

April 1, 2008 Tuesday

Romanian defense minister sees EU, NATO as complementary

LENGTH: 407 words

Text of report in English by Romanian news agency Rompres,

Bucharest, April 1 (Rompres) - The European Union and NATO are two complementary entities, because the challenges currently facing Europe are multifarious and solutions to them can only come from one of the two organizations, Romanian MEP Ioan Mircea Pascu of the opposition Social Democratic Party (PSD) said on Tuesday.

Attending a conference in Bucharest on the Security of Central Europe: power, market and international influence organized by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) of Washington, Pascu talked about the relations between the EU and the North Atlantic Alliance and the importance of close cooperation between them in the unification of the European continent and other future issues.

Pascu said Europe is invaded and overwhelmed by political issues and there is a risk of them generating catastrophes soon, and in this connection the 27 EU members states are well equipped to offer solutions. At the same time, Europeans are facing climate issues, which NATO can solve because it has the necessary capabilities.

He also talked about the need for a uniform European market for weapons and the need for a closer approach of the relations with defence companies that have offered support to European countries, because Europe needs a uniform market in this area, with all the reticence displayed by certain countries in this regard.

He added that there are many European defence companies doing business with the US, and said he believes the pragmatism of business people working in this area can contribute to strengthening cooperation between the two flanks of the Atlantic.

The conference on security in Central Europe is organized by CSIS, the EconomixNews Romania Centre for Technological Intelligence, the Foundation for Democracy, Culture and Freedom of Bucharest and the Euro-Atlantic Council of Romania ahead of the Bucharest NATO Summit, April 2-4. It is aimed at discussing the contribution which Central Europe, currently undergoing integration with the EU and NATO, may bring to stability and security in Europe. Attending the conference are prominent leaders of the US and Europe who will be discussing today key strategic aspects that have an impact on Central and Eastern European countries and their economic, political and security implications on trans-Atlantic ties.

Source: Rompres news agency, Bucharest, in English 0845 gmt 1 Apr 08



Business relies on security, security enables business

Interview with Mr. Janusz Bugajski, Director of the New European Democracies Project of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

published in issue 4153 page 8 at 2008-04-02

Janusz Bugajski took part in the CSIS conference "Central European Security: Power, Markets, and International Influence" that was held yesterday in Bucharest. The conference particularly focused on the implications of the security on the business environment, as well as on the importance of business for the cooperation among NATO allies and on the new economic opportunities resulted after the enlargement of the Alliance. Mr. Bugajski accepted to grant us an interview one day before the conference, in which he talked about the reunion 's stake, but also about a few points on the Bucharest NATO summit's agenda.

What is the purpose of the conference 'Central Europe: Security, Power, Markets and International Influence?'

Our conference which is co-hosted, co-organized by CSIS Foundation For Democracy, Liberty and Culture, is an annual event we have in Washington and also in Bucharest and this year we have made sure it coincided with the NATO Summit, because this is a very important event for the Alliance, for the United States and for Romania.

The main purpose of our conference is not to duplicate with what NATO is discussing, but to look a little bit more at NATO's evolution, the way NATO is heading, to look at the political, business and economic interests around NATO. Specifically we will be looking at the defence industry; we will be looking at economic opportunities for other business as a result of NATO enlargement and new NATO missions. We will be looking also at Russian influence in the region, exactly what it consists of and how it affects the Alliance's policy.

What is, in your opinion, the connection between business and security?

It is a very close connection, because ultimately you can't do business unless you have a secure environment in which to do business. Security these days doesn't just mean military defence, it means homeland security, means protection from internal and external terrorists, from cyber attacks, from instability, from weak states. So many issues now revolve around security that the most important thing for businessmen is to have predictability and responsible governments, the possibility to make money, to make profit, to reinvest, and not to be appropriated by the state to have a good business environment with law taxation. Business relies on security, security enables business.

How would you characterize the business environment in Romania?

As compared to how Romania was looking fifteen years ago, the environment is much, much better. Not only it is a secure environment, politically secure, it is a democracy, it is encouraging for business to come in, it is also a member of the European Union, which means Romania has made the grade, in terms of its qualifications and conditions. It's also still a country with a relatively cheaper labour force, possibilities for Greenfield investment, it's a country strategically placed in terms of the Balkans, Central Europe and the Black Sea region. For all these reasons, I think Romania is a good destination for business.

How do you see the settlement of the energy issue in the relation between Russia and Europe?

