial incentive for domestic democratic reforms as well as a foreign policy priority. For this reason, it should be a German interest to support Macedonian NATO and EU ambitions to further stabilize the

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<sup>59</sup> Freedom House Index, World Bank Governance Indicators and the Democracy Index of *The Economist*

<sup>60</sup> "Iceland bid to join EU advances as Balkan states wait", in: *The Irish Times*, 28.07.2009.

Balkans and Southeast Europe. Additionally, because Macedonia will ultimately join the EU, its NATO membership will not increase the membership asymmetry.

Moreover, except for the naming dispute with Greece, Macedonia has no further international issues and because of the geographic distance, possible Russian objections should be ruled out. Furthermore, through its military reforms and participation in international missions like EUFOR and ISAF, it contributes to NATO's and therefore Germany's security. In 2008, Macedonia spent 2.0 % of its GDP on its military, meeting NATO's expectations, even so the figure decreased from 3.3% in 2002.

Taken together, Germany should actively support Macedonia in its wish to join NATO as soon as possible and push Macedonia and Greece to solve the naming dispute.

#### *Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina*

Like Macedonia, Montenegro is a flawed democracy, but in a slightly better condition. It, too, made impressive progress concerning the state of its democracy and domestic stability during the last years. Montenegro will also join the EU in the long-term, if the democratic reform process continues and the economic situation improves. Moreover, Montenegro is not involved in any severe international disputes. In 2007, the country's military spending came to 2.3% of its GDP, which exceeds the figure of 2.0%, which NATO expects from its members. Although Montenegro's possible economic and military contributions to NATO are insignificant, its NATO membership will serve Germany's interest through stabilizing the Balkans and Southeast Europe. However, Germany should support Montenegrin NATO membership as soon as the state of domestic reform of Montenegro would allow the accession and a majority of the population supports it.<sup>61</sup> During their December meeting 2009, the NATO members agreed on inviting Montenegro to a MAP. Regularly, after the invitation to implement a MAP, it took countries between five to ten years to reach full membership.

According to *The Economist's* Index of Democracy, Bosnia-Herzegovina cannot be considered a democratic state yet. Problematic areas are especially the state of the rule of law and the separation of power.<sup>62</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina faces serious domestic disputes between its two entities and the three main nationalities, which de-stabilize the country. Additionally, it is involved in smaller territorial disputes with Serbia and Croatia. But Bosnia-Herzegovina has a long-term perspective for membership both in NATO and the European Union, if it is able to develop a stable and democratic system.

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<sup>61</sup> At the moment, the majority in Montenegro disapproves NATO membership. "Serbian analyst view implications of Albanian, Croatian NATO membership", BBC Monitoring Europe, 14.04.2009.

<sup>62</sup> Thorsten Gromes (2008), *Gemeinsame Demokratie, geteilte Gesellschaft*. HSFK-Report 9, 26.

Germany should as well support Bosnia's potential membership in the Euro-Atlantic institutions and foster the reform process within the country, just like in the cases of Montenegro and Macedonia. The stabilization of the Western Balkans is one of the German core interests in NATO and EU enlargement, and therefore the membership of all these states a main concern for Germany.

### *Summary*

Taken together, because of the long-term EU membership perspective, the missing conflicts with Russia and the stabilizing effect that the NATO accession will have on the Western Balkans, their NATO membership is in accordance with German security interests. Moreover, NATO membership of these states would decrease of NATO's frontiers with non-Allied states and erase some 'white spots' from the European political map. Therefore Germany should actively push NATO enlargement in this region and support the necessary up-front reform procedures. Moreover, all states at the Western Balkans are relatively small, so that NATO itself will not be significantly negatively affected by their membership anyway. Their accession could increase European security by stabilizing one of the most turbulent regions, while not affecting the Alliance and alienating Russia.

## **4.2 Georgia**

While NATO membership of the states of the Western Balkan can be considered a German interest, this does not hold true for Georgia.

