

Content Analysis of Media Coverage of Russia in the US

VIOLATIONS OF JOURNALISTIC STANDARDS

1	Opinion Presented as News
2	Omission of key facts
3	Inaccurate Statement/Data
4	Claim Unsupported by Data/Facts
5	Sensational context
6	Slanted terminology
7	One-sided perspective
8	Lack of comparative context
9	Overuse of same Russian source
10	Overuse of same Western source
11	Unidentified source
12	Lack of historical context
13	Lack of cultural context
14	Obsolete information
15	Repetitious clichés/ words
16	Inflammatory headline
17	Cold war rhetoric

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NATO Expansion Should Continue

By Donal Rumsfeld

Mr. Rumsfeld was U.S. ambassador to NATO from 1973 to 1974 and was the 13th and 21st U.S. secretary of Defense.

Next week Romania's capital of Bucharest will host representatives from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's 26 member nations. There the alliance will make critical choices about its mission in Afghanistan and expanding to several former Soviet-bloc nations. These decisions need not and should not be further delayed for yet more "meetings" and "consultations" in capitals across Europe.

Today NATO needs clarity of purpose. A display of timidity in Bucharest could derail its recent progress in adjusting to the demands of the still new 21st century. Moving decisively beyond NATO's traditional mindset is a strategic imperative if the alliance is to remain relevant to the challenges it is likely to face.

There is no better way for NATO to move forward than by extending full membership invitations to Albania, Croatia and Macedonia² and by beginning the process to bring Georgia and Ukraine into the alliance in the future through membership action plans (MAPs). At a time when European commitments to the NATO mission in Afghanistan are being questioned, the determination of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia to contribute to tough missions is clear. Collectively, the three Balkan nations have more than 650 troops currently serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁸

Comment: OMISSION OF KEY FACTS

Comment: LACK OF COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

At the moment Croatia has more than 200 troops training the Afghan National Army and serving in Provincial Reconstruction Teams. A company of Macedonian troops leads the mission of defending NATO's International Security Assistance Force headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan. In addition to its continuous troop presence in Afghanistan since 2002, Albania was among the first nations to deploy to Iraq in 2003. Five years later, Albania intends to be among the last to

² **OMISSION OF KEY FACTS:** Inviting Croatia and most certainly Macedonia into NATO seems to violate NATO's own principles on extending membership. Both countries suffer from potential border and sovereignty conflicts that could draw the alliance into conflicts it should try to remain neutral or stand aside from. NATO rules on membership admission stipulate that prospective members do not suffer from territorial or sovereignty disputes. Macedonia's Albanian population in the north is demanding national autonomy of the kind that could be a precursor to demands for independence and unification with Kosovo and/or Albania. Kosovo's impending internationally-recognized independence will strengthen the imperative for a 'Great Albania' of the kind that can only encourage the stance taken by Macedonia's Albanians. Similarly, the Bosnia-Herzegovina's survival as an integrated entity in its present form is not a foregone conclusion. The ongoing tensions between the Serb, Muslim and Croat communities there and between Serbia and Kosovo still hold the potential for a regional meltdown; one that is best avoided by securing Serbian and Russian cooperation, rather than continued attacks on their interests. Moreover, NATO member Greece is opposing Macedonia's admission on the basis of its longstanding opposition to Macedonia's name which corresponds to Greece's northernmost region and raises fears in Athens of a Macedonian revanchism. Thus, Macedonia's admission will not only expose NATO to potential local conflicts but will weaken the alliance's internal comity by offending Greece. An ignored Athens might be less accommodating regarding its supply of troops to the efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq and its position regarding its longstanding dispute over Cyprus with NATO member Turkey; a conflict which emerged when both countries were already NATO members and should serve as a warning to expanding NATO to countries with even more sharp sovereignty or 'stateness' issues.

⁸ **LACK OF COMPARATIVE CONTEXT:** These three countries' contribution to the war against jihadism in Afghanistan and Iraq therefore amounts to a fraction of 1 percent of the combined international effort. Does such a weak contribution suggest a deep commitment "to tough missions"? Or is it a show of support for the U.S. and Western effort in order to win NATO membership and the benefits that they will accrue from membership? Even if these contributions are a reflection of a sincere calculus of common interest with the West, do the small contributions to NATO efforts that these three small and relatively poor countries (especially Albania and Macedonia) as well as Georgia and Ukraine are capable of rendering outweigh the cost of alienating from NATO a truly great power such as Russia and the potential instability this may cause on NATO's eastern periphery? Rumsfeld notes that these miniscule contributions are needed because other "European commitments to the NATO mission and Afghanistan" (and he might have added traditional NATO member-countries' contribution to the effort in Iraq) "are being questioned." In fact major NATO powers such as Germany are not doing their share in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the extent to which new members and the prospect of additional new ones compensate for the shortfall relieves 'old NATO' members from facing the dire consequences of their negligence and allows them to continue to shirk their responsibilities, which undermines the alliance in the long-term.

leave. As the Albanian military commander in Mosul, Iraq, recently said, "We'll be here as long as the Americans are."

