

Is NATO's Open Door Policy for the Western Balkans Still Relevant?

**Prof. Jim Seroka PhD
Auburn University USA
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NATO's Invitation to the Western Balkans Still Stands, but ...

The door is still open to the Western Balkans, but it is not wide enough to go through with comfort.



NATO's Invitation to the Western Balkans Still Stands, but ...

- **NATO members have much less enthusiasm, reason, and passion to follow through on the invitations to membership.**
- **NATO's attention has shifted from growth to consolidation.**
- **Candidate countries encounter higher hurdles to NATO accession.**

The Western Balkans are No Longer a Major NATO Concern

- **A Russian threat in the Ukraine, Black Sea, and Baltic states;**
- **Terrorism from ISIL and others impacting Western Europe;**
- **Civil War and refugees from Syria, Iraq, Libya.**

The Western Balkans are No Longer a Major NATO Concern

NATO's current priority concerns and the national interests of the Western Balkan nations are diverging.



NATO's European Members Do Not Prioritize Threats Similarly

- **Poland, Baltic States, and Romania prioritize deterring and containing Russia.**
- **Italy & Germany prioritize Russian deterrence and engagement.**
- **France, Belgium, Spain & Turkey focus on terrorism.**
- **Italy, Turkey, Greece, Spain & Portugal focus on refugees.**

NATO's European Members Do Not Prioritize Threats Similarly

Until NATO reaches consensus on its priorities, enlargement will be deferred.



NATO's New Agenda Requires a New and Untested Kind of NATO

- **NATO's needs to expand its capabilities and resources beyond its traditional strength in military deterrence.**
- **NATO needs to increasingly rely upon cooperation with partners, such as the EU.**

NATO's New Agenda Requires a New and Untested Kind of NATO

How would Western Balkan membership substantively add value to the new NATO beyond its current role of a partner?



NATO is Facing Serious Internal Challenges

- Most NATO member governments cannot meet their pledge to enhance their military capabilities.**
- Many NATO member publics are not committed to Article V.**
- Some member country potential leaders are also uncommitted to collective security guarantees.**

NATO is Facing Serious Internal Challenges

NATO may have expanded to far and too fast to be willing to offer additional security obligations to aspiring new members.



NATO's Decision Processes May Have Reached an Impasse

- **Response to Russia on the Ukraine crisis.**
- **Accommodation to Greece on Macedonia's membership.**
- **Hesitancy on collective action on refugees, ISIL, terrorism, Libya**

NATO's Decision Processes May Have Reached an Impasse

Additional members in NATO may be seen as complicating NATO decision-making even more.

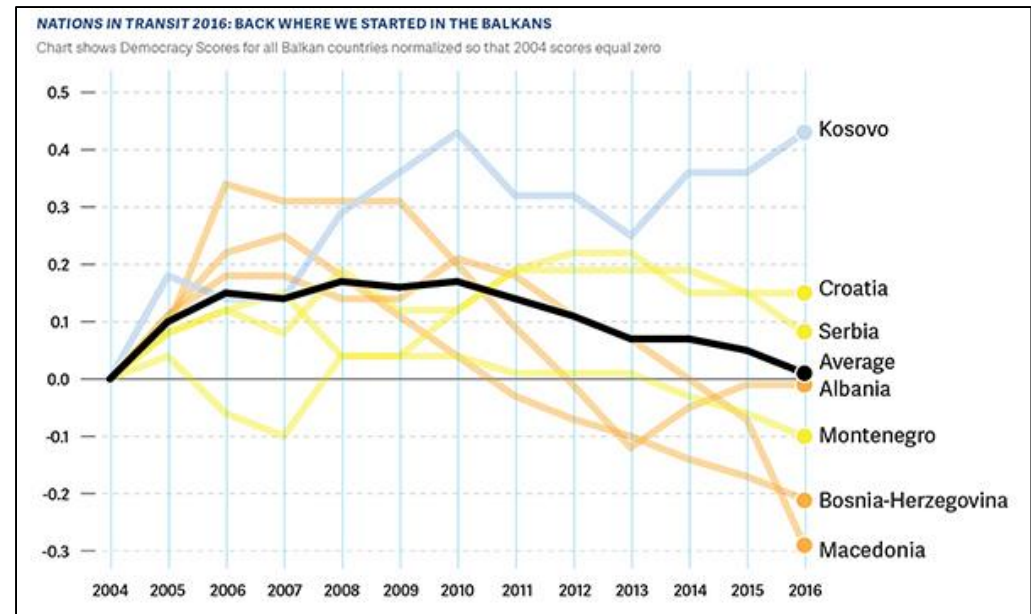


NATO Expects More from New Members Today

- ❑ NATO now expects more than a professional and modern military ally.**
- ❑ NATO now expects more than formal adherence to its values.**
- ❑ NATO now expects new members to have a stable, functioning, self-governing, democratic and pluralist polity.**

NATO Expects More from New Members Today

Today, states in transition to democracy encounter increasingly higher expectations prior to membership.



NATO's New Reality and Western Balkan Membership Prospects

- 1. An expanded NATO may not be seen as a stronger NATO.**
- 2. Additional security obligations for NATO may not be seen to be helpful to collective security.**
- 3. New member nations may add more risk and costs, than they provide in benefits.**

What Can Be Done?

- ✓ **Advocate for an open door track for Georgia and the Ukraine separate from that of the Western Balkans.**
- ✓ **Go beyond military relations and demonstrate a commitment to NATO's value community.**
- ✓ **Continue and strengthen partnership activities with NATO and be patient.**

The Transitional Stage of NATO Membership May Not Be So Bad

- ✓ **Aspiring members receive NATO assistance with relatively few strings;**
- ✓ **Aspiring member nations have built modern, professional militaries that work well with NATO today;**
- ✓ **Aspiring member nations can retain flexibility from implementing every NATO obligation and requirement.**

NATO's Invitation to the Western Balkans Still Stands, but ...

The door is still open for the Western Balkans, but not wide enough to get comfortably inside.



Questions – Comments?

Thank You