Its current state of democracy and liberty is quite weak and decreased during the last few years. In the past, the low level of democracy was one of the most important official reasons for Germany to criticize and blockade Georgian NATO membership ambitions.<sup>63</sup> Empirically, transformation states like Georgia are very likely to be involved in international conflicts.<sup>64</sup> In this regard, the Georgian-Russian War 2008 proved the argument right. It seems questionable, if President Saakashvili and the responsible Georgian administration are reasonable and reliable partners for NATO.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the war made one major Georgian shortcoming permanent: the unsolved and ongoing conflicts over South Ossetia and Abkhazia with Russia. As long as these conflicts are not resolved in a permanent and peaceful way, Georgian NATO

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<sup>63</sup> "NATO-Außenminister suchen Ausweg aus Streit um Bündniserweiterung", Agence France Presse, 02.12.2008; "Für Ukraine und Georgien bleibt die Nato-Tür verschlossen", in: *Die Welt*, 02.12.2008; "Berlin setzt sich bei Nato-Kurs gegen die USA durch", in: *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 03.12.2008; "Wieder Dialog mit Russland - Ukraine und Georgien müssen warten", in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 03.12.2008 and "Tür zu für Georgien und Ukraine", in: *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 02.12.2008.

<sup>64</sup> Mansfield / Snyder (2002), *Democratic Transitions*, 297-337.

<sup>65</sup> Lincoln A. Mitchell (2009), "Georgia Postbellum", in: *The American Interest* 5, 67.

membership is unthinkable, especially since Saakashvili tried to solve them by force in 2008 and maybe even tried to entrap NATO in a conflict with Russia.

Not only is such a conflict with Russia not in the interest of any NATO member, but also is the willingness to defend Georgia within the Alliance pretty small – especially if Georgia itself provoked a conflict.<sup>66</sup> In fact, almost all continental European Allies did not support Georgian membership in the past.

Furthermore, NATO's military capabilities to quickly defend Georgia directly are comparably weak and the country shares a mountainous border with only one other NATO ally, namely Turkey. The obvious problems NATO would have to defend Georgia could weaken Allied deterrence and make it less believable. These shortcomings put NATO in a pretty bad fix in case of a new Russian-Georgian War, because NATO will take serious damage, if it fails to defend an Ally, a real possibility in the Georgian case.<sup>67</sup> Russia itself disapproves Georgian NATO membership emphatically. Therefore, the accession of Georgia would lead to a serious conflict between Russia and NATO, in which especially Germany has no interest.

Taken together, Germany has little to win from Georgian NATO membership. Accordingly, 72% of the German population reject Georgian NATO membership.<sup>68</sup> Since Georgia has no perspective to join the EU as a full member yet, its NATO membership can just add partly to Euro-Atlantic stability and would increase the asymmetry in NATO and EU membership. The country's unsolved conflicts with Russia, the possibility of military conflict and the strong Russian disapproval would decrease NATO's overall security and cohesion. On the other hand, Georgia has not much to offer at the moment, because its military was virtually destroyed in the war with Russia and will not be able to participate significantly in NATO operations.<sup>69</sup> In the future, Georgia might focus more on territorial defense than on overseas operations, even though Georgia offered to deploy 1.000 soldiers in Afghanistan to support American efforts.<sup>70</sup> Only Georgia's strategic position, which offers an alternative route to Central Asia and Afghanistan that is not under Russian control, would be an added value for

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<sup>66</sup> Robert E. Hunter (2008), *NATO Foreign Ministers Unlikely to Push Georgia, Ukraine Membership*, Interview, 25.11.2008 ([http://www.cfr.org/publication/17840/nato\\_foreign\\_ministers\\_unlikely\\_to\\_push\\_georgia\\_ukraine\\_membership.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/17840/nato_foreign_ministers_unlikely_to_push_georgia_ukraine_membership.html), valid: September 2009).

<sup>67</sup> Karl Kaiser (2009), "An alternative to NATO membership", in: *The New York Times*, 05.02.2009.

<sup>68</sup> Infratest Dimap, Deutschlandtrend April 2008 (<http://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2008/april/> valid: September 2009).

<sup>69</sup> Pierre Razoux (2009), *What Future for Georgia?* NATO Defense College Research Paper No. 47, 2.

<sup>70</sup> "U.K. to Add Troops in Afghanistan", in: *The Wall Street Journal*, 14.10.2009.

the Alliance.<sup>71</sup> But this cannot outweigh the many disadvantages, and so Germany should consequently reject Georgia's NATO accession.

### 4.3 Ukraine

Ukraine would be the largest country that joined NATO during the last decades, maybe expect for Poland. From all CIS states, Ukraine has probably the best preconditions to develop a strong democracy, although at the moment it is still highly troubled by domestic crisis, bad governance, oligarchs, and corruption in bureaucracy and justice.<sup>72</sup> Arguably, if Ukraine holds on to transform into a strong democracy, this would increase stability in Europe. However, Ukraine – like Georgia – has no perspective to join the EU yet. Therefore, only its NATO accession would not be sufficient to stabilize the country, and its membership would also increase the asymmetry in membership of EU and NATO.