I don't think it will be settled any time soon. The question is how to stabilize it and make it predictable. The problem with Russian energy supplies is that energy policy in Russia is closely tied to foreign policy.

The Kremlin uses its energy monopolies and it is increasing Europe's reliance on Russian energy, on Russian transport energy, in order to exert political pressure on specific targeted governments, in order to gain more influence in decision-making, not just in Central Europe, but also in Western Europe, to get more influence within European Union and, as we see at the moment, to try and prevent further NATO eastward enlargement. For all these reasons, I don't think the situation will be stabilized. It's up to Europe to come up with a more affective energy policy which includes greater diversity, greater coordination and greater assurance of supplies to countries that may be affected by blackmail from Russia. In all the areas maybe NATO can play some kind of role.

What chances have two major projects as Nabucco gas pipe and Constanta Trieste oil pipe to be carried out?

As we know there are different plans on supplying both gas and oil from the Caspian area and from Russia to Europe. Russia wants to monopolize the transportation routes and to tie Western companies in contracts and European governments in long term contracts relying to Russian energy.

The Nabucco project was meant to counter that, by creating an independent source, an independent route from Central Asia and Caspian region to Europe. Unfortunately, there hasn't been enough commitment on the European side to invest in the Nabucco project. Russia in the meantime has developed a very aggressive strategy to try and tie all the countries in the region, from Germany right across the continent to Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey and to propose pipelines, particularly south stream. Romania would prefer to have more diversity in its supplies; it doesn't want to be dependant much on Russian energy. The question is how much investment will come into that?

It is all a question of business confidence investment and commitment of the Governments, as well as coordination and I don't see that at the moment in Europe.

Is there any risk for Romania to remain at the Eastern border of NATO, it is possible a slowing down of the NATO's enlargement?

Yes, there is a danger, not just a slowing down of the Alliance, but that the territories to the East around the Black Sea region could be increasingly subject to direct Russian control, a domination in which not only there will be negative political influences, but negative economic influences. The Russian model of business does not correspond with the European model of business. It is based on close contacts with the Government, on political influence, on security service involvement and some times on corrupt practices or less than clear business practices. And that it is not a model that one would want exported anywhere in the region.

Romania faces a potential Russian resurgence around the Black Sea region which would be detrimental to Romania's security interests.

Do you believe that Greece-Macedonia dispute over the name of the former Yugoslav republic will have an impact on the agenda of the Bucharest Summit?

I don't see Greece will agree to issue an invitation and to ratify the membership of Macedonia in NATO. I think this issue will be probably postponed. I think there will be two countries invited, Albania and Croatia, and Macedonia will have to wait until there is a resolution to the name dispute. It is not just a name dispute; it is the use of the name dispute. It has already taking 17 years, but if Macedonia wants to get an invitation I think it has to make some kind of a compromise.

What about the Membership Action Plan for Ukraine and Georgia?

I also do not think that Ukraine and Georgia will obtain exactly what they want, the invitations to join the Membership Action Plan process. One, Russia has been campaigning vigorously against it; two, there are

some countries, particularly Germany, but also France, saying the Ukrainian public doesn't support NATO and that Georgia is a divided country. So, I don't think there will be Maps issued, but some promises will be made that Maps will be issued over a certain period of time, where other certain conditions are met. But basically, unfortunately, Russia exerts a very negative role here.

Do you think Kosovo issue will be on the summit's agenda, in a way or another?

Not so much, I mean the only way it will be is NATO will recommit itself to maintaining its true presence - 16-17,000 troops' presence - in Kosovo. Most of the EU governments will recognize Kosovo by the end of the year. The United States already have, Germany, France and major countries already have. I don't think it is a major security issue.

by Alina Grigoras

The Washington Times

April 1, 2008 Tuesday

Bush begins Europe tour; Faces Russian opposition on proposals for East

BYLINE: By Jon Ward, THE WASHINGTON TIMES

SECTION: 'A03'

LENGTH: 435 words

DATELINE: KIEV

President Bush arrived in Eastern Europe yesterday for a weeklong trip that his advisers said would highlight a U.S.-backed expansion of democracy across the region.

The trip will be punctuated by the final official meeting between a weakened Mr. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin

who is leaving office next month but will remain a powerful figure in his nation.

Russia's shadow will loom large throughout Mr. Bush's trip, which is centered around a NATO summit Thursday and Friday in Bucharest, Romania.