As was the case with NATO invitations to other former Soviet-bloc nations in 1999 and 2004, this year's expansion would consolidate democratic and economic gains in Southeast Europe.^{12,8} The region's trajectory toward free political institutions and free markets is unmistakable.

Comment: LACK OF HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE CONTEXTS

For the past several years under membership action plans, the governments of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia have been preparing to join the ranks of NATO. They now meet the necessary criteria for membership. They have shown their commitment to human rights and regional stability by protecting the rights of ethnic minorities. **They have allocated a greater percentage of their GDP to defense expenditures than most NATO countries in Western Europe,**⁷ and they have built sound defense capabilities in intelligence, medical support, and special operations.

Comment: ONE-SIDED PERSPECTIVE

Perhaps most important in light of NATO's demonstrated shortcomings, Albania, Croatia and Macedonia have made use of those capabilities in Afghanistan and Iraq by taking on the tough missions that several current NATO members have been unwilling to carry out. Albania, Croatia and Macedonia are certainly not large geographically, but **the operational -- and attitudinal -- contributions they bring to NATO will far outstrip their size.**⁷

Comment: ONE-SIDED PERSPECTIVE

With respect to Georgia and Ukraine, **both nations are democratic,**^{3,4} **politically mature,**

Comment: INACCURATE STATEMENT and CLAIM UNSUPPORTED BY DATA/FACTS

^{12,8} **LACK OF HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE CONTEXTS:** No evidence has ever been presented to show that without NATO expansion the countries admitted in 1999 and 2004 would not have consolidated their democracies. In fact, in almost every case, the new members were very consolidated by the time they were offered NATO expansion. This contradiction in the this aspect of the logic or justification for the expansion policy is reflected in Rumsfeld's very next sentence where he notes that "(t)he region's trajectory toward free political institutions and free markets is unmistakable." Croatia's democratic credentials have not been at issue for nearly a decade, the only risk posed to the democracies of Albania and Macedonia lie in potential sovereignty disputes rooted in demands for Albanian autonomy in Macedonia and Albania's nationalist elements supporting the creation of a 'Great Albania' to encompass Kosovo and regions in Macedonia.

⁷ **ONE-SIDED PERSPECTIVE:** This raises the question of whether this is good for still weak transitional economies and poor countries, especially Albania and Macedonia as well as Ukraine and Georgia discussed below.

⁷ **ONE-SIDED PERSPECTIVE:** This ignores the downside of these prospective member contributions' compensation for the old NATO members' inordinately weak support. The latter 'free ride' by enjoying the benefits of membership while not fulfilling their responsibilities commensurate with their membership and status within the alliance as better-off and founding members. Moreover, Rumsfeld here is repeating the point regarding these countries' comparatively weak contribution to NATO and Western security measures in Afghanistan and Iraq, especially regarding the costs regarding relations with Russia.

^{3,4} **INACCURATE STATEMENT and CLAIM UNSUPPORTED BY DATA/FACTS:** Rumsfeld's claim that Georgia and Ukraine "are democratic" is open to serious question. It can be argued that they are democratizing, but they are from stable democracies. Mikhail Saakashvili's regime recently cracked

relatively stable^{3,4} and committed to the international community after the Orange and Rose revolutions in 2003 and 2004. Neighboring Russia recently suggested it might turn its nuclear arsenal on Ukraine or incite civil disorder in Georgia **if either takes steps to join NATO**.³

Comment: INACCURATE STATEMENT

down on the opposition in Georgia around the presidential elections, and there were serious problems with the conduct of the election itself, as stated by the OSCE. Saakashvili seemingly betrayed the Rose Revolution's democratic promise, by forcibly cracking down on protestors, closing an opposition television station, and declaring emergency rule. Saakashvili's government then ran a less than free and fair presidential election campaign, winning with 53 percent of the vote compared with 96 percent in 2004. (On the Georgian presidential election's clearly less than free and fair execution see the report in Russia's liberal, anti-Putin newspaper *Novaya gazeta* – Yelena Milashina, "Sam prishol," *Novaya gazeta*, No. 1, 10 January 2008, www.novayagazeta.ru/data/2008/01/18.html.) Saakashvili was saved when Western governments and most international governmental organizations gave the election overall passing marks. The opposition rejected the official election tally and mounted days of demonstrations in Georgia's capitol, mimicking the proponents of the Rose Revolution – minus the storming of the parliament building and the seizure of power. The government and opposition have still not resolved their differences, paralyzing parliament and administration, and requiring parliamentary elections set for May. More recently, the Georgian human rights ombudsman's critical report on human rights in Georgia has been held up for unexplained, likely political reasons. (See RFERL Newsline, Vol. 12, No. 60, 31 March 2008, www.rferl.org/newsline/2008/03/310308.asp.) Even Ukraine can hardly be regarded as a consolidated democracy; as in Georgia and Russia, corruption is rampant, the rule of law is weak, and the president appoints regional governors, rather than allowing them to be popularly elected.