Besides, even if a war between Ukraine and Russia is unlikely, it is far from being unthinkable. Currently, Ukraine has a number of disputes and potential conflicts with Russia: the conflict over the Black Sea Fleet base in Sevastopol, the support of Georgia during the war 2008, the question of the Russian language in Ukraine, the historic review on the Holodomor, disputes over the sea borders in the Strait of Kerch and the Azov Sea, the questions concerning the transit of natural gas, and, last but not least, the question of NATO membership itself.<sup>73</sup> Especially this issue and the question of the future of the Sevastopol base have the potential for severe (even military) conflicts between the two countries, whereas military conflict is not likely, but should also not ruled out easily.<sup>74</sup> Empirically, the danger of military confrontation increases, if Ukraine does not develop strong democratic procedures in the near future (see 3.1).

As long as Ukraine has not settled its disputes with Russia, it cannot join NATO. It is not in NATO's interest to get involved into a Ukrainian-Russian confrontation, and it is also questionable how NATO should handle a huge Russian military base on its territory, at least until 2017, when the Black Sea Fleet is supposed to leave the Crimea.

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<sup>71</sup> Mamuka Tsereteli (2008), *Beyond Georgia: Russia's Strategic Interests in Eurasia*, 11.06.2008 (<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4879>, valid: September 2009).

<sup>72</sup> Gerhard Simon (2009), "Ist die Demokratie in der Ukraine auf dem Rückzug", in: *ukraine-analysen* 54 and Nico Lange (2008), *NATO: Viel Arbeit für die Ukraine*, KAS-Länderbericht Dezember 2008 ([http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/47/1/year-2008/dokument\\_id-15259/index.html](http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/47/1/year-2008/dokument_id-15259/index.html), valid: September 2009).

<sup>73</sup> Steven Pifer (2009a), *Engaging Ukraine in 2009*, Brookings Foreign Policy Paper 12, 10.

<sup>74</sup> Steven Pifer (2009b), *Averting Crisis in Ukraine*, Council on Foreign Relations Special Report 41, 3, 6, 33-34 and "Medvedev's Message", in: *The New York Times*, 21.08.2009.

But contrary to Georgia, it would be easier to defend Ukraine for two reasons: First, Ukraine shares long borders with four other Allies; second, the Ukrainian military forces are probably strong enough to deter a Russian aggression.<sup>75</sup> So Ukraine's NATO membership would not hurt NATO's deterrence, and add some military value.

Nonetheless, this cannot make up for the high risk of entrapment and confrontation NATO faces in case of Ukraine's accession to the Alliance. Not only is Ukraine in his current democratic condition empirically highly war prone and moreover involved in serious conflicts with its great neighbor, but also will Russia not accept Ukraine's accession into NATO. For Russia, Ukraine is of significant strategic importance because of its naval bases, the transit of natural gas, the huge Russian minority in Ukraine, the pure size of the country, and the century-long connection of the history and identity of both nations. In case Ukraine joins NATO, Russia announced strong reactions, up to military intervention.<sup>76</sup>

It is open to discussion, which steps Russia would and could undertake – a military intervention in a country of the size of Ukraine is not a promising option for the Russian army, how its performance during the Georgian War showed. Nevertheless, Ukrainian NATO membership would create a major conflict between Russia and the West, not even comparable to the crisis over missile defense and Georgia. Such a crisis would also negate one of the arguably biggest advantages of Ukrainian NATO membership for the West – a higher degree of control over the natural gas transportation, which runs through the country.

Additionally, the Ukrainian population as well as the greatest part of the elites rejects membership in the Alliance. One-fourth of the population and basically only the current president Yushchenko and its administration are in favor of NATO membership.<sup>77</sup> As long as the majority in a country does not approve the accession to the Alliance, the Allies should not invite it. The procedures would look more like expansion – especially in Russian eyes – than enlargement, and furthermore, in case of the Ukraine, a future government could reject most of NATO related burdens, since these were domestically highly unpopular.

Because of the almost certain major confrontation with Russia in case of Ukraine's NATO accession, Ukraine's NATO membership is not in Germany's interest and decreases the overall security of the Alliance tremendously.

