

HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS BEFORE THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES March 30, 2004

Don't Expand NATO!

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. I do so because further expansion of NATO, an outdated alliance, is not in our national interest and may well constitute a threat to our national security in the future.

More than 50 years ago the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed to defend Western Europe and the United States against attack from the communist nations of Eastern Europe. It was an alliance of sovereign nations bound together in common purpose - for mutual defense. The deterrence value of NATO helped kept the peace throughout the Cold War. In short, NATO achieved its stated mission. With the fall of the Soviet system and the accompanying disappearance of the threat of attack, in 1989-1991, NATO's reason to exist ceased. Unfortunately, as with most bureaucracies, the end of NATO's mission did not mean the end of NATO. Instead, heads of NATO member states gathered in 1999 desperately attempting to devise new missions for the outdated and adrift alliance. This is where NATO moved from being a defensive alliance respecting the sovereignty of its members to an offensive and interventionist organization, concerned now with "economic, social and political difficulties...ethnic and religious rivalries, territorial disputes, inadequate or failed efforts at reform, the abuse of human rights, and the dissolution of states," in the words of the Washington 1999 Summit.

And we saw the fruits of this new NATO mission in the former Yugoslavia, where the US, through NATO, attacked a sovereign state that threatened neither the United States nor its own neighbors. In Yugoslavia, NATO abandoned the claim it once had to the moral high ground. The result of the illegal and immoral NATO intervention in the Balkans speaks for itself: NATO troops will occupy the Balkans for the foreseeable future. No peace has been attained, merely the cessation of hostilities and a permanent dependency on US foreign aid.

The further expansion of NATO is in reality a cover for increased US interventionism in Europe and beyond. It will be a conduit for more unconstitutional US foreign aid and US interference in the internal politics of member nations, especially the new members from the former East.

It will also mean more corporate welfare at home. As we know, NATO membership demands a minimum level of military spending of its member states. For NATO's new members, the burden of significantly increased military spending when there are no longer external threats is hard to meet. Unfortunately, this is where the US government steps in, offering aid and subsidized loans to these members so they can purchase more unneeded and unnecessary military equipment. In short, it is nothing more than corporate welfare for the US military industrial complex.

The expansion of NATO to these seven countries, we have heard, will open them up to the further expansion of US military bases, right up to the border of the former Soviet Union. Does no one worry that this continued provocation of Russia might have negative effects in the future? Is it necessary?

Further, this legislation encourages the accession of Albania, Macedonia, and Croatia - nations that not long ago were mired in civil and regional wars. The promise of US military assistance if any of these states are attacked is obviously a foolhardy one. What will the mutual defense obligations we are entering into mean if two Balkan NATO members begin hostilities against each other (again)?

In conclusion, we should not be wasting US tax money and taking on more military obligations expanding NATO. The alliance is a relic of the Cold War, a hold-over from another time, an anachronism. It should be disbanded, the sooner the better.