^{3,4} **INACCURATE STATEMENT and CLAIM UNSUPPORTED BY DATA/FACTS:** Rumsfeld's claim that Georgia and Ukraine are "stable" is clearly inaccurate. As noted above, Mikhail Saakashvili's regime recently cracked down on the opposition in Georgia around the presidential elections, and the opposition has boycotted the parliament and conducted permanent demonstrations and hunger strikes; hardly signs of stability. Both countries, especially Georgia, face problems of interethnic tension and sovereignty issues that could lead to secessionism. In Georgia, the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and North Ossetia are de facto - though unrecognized - independent states, and President Saakashvili has not ruled out the use of force to reunite them. Moreover, occasional firing between Georgian and CIS peacekeeping forces and between Georgian and the republics' respective forces lead to casualties and fatalities. The ethnic Russian population which predominates in eastern Ukraine has on occasion threatened secession, in particular over the issue of Ukraine's entry into NATO, which it opposes. There is also a sovereignty dispute between Russia and Ukraine over Sevastopol and Crimea, and the Crimean Tatars also constitute a potential separatist element. In both Georgia and Ukraine corruption is rampant, and the rule of law is weak, which also contribute to political instability. Perhaps, the greatest source of instability in both countries is the threat of NATO expansion. In Georgia NATO expansion – along with the West's recognition of Kosovo's independence – is driving Abkhazia and North Ossetia to seek Russian recognition of their independence and ultimately Russian security guarantees if not full incorporation into the Russian Federation. In Ukraine, NATO expansion is not only driving a wedge between Russia and Ukraine but between ethnic Russian-dominated eastern Ukraine and Ukrainian-dominated western Ukraine.

³ **INACCURATE STATEMENT:** This is not only an inaccurate statement; it is a deliberate distortion of the facts. Referring to "Russia recently suggesting" anything clearly obfuscates matters. Russia's main voice President Vladimir Putin seems to be Rumsfeld's source here. Putin in fact has never suggested anything similar, nor has any Russian Foreign Ministry official. On 13 February 2008, Putin, addressing not the issue of NATO expansion but the long-term prospect of Ukraine perhaps joining the ABM system

Undeterred, the Georgian and Ukrainian governments have expressed their clear desire to initiate membership action plan proceedings.

Silence on the issue of Georgia and Ukraine in Bucharest -- including **postponement of MAPs, as some Western European governments seem to be suggesting -- would amount to a rejection of Georgia's and Ukraine's international aspirations. It would prove disillusioning to their people,**^{3,2} and it would serve as a green light to Russia to continue the tired rhetoric of the Cold War.

Comment: INACCURATE STATEMENT and OMISSION OF KEY FACTS

The administration, bipartisan majorities in Congress, and most members of NATO have expressed support for extending membership to nations in Southeastern Europe and for partnerships with those nations beyond. **Why then the hold up? Aside from Russia's opposition, Greece has threatened to issue a sole veto over Macedonia's entry because Macedonia refuses to change its country name.**³ The future of the trans-Atlantic alliance -- and its credibility as the pre-eminent political and military instrument of the world's democracies -- are too important to be constrained by narrow disputes over semantics or to intimidation tactics more befitting the last century.

Comment: INACCURATE STATEMENT

A larger, reinvigorated alliance, with three new members and two potential members, would augment NATO with countries that have a proven track record of not only recognizing today's challenges but **also of consistently contributing to the alliance's efforts to promote and protect its interests. Expansion would bring operational expertise**³ and a spirit of cooperation to an alliance in need of both. All five nations would also bring to NATO an appreciation for the vigilance

Comment: INACCURATE STATEMENT

the U.S. is planning to install in Poland and the Czech Republic, stated that "it is horrible to say and even horrible to think that, in response to the deployment of such facilities on Ukrainian territory, which cannot theoretically be ruled out, Russia could target its missile systems at Ukraine. Imagine this, just for a second." (See Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Vol. 12, No. 30, 13 February 2008, www.rferl.org/newsline/2008/02/130208.asp.) Putin never stated that Russia would incite separatism in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions but rather that Georgia's entry into NATO would incite interethnic tensions and separatism there.