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<sup>75</sup> Taras Kuzio (2009), "Self-Defense Lessons: Ukrainian Insecurity Post-Georgia", in: *Jane's Intelligence Review* 2.

<sup>76</sup> The Commission on U.S. Policy toward Russia (2009), *The Right Direction for U.S. Policy toward Russia*, 8; Morelli, 2008, 24-25, Dmitry Rogozin (2009), "Your Call, NATO", in: *The New York Times*, 07.05.2009; Ruslan Pukhov (2009), *Sizing Up Russia – NATO Relations*, Moscow Defense Brief 1.

<sup>77</sup> *Public Opinion in Ukraine: Findings from an IFES October 2008 Survey*

([www.ifes.org/files/UkraineExecSum.pdf](http://www.ifes.org/files/UkraineExecSum.pdf) valid: September 2009), 4 and Katerina Malygina (2008), "Die NATO-Integration der Ukraine: Zwei Schritte zurück, einer nach vorn", in: *ukraine-analysen* 49, 8.

## 5 Policy Options to Solve the Georgian-Ukrainian Dilemma

The Alliance and therefore Germany agreed on Ukrainian and Georgian NATO membership at some point in the future, although this lies hardly in their interests. So NATO is stuck between a rock and a hard place, because the credibility of covenants is crucial for an alliance. That means that NATO cannot simply revoke its statements without significantly hurting its reputation and credibility, especially since the Russian military operations against Georgia also served the purpose to demonstrate NATO's incapability to protect one of its candidate countries and to stabilize its periphery.<sup>78</sup> In doing so, Russia was successful. Also, Russia made obvious that it has a de facto veto on NATO membership of some countries, because it successfully slowed down Georgia's accession process.

The following chapter discusses options to overcome NATO's catch-22 without damaging the Alliance, while at the same time serving Russian, Ukrainian and Georgian long-term interests.

### 5.1 Neutrality as an Alternative to Ukrainian NATO Membership

Even though the problems of Georgian NATO membership are much more present in the public and academic discussion, the Ukrainian case is the potentially more dangerous one, but also the one that might be easier to resolve.

The majority of the Ukrainians opposes NATO membership, which is seen by many within the country as a project of the current president Yushchenko and its administration. However, Ukraine faces presidential election in the beginning of 2010, and almost certainly Yushchenko will be deselected. Candidates with good chances to become new president are for example Viktor Yanukovich or the current Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. While Tymoshenko is generally more skeptical on NATO membership, Yanukovich disapproves it, and both refer to the overwhelming refusal within the Ukrainian population.<sup>79</sup> This attitude reflects the growing importance of the Russian electorate in the country, which is particularly critical on NATO membership.<sup>80</sup> Yanukovich also calls for a nation-wide referendum on the issue before further steps are taken, and there can be no doubt how such a referendum ends.<sup>81</sup>

For Germany this is actually good news, because a new administration in Kiev could revoke publicly its interest in joining the Alliance. However, this will not mean an end of Ukrainian-

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<sup>78</sup> Janusz Bugajski (2009), *Vice President Biden in Georgia*, 21.07.2009 (<http://csis.org/publication/vice-president-biden-georgia>, valid: 26.08.09).

<sup>79</sup> Katerina Malygina (2008), "Die NATO-Integration der Ukraine: Zwei Schritte zurück, einer nach vorn", in: *ukraine-analysen* 49, 8.

<sup>80</sup> Rainer Lindner (2008), "Die Krim als neuer 'Frozen Conflict'?", in: Pleines, Heiko/Schröder, Hans-Henning: *Der bewaffnete Konflikt um Südossetien und internationale Reaktionen*. Forschungsstelle Osteuropa Bremen Arbeitspapiere und Materialien Nr. 97, 29.

<sup>81</sup> BBC Monitoring Kiev Unit. *Opposition leader views NATO as threat to Ukraine's political stability, economy*, 07.03.2008.

NATO cooperation within the NATO-Ukraine Commission, the PfP, and the EAPC. Ukraine itself has a genuine interest in this cooperation, for example to reform its military.