National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley said yesterday that the president's trip to Croatia later this week will " show that we are also bringing stability to the Balkans. " NATO is expected to admit Croatia into the alliance this week.

NATO's steady growth has conformed with the vision of Mr. Bush and his predecessors of a Europe free from communism or autocratic rule, Mr. Hadley told reporters aboard Air Force One en route from Washington.

The entry of Croatia, Albania and Macedonia into NATO would represent " a capstone to a lot of American policy supported by Republicans and Democrats over the last 15 years, " Mr. Hadley said.

Mr. Bush said in a November 2002 speech in Romania that " Russia has nothing to fear from the growth of NATO, because Russia needs peaceful, stable neighbors. "

Mr. Putin and his hand-picked successor, President-elect Dmitry Medvedev, oppose the proposed NATO membership of Ukraine and Georgia. A major issue at the summit is whether to allow the two former Soviet republics to begin the membership process.

" Georgia's accession into NATO will be seen here as an attempt to trigger a war in the Caucasus, and NATO membership for Ukraine will be interpreted as an effort to foment a conflict with Russia, " Sergei Markov, a Russian parliament member and Putin ally, told reporters.

Mr. Bush's support of Ukraine's entry into the membership action plan will be countered by Russian pressure on European powers to oppose it.

Germany appears to be " succumbing to Kremlin pressure " on the matter, said **Janusz Bugajski**, director of the New European Democracies Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Mr. Bush will meet with Mr. Putin on Sunday in the Russian resort town of Sochi to discuss NATO issues and the U.S.-backed missile defense system proposed for Eastern Europe, which Moscow also opposes.

Mr. Hadley has called the personal relationship between the U.S. and Russian presidents " complicated. "

After Mr. Medvedev takes office, Mr. Putin is expected to assume the title of prime minister and wield enormous influence over the government.

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<http://www.adevarul.ro/articole/sergiu-medar-nato-nu-este-croită-pentru-a-reconstrui-un-stat/346718>

Sergiu Medar: NATO nu este croită pentru a reconstrui un stat

(526 afisari, 2008-04-02)



Sergiu Medar (dreapta), la discuțiile despre securitatea ... Fostul șef al Comunității Naționale de Informații, generalul Sergiu Medar, a declarat la conferința "Securitatea Europei Centrale: Putere, Piețe și Influența Internațională" că NATO nu este croită pentru reconstrucția unui stat, al doilea pas fiind intervenția companiilor private. Medar a dat exemplul Afganistanului, unde numeroase companii nu doresc să-și mute



afacerile în zone nesigure.

Medar a susținut că aceia care conduc astfel de firme trebuie consiliați pe probleme de securitate, pentru a opera într-un mediu ostil. În cadrul aceleiași conferințe, președintele PSD, Mircea Geoană, a declarat că înainte de a se ajunge la o înțelegere strategică cu Rusia, este util ca SUA și UE să aibă discuții prin care să găsească o poziționare comună față de Moscova, inclusiv pe problemele energetice.

Geoană a precizat însă că nu ar trebui să existe nicio grabă pentru stabilirea unei înțelegeri la sfârșitul summitului de la București. Conferința a fost organizată de Centrul pentru Studii Strategice și Internaționale din Washington, împreună cu Fundația pentru Democrație, Cultură și Libertate din București și Consiliul Euro-Atlantic România.



<http://www.jurnalul.ro/articole/121064/piete-influenta-si-putere-internationala/comenteaza>

Prima pagina » Politic » Piețe, Influență și Putere Internațională

Piețe, Influență și Putere Internațională

31/03/2008 de Jurnalul National

Conferință la Capșa

Centrul pentru Studii Strategice și Internaționale din Washington, DC, Centrul pentru Informare Tehnologică –EconomixNews România, Fundația pentru Democrație, Cultura și Libertate din București și Consiliul Euro-Atlantic România organizează mâine, 1 aprilie, la Casa Capșa din Capitală conferința internațională “Securitatea Europei Centrale: Putere, Piețe și Influență Internațională”. Evenimentul reprezintă punctul culminant al proiectului CSIS referitor la provocările majore cu care se confruntă Europa Centrală și de Est (ECE). Conferința va reuni personalități proeminente din SUA și Europa: oficiali, analiști, lideri în domeniul afacerilor – pentru a discuta aspecte strategice cheie cu impact asupra țărilor ECE și implicațiile lor economice, politice și de securitate asupra relațiilor trans-atlantice. De asemenea, conferința va analiza rolul și influența crescândă ale Rusiei asupra vecinătății sale imediate. Conținutul, concluziile și setul de recomandări care vor fi elaborate în timpul reuniunii vor fi incluse într-un raport al CSIS ulterior conferinței, care va fi diseminat printr-o rețea cuprinzătoare de contacte în Europa și Statele Unite ale Americii.