^{3,2} **INACCURATE STATEMENT and OMISSION OF KEY FACTS:** Rumsfeld's statement here is inaccurate and clearly misleading, as he surely knows but chooses to omit the crucial fact that all public opinion surveys in Ukraine show that a majority or plurality opposes Ukraine's entry into NATO.

³ **INACCURATE STATEMENT:** Before publication and even submission of Rumsfeld's article, key NATO member Germany had already come out in opposition to offering Ukraine and Georgia a MAP, and shortly after publication France seconded Germany's position.

³ **INACCURATE STATEMENT:** It is unclear what new "operational expertise" the militaries of these five former communist countries can bring to NATO that is not possessed by NATO's present cohort of member-countries, which includes the most highly operational capable and technologically advanced militaries in the world. All five have been members of the Partnership for Peace program which features military assistance to them in the form of consulting and training from NATO. Georgia has recently been the beneficiary of additional military assistance and training from the U.S. What these countries do offer is an opportunity to expand the West's weapons market at the expense of Russia's arms industry, and in the case of Ukraine cut into Russia's perhaps most important military-industrial partner in terms of weapons production.

required to defend liberty. With their peoples' first hand experience of Communist occupation, they see in Islamic extremism the dangers of an all too familiar totalitarian ideology.⁷

Comment: ONE-SIDED PERSPECTIVE

NATO's mission in Afghanistan, thousands of miles from the European continent, has been an historic step toward transforming NATO to meet new challenges of the 21st century. But its work there has laid bare some hard truths about the state of the alliance.

Restrictive national caveats imposed by some member nations currently prevent their contingents from engaging in combat, causing other NATO and **non-NATO members of the coalition -- such as those being considered for membership currently -- to carry a disproportionate burden of the alliance's work and sacrifice.**^{3,2} Outdated rules of engagement, uneven national commitments, and a lack of sufficient urgency among several of its members are indisputable facts. And so too are the possibilities of failure and creeping irrelevance if NATO does not act wisely in Bucharest.

Comment: INACCURATE STATEMENT and OMISSION OF KEY FACTS

Expanding NATO to Albania, Croatia and Macedonia and building closer partnerships with Georgia and Ukraine would help to assuage any concerns that the alliance no longer has the collective grit **for the tough work necessary to overcome the challenges in Afghanistan.**⁷ All five non-NATO nations currently under consideration -- in contrast with several full NATO members -- have demonstrated willingness to accept NATO responsibilities.

Comment: ONE-SIDED PERSPECTIVE

Albania, Croatia and Macedonia are today ready to accept those responsibilities. Georgia and

⁷ **ONE-SIDED PERSPECTIVE:** If this is one of the criteria for NATO membership, then Russia has a stronger claim, since Russia suffered more from communism than perhaps any other country, excluding China.

^{3,2} **INACCURATE STATEMENT:** As noted in the second footnote comment on Rumsfeld's piece, the contribution of these countries is miniscule, making this statement inaccurate. **OMISSION OF KEY FACTS:** Russia is one non-member that has made a considerable contribution to NATO's effort in Afghanistan, despite the alliance's encroachment on Russian interests elsewhere. Russia has shared intelligence with the U.S. in the global war on jihadism, provided construction engineering assistance to Afghanistan to assist in the reconstruction effort, and jointly trained anti-narcotics personnel in Afghanistan and Central Asian countries. Russia recently offered a training base of the Ministry of Internal Affairs All-Russian Institute for Advanced Training located near Moscow for the latter purpose. According to the Heritage Foundation's Ariel Cohen, Russia has also reportedly expressed an interest in providing military helicopters for the war in Afghanistan. (See Ariel Cohen, "The Sochi Bush-Putin Summit: Last Chance to Improve Relations," Heritage Foundation Web Memo #1877, April 1, 2008, www.heritage.org.) Moreover, Russia and NATO are putting the final touches on a protocol for simplifying land transit of non-military cargo through Russian territory to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, and preparing an agreement on the use of Russian military air transport. Also, Russia and NATO are now negotiating establishment of an exchange of information and advanced experience, staging exercises and counter-terrorism training, and strengthening security on air and sea transport, subway systems and critical infrastructure in implementing the comprehensive RNC action plan on struggle against terrorism.

⁷ **ONE-SIDED PERSPECTIVE:** Would not this be resolved better by getting current members to fulfill their share of the responsibility, rather than allowing them to continue to shirk it by putting it on new members with clearly less capacity than such states as Germany.

Ukraine will likely be ready to accept NATO responsibilities in the coming years if issued membership action plans next week. The Bucharest summit presents an opportunity to advance the interests of all 26 member nations by expanding the NATO alliance. Now is not a time for self-doubt. It is a time for U.S. and European leadership.

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