A Ukrainian abdication of NATO membership would also not mean a general pro-Russian/anti-Western shift in Ukrainian foreign policy. In fact, this is quite unlikely, even if Yanukovich, formerly known as a Russophile, becomes the next president, because the general guidelines of Ukrainian foreign relations call for good relations with both, Russia and the West.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, the Ukrainian elites are split: 45% of them are in favor for stronger alignment with the West (in accordance with 40% of the population, which favors EU-membership) and 31% in favor for stronger alignment with Russia.<sup>83</sup>

The status that would suit this situation best is official Ukrainian neutrality. In 1994, Ukraine, Russia, the United States, and Great Britain already agreed on the so-called 'Budapest Memorandum', which can serve as a role model.<sup>84</sup> In a new agreement, NATO, the EU, and Russia could guarantee Ukrainian independence, sovereignty, and its frontiers. Additionally, they renounce the threat of political, economic, or military force against the political independence and integrity of Ukraine as well as any interference in Ukrainian internal affairs. In return, Ukraine will pledge that it will not enter any military alliances, not host (further?) foreign military installations, and not allow any foreign power to use its territory for unfriendly actions against the other signatories. Furthermore, all sides stress their commitment to peaceful conflict resolution. To help Ukraine to defend its neutrality, the signatories help the country reforming its military and deliver defensive weapons like modern air-defense and anti-tank systems to deter an aggressor and also foster Ukrainian economic development. Many Ukrainian politicians support such a solutions, like presidential candidate Yanukovich, Speaker of the Rada Volodymyr Lytvyn or the deputy chairman of the parliamentary defense committee, Serhiy Grynevetsky and even the current foreign minister Petro Poroshenko.<sup>85</sup> And current foreign minister

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<sup>82</sup> James Sherr (2009), "Russian and American Strategic Rivalry in Ukraine and Georgia", in: Blank, Stephen J. (Ed.), *Prospects for U.S.-Russian Security Cooperation*,

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/Pubs/display.cfm?pubID=892>, valid: October 2009), 290 and 300.

<sup>83</sup> Steven Pifer (2009), *Averting Crisis in Ukraine*, Council on Foreign Relations Special Report 41/2009, 13 and Nico Lange (2008), *NATO: Viel Arbeit für die Ukraine*, KAS-Länderbericht Dezember 2008

([http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/47/1/year-2008/dokument\\_id-15259/index.html](http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/47/1/year-2008/dokument_id-15259/index.html), valid: September 2009).

<sup>84</sup> *Memorandum on Security Assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*, Budapest, 05.12.1994

([http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Ukraine\\_Memorandum\\_on\\_Security\\_Assurances](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Ukraine_Memorandum_on_Security_Assurances), valid: October 2009).

<sup>85</sup> BBC Monitoring Kiev Unit, *Opposition leader views NATO as threat to Ukraine's political stability, economy*, 07.03.2008; *Remarks by Hon. Serhiy Grynevetsky* (<http://cics.com.ua/index.php/ru/content-layouts/83-remarks-by-hon-serhiy-grynevetsky>, valid: October 2009); *Speaker Lytvyn stands for higher status of Budapest Memorandum 1994*, 13.07.2009 (<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/order/?id=164791>, valid: October 2009) and "Uns geht es um unsere Sicherheit, nicht um die NATO", in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 29.11.2009.

Such a neutrality agreement would benefit all sides. NATO could dispose a permanent bone of contention in its relations with Russia and lay the foundation for better Russo-NATO cooperation by not expanding into Russia's near abroad. Since NATO will not benefit a great deal from such expansion anyway, this is a suitable deal. Even more important, it is a permanent solution. A neutral Ukraine would also serve as a buffer-zone between NATO and Russia in case of a confrontation between the two, and help to prevent escalation by geographically separating them. Moreover, because Ukraine renounced its interest in NATO membership itself, NATO's credibility remains intact. But on the other hand, the agreement would still allow Ukraine to participate in the cooperation mechanisms of EU and NATO and therefore preserve good Western-Ukraine relations, without including the risk for NATO of being entrapped in a Russo-Ukrainian conflict. It would also still be possible for Ukraine to participate in NATO operations.

For Ukraine, one of the most important benefits would be the permanent elimination of a conflict with Russia about the country's NATO membership. At the same time, neutrality status allows Ukraine to maintain good relations with the West and Russia, and it could still benefit from cooperation with NATO. It can be argued that Ukraine would de facto not give anything up, because it is highly unlikely that it will reach membership in this institution anyway anytime soon. However, without full membership, there will be no NATO Art. V guarantee for Ukraine. But this is a justifiable loss for Ukraine, since the risk of military confrontation with Russia – the most plausible Art. V scenario – is quite low and decreases in case of a successful agreement. To further minimize the risk, the signatories should supply Ukraine with defensive weapon systems to increase its ability to defend itself. Such an agreement would also not rule out future EU membership of Ukraine, as the EU membership of other neutral countries like Austria, Ireland etc. shows.