http://www.amosnews.ro/Conferinta_Securitatea_Europei_Centrale_Putere_Piete_si_Influenta_Internationala_-241384

Știre: Conferința "Securitatea Europei Centrale: Putere, Piețe și Influența Internațională"



In seria CSIS - Agenda de securitate a Europei Centrale si de Est, pe 1 aprilie 2008 va avea loc, în organizarea Centrului pentru Studii Strategice si Internationale din Washington, DC, Centrul pentru Informare Tehnologica –EconomixNews Romania, Fundatia pentru Democratie, Cultura si Libertate din Bucuresti si Consiliul Euro-Atlantic Romania conferinta internationala "Securitatea Europei Centrale: Putere, Piete si Influenta Internationala" care se va desfășura la Bucuresti, pe 1 aprilie 2008, la Casa Capsa, pe Calea Victoriei 36.

Conferinta din Bucuresti reprezinta punctul culminant al proiectului CSIS referitor la provocarile majore cu care se confrunta Europa Centrala si de Est (ECE). Evenimentul va reuni personalitati proeminente din SUA si Europa: oficiali, analisti, lideri in domeniul afacerilor – pentru a discuta aspecte strategice cheie cu impact asupra tarilor ECE si implicatiile lor economice, politice si de securitate asupra relatiilor trans-atlantice. De asemenea, conferinta va analiza rolul si influenta crescande ale Rusiei asupra vecinatatii sale imediate.

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Iată și programul conferinței:

8:00 – 8:30 – Inregistrarea participantilor

8:30 - Cuvant Introductiv

Janusz Bugajski, CSIS

David Scruggs, CSIS

Dragos Seuleanu, Fundatia pentru Democratie, Cultura si Libertate

Liviu Muresan, Fundatia EURISC

8:45 – 9:00 – Discurs de deschidere

Spre o evaluare comuna a amenințărilor în Europa Centrală și de Est - Gen.(ret.) dr. Constantin Degeratu, Consilier de Stat în cadrul Departamentului Securității Naționale

9:00 – 10:15 PANELUL 1: PROVOCĂRI INTERNE ȘI EXTERNE LA ADRESA VIITORULUI NATO

Moderator: Dragos Seuleanu, FDCL

Perspectiva Dimensiunii și a scopului NATO – dr. Stefanie Babst, asistent al adjunctului secretarului general NATO pentru diplomatie publică

Probleme de securitate: apărarea anti-racheta, terorism informational, crima organizată – Jeffrey Simon, National Defence University

Coordonare UE-NATO – Ioan Mircea Pascu, europarlamentar, fost ministru al apărării

Cooperarea transfrontalieră – Aida Catana, EUPC, consultant pentru fonduri europene

10:15 – 11:45 PANELUL 2: PROBLEME CHEIE DE SECURITATE ȘI IMPLICATII ASUPRA BUSINESSULUI

Moderator: William Siefken, CSIS

Problemele de securitate și realitățile funcționale din Europa Centrală și de Est – Scott Haris, președinte, Lockheed Martin Europe

Rolul mediului de afaceri în misiunile NATO – gen. Sergiu Medar, fost șef al Direcției de Informații Militare și consilier prezidențial pentru apărare și securitate națională

Rolul sectorului privat în asigurarea securității statului – Aurelian Ionescu, IBM Romania

Politica și economia contractorilor în operațiunile NATO – Robert Bell, senior vice președinte, SAIC Europa

11:45 – 12:15 Masa de pranz

12:15 – 12:45 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

12:45 – 14:00 PANEL 3: INFLUENȚA RUSIEI ASUPRA MEMBRILOR NATO

Moderator: Janusz Bugajski, CSIS

Relațiile NATO-Rusia și EU-Rusia – Mircea Geoana, președintele Comisiei de Politică externă – Senatul României, fost ministru de externe

Politica energetică a Kremlinului – Vladimir Socor, Jamestown Foundation

Influența economică a Rusiei – Ognyan Mintchev, IRIS

14:00 – 15:15 PANEL 4: DEZVOLTAREA INDUSTRIEI DE APĂRARE ÎN EUROPA

Moderator: David Scruggs, CSIS

Consolidarea industriei – modele actuale & valul viitor – Andrew James, Universitatea Manchester - Manchester Business School

Limitări și oportunități ale coordonării guvernamentale – Nick Witney, senior fellow, Consiliul european pentru relații externe

Colaborarea în industria de apărare europeană – noi vectori – Aurel Cazacu, director general pentru industria de apărare, Ministerul Economiei și Finanțelor

Inovarea și C&D: Anton Anton, secretar de stat, președintele ANCS.

