

S P E E C H

*by H.E. Traian Basescu, President of Romania
At the Konrad Adenauer Foundation*

***“NATO After the Bucharest Summit:
Heading Towards a Renewed Transatlantic Agenda”
(30 iunie 2008, Bruxelles)***

*Distinguished audience,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

It gives me great pleasure to attend, as a guest of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, a conference on the future of NATO, even more so as it takes place just as we are preparing for the 60th anniversary of the Alliance. In this context, I should mention that I already had the opportunity to speak about the outcome of the Bucharest Summit in a conference organized by the Romanian branch of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

On that occasion, I stated that the Summit met Romania's objectives and expectations. It was not only the largest Summit in the history of the Alliance, but it was also a success in terms of organization and, especially, in terms of substance of the political debates and decisions. It was a Summit with a dense agenda, which took place against a complex international background. On most of the issues we succeeded in finding compromise solutions. On others, even though we could not reach closure, important steps were made.

What we can be certain of is that the Bucharest Summit was a key event for the transformation of the Alliance and for strengthening its contribution to the Euro-Atlantic and global security. Let me briefly point out what we have succeeded in achieving.

Firstly, we continued the NATO enlargement, by inviting Albania and Croatia to join us. We expect to implement, as soon as possible, the invitation extended to Macedonia, pending settlement of the name issue. We have also drawn Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro closer to the Alliance, keeping, at the same time, an open door for Serbia. We hope that soon the domestic political scene will allow Belgrade to strengthen its partnership with NATO.

At the same time, the Alliance maintained the open door policy toward Eastern Europe and the Black Sea Region. The Allies made a clear commitment to Georgia and Ukraine with respect to their future NATO membership. The two countries should be allowed to make full use of the Membership Action Plan - MAP – which is an

instrument that has already been tested and has proven its effectiveness with respect to reform acceleration.

Secondly, Bucharest has also emerged as a Summit for Partners. The meetings with the Euro-Atlantic partners, with the Afghanistan contributors, with Russia and Ukraine, were clear signals of the importance that NATO attaches to its partnership policy. This Summit has also marked NATO's openness toward cooperation with partners across the globe.

By attending the NATO-Russia Council, the President of the Russian Federation acknowledged the importance of this strategic dialogue forum and the possibility to further enhance it, by tackling issues where the Allies and Russia do not hold similar views, such as the Treaty on the Conventional Forces in Europe or missile defense.

Thirdly, the Bucharest Summit also signaled a stronger NATO commitment toward cooperation with other organizations in the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan. The presence, for the first time at a NATO Summit, of the UN Secretary General, the President of the European Commission and the representatives of the World Bank, further increased the relevance of the decisions reached. As a matter of consistency, we are expecting the signing, as soon as possible, of the UN-NATO Declaration, which would lay the basis for a pragmatic cooperation between the two organizations to this end.

I had the opportunity to discuss with President Karzai about the joint efforts of the authorities in Kabul and those of the international community, aimed at ensuring a better life for the Afghan people. What this country needs goes beyond a pure military response, it requires a complex solution. With this end in view, the Allies adopted a strategic concept, with a specific action plan, on the basis of which we pledged further troop contributions. Recently, the International Conference in Paris and the Meeting of the G8 Foreign Ministers strengthened the security commitment made in Bucharest, through international contributions aimed at the development and civil reconstruction of Afghanistan. Streamlining these efforts, along with eradicating poppy crops and enhancing border security are priorities for the following period.

In the fourth place, the Summit contributed to increasing NATO's ability to tackle the security threats of the XXI century. The Alliance has extended not only its membership, but also its capacity to answer the current security threats. With this purpose in mind, NATO has adopted specific concepts in the field of comprehensive approach, cyber-defense or arms control. We have taken the decision to tackle the ballistic missile threat by putting in place a missile defense system that would cover the entire allied territory. The indivisibility of security and the collective solidarity are the essential principles that underpin our approach.

Moreover, we have decided that NATO will take on a role in energy security, an increasingly relevant issue. The contributions that the Alliance will bring in this field involve assessing the risks to energy security, identifying NATO's role in protecting the critical infrastructure and in supporting regional cooperation. Through its experience and capabilities, the Alliance can bring added value to the efforts of other actors, for example in what concerns the critical aspect of protecting the infrastructure for energy resources.

We can speak at length about the NATO Summit. However, I would like to conclude by saying that, through the decisions reached in Bucharest, NATO reconfirmed its relevance in the new security environment and its willingness and capacity to effectively respond to the current threats. Moreover, something which is particularly important for Romania, the Alliance reconfirmed its interest in ensuring the necessary balance between its mission to guarantee Euro-Atlantic security and the innate contribution of such an organization to global security.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Only three month after the Bucharest Meeting, we are laying the ground work for the April 2009 Summit, which will celebrate the Alliance's 60th anniversary. In Strasbourg and Kehl we have the opportunity of renewing the transatlantic agenda by strengthening NATO's role and capabilities for the XXI century. From a Romanian perspective, these are some of the priorities related to this objective.