A status of permanent Ukrainian neutrality would also serve Russia's interest, because it would prevent NATO's expansion towards the Russian borders and into the near abroad. Furthermore, relations with Ukraine could improve, the country would still serve as a transit country for natural gas, and it would be open for the Russian economy and for continuation of cooperation in the defense industry sector.

But this admittedly ambitious project has also some drawbacks. First, the question of the future of the Black Sea Fleet port in Sevastopol remains unsolved. If Ukraine becomes officially neutral, Russia would probably have to give up the base. It is questionable how the Sevastopol conflict can be solved, because so far the Russians show little intention to give up the base in 2017. Second, and closely related to the first point, the Russians have little incentive to accept

official Ukrainian neutrality, if they can achieve their goals (preventing Ukrainian NATO membership, maintaining economic relations with Kiev and using Ukraine as a transit country for natural gas) by just maintaining the status quo. Also some observers argue that Russia has even an interest in an unstable Ukraine that serves as a negative role-model for Western reform and demonstrates the amenities of Putin's so-called 'guided democracy'.<sup>86</sup> In this case, Russia would possibly not officially rule out its possibility to interfere in Ukrainian domestic affairs to de-stabilize the country. Third, it is unclear if the West could reach a consensus to support the agreement. While the continental Western European powers are likely to support such a proposal, some of the Eastern European countries might find it too soft concerning Russia. Additionally, although Barack Obama slowed down the enlargement process successfully, there are strong domestic elements in the United States, which are committed to the spread of democracy (by enlarging NATO, too) and a hard, containing policy on Russia.<sup>87</sup> Any U.S. administration will find it extremely difficult to convince this opposition, namely in the Senate, to agree to a Ukrainian neutrality treaty. So in practice there might be strong resentments against the proposal from the two arguably most important players, Russia and the United States. In this case, the European Union would be needed to act as a stronger broker for Ukrainian neutrality.

Overall, Germany has much to gain from Ukrainian neutrality: The intra-Alliance, NATO-Russia, and Ukraine-Russia disputes on this issue would end and relations with Russia would no longer be negatively affected by it. The situation at the Eastern European Union border would be stabilized and therefore Germany's security increases. Hence, Germany should support proposals for Ukrainian neutrality within the multilateral frameworks of EU and NATO and also shape Russia's choices towards this direction.

## 5.2 Solving the NATO-Georgian Dilemma?

Solving the Georgian NATO membership dilemma could prove to be even more complicated, since the desire for Georgian NATO membership is still deeply embedded within the country and a high priority for president Saakashvili.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, the Georgian-Russian War in 2008 damped the former cross-party consensus and the high public approval rates for join-

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<sup>86</sup> Steven Pifer (2009a), *Engaging Ukraine in 2009*, Brookings Foreign Policy Paper 12, 10.

<sup>87</sup> Markus Kaim (2009), "Back to the Future. Die amerikanische NATO-Debatte zu Beginn der Präsidentschaft Barack Obamas", in: *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* 2, 222-224; Tony Karon (2009), *The Georgia Crisis: A Blow to NATO*, (<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1832988,00.html>, valid: September 2009), 1-3; Donald K. Bandler (2009), "Immer dieser Michel: Washington, Berlin und der Streit um die NATO-Osterweiterung", in: *Internationale Politik* 3, 77; Timo Noetzel / Benjamin Schreer (2009), "Does a multi-tier NATO matter? The Atlantic alliance and the process of strategic change", in: *International Affairs* 2, 216.

<sup>88</sup> Vincent Morelli et al. (2008), *NATO Enlargement: Albania, Croatia, and Possible Future Candidates*, CRS Report for Congress, 18.

ing the Alliance between 68% and 77%. A majority still wants Georgia align with the West, but EU membership becomes increasingly more important in comparison to NATO membership.<sup>89</sup> However, unlike in the case of Ukraine, it seems unlikely that Georgia will give up its NATO ambitions voluntarily anytime soon, since Georgia feels it needs the security guarantee to be safe from Russia, in a time where 85% of its population see Russia as the greatest political and economic threat.<sup>90</sup>

Since Georgian NATO membership is not an attractive option for the West, one has to find another way to increase Georgian security, which should also at least not downgrade Georgian-Russian and NATO-Russian relations.

For this to happen, at first Georgia and Russia have to solve their ongoing conflict over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Georgia should begin to accept that both provinces are lost, especially since Russia recognized them officially as independent states. Russia will not take this recognition back, and even president Saakashvili has indicated that the provinces might be lost for Georgia.<sup>91</sup> In this situation, the West should change its position and not longer insists on undivided Georgian territorial integrity, because that is de facto wishful thinking and does not help to solve the conflict permanently.<sup>92</sup>

But here some problems occur: On the one hand, like in the case of Ukraine, it is unclear if Russia has a genuine interest in solving his disputes with Georgia. On the other hand, more than 90% of the Georgians disapprove the independence of the two provinces, and 62% consider conserving territorial unity the priority of the government.<sup>93</sup> So any Georgian administration that might try to give up territorial unity will face severe domestic resistance, which makes such a move highly unlikely or even impossible in the foreseeable future. Probably the situation in the region will be similar to the situation on Cyprus, and the West and Georgia will have to live with the current status quo, which also means that Georgia cannot join NATO as long as the conflict is not solved.

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<sup>89</sup> Ghia Nodia (2009), *Why Georgia Dare Not Risk Declaring Neutrality*, 02.04.2009 ([http://www.rferl.org/content/Why\\_Georgia\\_Dare\\_Not\\_Risk\\_Declaring\\_Neutrality/1600767.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Why_Georgia_Dare_Not_Risk_Declaring_Neutrality/1600767.html), valid: October 2009);, Martin Malek (2008), "NATO and the South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia on Different Tracks", in: *Connections* 3, 35-36; Georgian National Survey June 16-25, 2009.

<sup>90</sup> Georgian National Survey June 16-25, 2009.

<sup>91</sup> Egbert Jahn (2008), "Neue Fronten nach dem Krieg", in: *Osteuropa* 11, 7; Lionel Beehner (2009), *Letter From Tbilisi: Georgia's Confidence Game* (<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/features/letters-from/letter-from-tbilisi-georgias-confidence-game> valid: September 2009).

<sup>92</sup> Alexander Cooley / Lincoln Mitchell (2009), "No Way to Treat Our Friends: Recasting Recent U.S.-Georgian Relations", in: *The Washington Quarterly* 1, 38-38; Walther Stützle (2008), "Man kann hier überhaupt nicht von Sieger sprechen", Interview, 13.08.2008 ([http://www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/interview\\_dlf/830916/](http://www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/interview_dlf/830916/), valid: October 2009); Alexander Rahr (2009), "Wir haben Russland den Georgien-Krieg verziehen", DGAP-Pressemitteilung, 04.08.2009 (<http://www.dgap.org/dgap/presse/mitteilungen/view/1248963647.html>, valid: October 2009).

<sup>93</sup> Georgian National Survey June 16-25, 2009.

In the long-term, the 'Ukrainian-model' described above might serve anybody's interests the best in Georgia, too, after Georgia recognizes the independence of Abkhazia and Ossetia. This and an end of Georgian NATO ambitions would increase security towards Russia, while cooperation with NATO and EU would increase the wealth and security of the country as well and so decrease Russian influence.

Unfortunately, Georgian neutrality is not a real option at the moment. Even though some Georgian politicians support such a step, the parliamentary majority ruled it out in 2007. Furthermore, neutrality would be considered a Russian 'victory' and Western abandonment in Georgia. From the Georgian point of view it would also endanger the alignment with the West, since Georgia would be helplessly exposed to Russian influence, despite NATO-Georgia Commission and ongoing EU-Georgia cooperation.<sup>94</sup>

Anyway, the West should do whatever it takes to pacify the situation, that is to prevent Russia from invading Georgia again and to prevent another Georgian military action against the two provinces as well, for example by providing strictly defensive military systems to Georgia to deter a Russian intervention.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, no steps should be taken to bring Georgia any closer to NATO membership and the West should try to affect Georgia to accept the loss of the two provinces and therefore eliminate one big problem on the way to a permanent, peaceful conflict resolution.

While NATO should act reluctantly, the Germany and the EU, not-threatening to Russia, could use its influence in the region. For example, it could create economic and political incentives, which would make it easier for the Georgian government to accept the loss of Ossetia and Abkhazia. However, the EU might not be able to push Georgia into the right direction, that is recognize the independence of the two provinces, since many members have ongoing domestic disputes over autonomy of their own provinces, and does therefore not wish to create any precedents (compare the recognition of Kosovo).