First, the Alliance must remain committed to the Western Balkans. NATO's enlargement should continue, in order to further support the democratic transformation in this part of Europe. The Western Balkans remains a challenging region and NATO should continue to have a key-role in the stabilization process, alongside EU and the UN. We are pleased to see that the European Union has renewed its commitment toward the countries in the region and has recently signed an Association and Stabilization Agreement with Bosnia-Herzegovina, after concluding a similar agreement with Serbia. Romania looks forward to the developing relationship between the Western Balkan states and the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, as they approach membership status.

Notwithstanding regional evolutions, Kosovo remains a challenge. Romania maintains its policy of non-recognition of the unilateral declaration of independence. At the same time, we will back Allied measures, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244, with the understanding that this does not represent an implicit recognition of Kosovo independence. The recognition is an attribute of states only. We employ the same interpretation with respect to NATO's new tasks in Kosovo.

Secondly, the Euro-Atlantic security depends on regional stability, be it in the Western Balkans, Black Sea Region or Central Asia. Through its track record NATO has demonstrated it does not draw spheres of influence, but aims at enhancing stability and facilitating democratic transformation. The time has come for Georgia and Ukraine to join this process, which grants them more than a possible membership in our Alliance; it offers them a society-oriented project. We believe these two states should benefit from the opportunity of using MAP as soon as possible, while making it clear that MAP does not equal an invitation to NATO. It is an efficient mechanism of preparation, which entails political responsibility for pursuing the required reforms.

NATO's approach towards Euro-Atlantic security needs to acquire a stronger regional dimension, beyond the enlargement process. Alongside the EU, the Alliance could foster the potential of the Black Sea – Caspian Sea – Central Asian area. It can achieve this by promoting political dialogue, supporting regional cooperation and the development of institutional and security capabilities, including in the field of energy

infrastructure. At the same time, settling the frozen conflicts in the Black Sea region cannot be postponed indefinitely. Their resolution resides with the independence, sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the states involved.

It is important to define a partnership between NATO and the Russian Federation, based on a coherent and transparent dialogue. Our common goal is to enhance European and international security. In pursuit of this goal, we should not discard the principle of inviolability of borders—as stipulated by the Helsinki Final Act. The emphasis should not be laid on a reconfiguration of the European security architecture, but on strengthening the strategic dialogue with Russia, both on the EU and NATO dimension. The talks on the EU-Russia new strategic partnership or in the NATO-Russia Council can provide solutions to the issues that concern us.

An issue where the partnership between NATO and the Russian Federation can prove its value concerns the arms control regime in Europe. I have to admit that there are certain differences among state parties to the Treaty on the Conventional Forces in Europe and these differences have led to the current state of affairs. At the same time, I am convinced that, since we have once managed to find a solution that could accommodate all interests, we will be able to do it again. The only condition is that, once the engagements are undertaken, all parties must respect them, in full.

Thirdly, we need to continue the military transformation of the Alliance, in order to ensure an effective collective defense, based on well trained forces and adequate capabilities for their deployment. The enforcement of the concepts adopted in Bucharest, for tackling the new threats, is essential in order to answer the current and future challenges. In this respect, unity of action and protecting the Allied consensus are essential. Additionally, I believe it is now the time to have an extended discussion on the allocation of the necessary resources.

NATO's future will be defined, mainly, by the success of its operations, and also by soft-security approaches, by the capacity to develop partnerships, to strengthen institutions, to contribute through niche roles to the European and international efforts of combating terrorism, proliferation of weapons mass of destruction and to contribute to the development of energy security.

In the fourth place, the next Summit needs to convey the message of a new stage in the transatlantic cooperation within NATO. We believe that, through the symbolism of its location, the next Summit, which will be hosted by France and Germany will reflect both NATO's vocation to reunify Europe, as well as the fact that the Franco-German tandem can be more than a propeller for the European integration; it can act as a catalyst for transatlantic cooperation within the alliance. We hope that the 60th anniversary of the Alliance will coincide with the reinstatement of the NATO defense family, as indicated by the return of France in the military structures of the Alliance.

Tomorrow, July 1st, France takes on the Presidency of the European Union. Let us keep faith that the following months will offer us the opportunity to bridge various approaches to security issues. The recent US–EU Summit Declaration provides a promising platform in this respect.

We must not forget that the Allies have already acknowledged the need for a new strategic concept, while EU is updating its own security strategy. We should take

advantage of this opportunity in order to focus the approaches of the two organizations on the common objective, namely consolidating peace and strengthening Euro-Atlantic and international security.

The fact that NATO will convene in the city which hosts the Council of Europe is also relevant for the philosophy of the Alliance, where democratic values lay the foundation to our security. From this perspective, it is important that the next Summit should strengthen NATO's role in supporting democratic transformation and integration in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Taking into account all these challenges and objectives, I would say that NATO's road toward the next Summit and beyond offers an opportunity to strengthen the North-Atlantic Alliance as a pillar of the European and Euro-Atlantic security architecture. The priorities and commitments for the next decade, including a stronger NATO – EU partnership, should be the catalysts for a renewed transatlantic agenda.

Thank you!