## 6 Conclusions

The aim of this analysis was to define German interests in future NATO enlargement to find out which membership ambitions Germany should support, and which countries should not

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<sup>94</sup> Zdenek Kriz / Zinaida Shevchuk (2009), *Georgia on the way to NATO after the Russian-Georgian Armed Conflict in 2008* (<http://www.defenceandstrategy.eu/cs/aktualni-cislo-1-2009/clanky/georgia-on-the-way-to-nato-after-the-russian-georgian-armed-conflict-in-2008.html>, valid: October 2009), 105-106; Nodia, Ghia. *Why Georgia Dare Not Risk Declaring Neutrality*, 02.04.2009 ([http://www.rferl.org/content/Why\\_Georgia\\_Dare\\_Not\\_Risk\\_Declaring\\_Neutrality/1600767.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Why_Georgia_Dare_Not_Risk_Declaring_Neutrality/1600767.html), Stand: 01.09.2009).

<sup>95</sup> Robert E. Hamilton (2008), *The Georgia-Russia War and NATO* (<http://csis.org/publication/georgia-russia-war-and-nato>, valid: October 2009).

join NATO from the German point of view. The paper argued that Germany's primary interest in NATO and NATO enlargement is to create a stable, democratized European security order. Furthermore, Germany has five more significant interests concerning NATO enlargement. First, NATO enlargement should not decrease the cohesion within the Alliance or negatively influence the relations between Europe and the US or the EU and NATO. Second, further enlargement must not decrease the security of the Federal Republic or NATO in general, especially not by alienating Russia. Third, related to the last point, the friendly Russo-German relations should not be ruined through enlargement, unless the gains of enlargement could outweigh the expected losses. Fourth, additional financial costs should be avoided as far as possible and finally, NATO's decision-making process must still be able to work effectively. Based on the current state of the Alliance's enlargement process, the paper focused on three areas: the Western Balkan states, Georgia, and Ukraine. An analysis of the German interests and the potential member states showed that Germany should focus on the Western Balkans for further NATO enlargement, because a successful stabilization and democratization of these countries, in connection with possible EU membership in the long-term and at least small military contribution to the Alliance would increase NATO's security. Moreover, most of these states have no unsolvable minority or international disputes and because of the geographical distance to Russia, possible Russian objections can be ruled out. Since all of the candidate countries in this area are comparably small, significant financial costs or grid-lock in NATO's decision-making process are unlikely. So while possible negative consequences are manageable, NATO membership of these states would actually increase Allied security and eliminate 'white spots' on the geopolitical map of Europe.

On the other hand, in case of Georgia and Ukraine, NATO and Germany have little to gain from their membership and much to lose. Both states have no EU membership perspective at the moment, so their accession to the Alliance might decrease its cohesion and hurt the ESDP. Also, both states have unsolved disputes with Russia, and most of them are unlikely to be solved anytime soon. Moreover, this includes the danger of entrapment for NATO into a (even military) conflict with Russia. Also, Russia consider both states 'near abroad', and NATO membership of one or both of them would be considered a hostile act against the Russian Federation and especially in case of Ukraine ruin NATO-Russian relations. In addition, in case of a Russian-Georgian or Russian-Ukrainian conflict, it is quite questionable if the old NATO members would have the means and especially the political will to actively defend these countries militarily if necessary. This is a lesson of the Russian-Georgian War 2008, which Russia probably learnt. These drawbacks, in particular the possible confrontation with

Russia, outweigh by far the gains of Georgian-Ukrainian NATO membership, for example military contributions to NATO's missions or control of strategic important territory. But NATO announced in 2008 and 2009 that Georgia as well as Ukraine will join the Alliance in the future, and since the Alliance depends heavily on its credibility, Germany can only delay the accession process of these countries. On the other hand, if the candidate countries themselves declare that they are no longer interested in joining the Alliance, NATO would be freed from its 'membership-promise'. The analysis pointed out that this is a not unrealistic in the Ukrainian case after the presidential elections in early 2010. In such a case, NATO, Russia and Ukraine should agree on a permanent status of Ukrainian neutrality. Unfortunately, although neutrality might be an option for Georgia in the future, the nature of its conflict with Russia make a manifestation of the status quo for the upcoming years most likely. However, Germany should support options for Georgia and Ukraine other than NATO membership like for example permanent neutrality.

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