Autor : ---

Mărti, 25 Martie 2008 - 02:02 PM

AmosNews

Conferinta "Securitatea Europei Centrale: Putere, Piete si Influenta Internationala"

In seria CSIS - Agenda de securitate a Europei Centrale si de Est, pe 1 aprilie 2008 va avea loc, in organizarea Centrului pentru Studii Strategice si Internationale din Washington, DC, Centrul pentru Informare Tehnologica –EconomixNews Romania, Fundatia pentru Democratie, Cultura si Libertate din Bucuresti si Consiliul Euro-Atlantic Romania conferinta internationala “Securitatea Europei Centrale: Putere, Piete si Influenta Internationala” care se va desfasura la Bucuresti, pe 1 aprilie 2008, la Casa Capsa, pe Calea Victoriei 36.

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Iata si programul conferintei: 8:00 – 8:30 – Inregistrarea participantilor 8:30 - Cuvant Introductiv Janusz Bugajski, CSIS David Scruggs, CSIS Dragos Seuleanu, Fundatia pentru Democratie, Cultura si Libertate Liviu Muresan, Fundatia EURISC 8:45 – 9:00 – Discurs de deschidere Spre o evaluare comuna a amenintarilor in Europa Centrala si de Est - Gen.(ret.) dr. Constantin Degeratu, Consilier de Stat in cadrul Departamentului Securitatii Nationale 9:00 – 10:15 PANELUL 1: PROVOCARI INTERNE SI EXTERNE LA ADRESA VIITORULUI NATO Moderator: Dragos Seuleanu, FDCL Perspectiva Dimensiunii si a scopului NATO – dr. Stefanie Babst, asistent al adjunctului secretarului general NATO pentru diplomatie publica Probleme de securitate: apararea anti-racheta, terorism informational, crima organizata – Jeffrey Simon, National Defence University Coordonare UE-NATO – Ioan Mircea Pascu, europarlamentar, fost ministru al apararii Cooperarea transfrontaliera – Aida Catana, EUPC, consultant pentru fonduri europene 10:15 – 11:45 PANELUL 2: PROBLEME CHEIE DE SECURITATE SI IMPLICATII ASUPRA BUSINESSULUI Moderator: William Siefken, CSIS Problemele de securitate si realitatile functionale din Europa Centrala si de Est – Scott Haris, presedinte, Lockheed Martin Europe Rolul mediului de afaceri in misiunile NATO – gen. Sergiu Medar, fost sef al Directiei de Informatii Militare si consilier prezidential pentru aparare si securitate nationala Rolul sectorului privat in asigurarea securitatii statului – Aurelian Ionescu, IBM Romania Politica si economia contractorilor in operatiunile NATO – Robert Bell, senior vice presedinte, SAIC Europa 11:45 – 12:15 Masa de pranz 12:15 – 12:45 KEYNOTE ADRESA 12:45 – 14:00 PANEL 3: INFLUENTA RUSIEI ASUPRA MEMBRILOR NATO Moderator: Janusz Bugajski, CSIS Relatiile NATO-Rusia si EU-

Rusia – Mircea Geoana, presedintele Comisiei de Politica externa – Senatul Romaniei, fost ministru de externe
Politica energetica a Kremlinului – Vladimir Socor, Jamestown Foundation
Influenta economica a Rusiei – Ognyan Mintchev, IRIS 14:00 – 15:15
PANEL 4: DEZVOLTAREA INDUSTRIEI DE APARARE IN EUROPA
Moderator: David Scruggs, CSIS
Consolidarea industriei – modele actuale & valul viitor – Andrew James, Universitatea Manchester - Manchester Business School
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Colaborarea in industria de aparare europeana – noi vectori – Aurel Cazacu, director general pentru industria de aparare, Ministerul Economiei si Finantelor
Inovarea si C&D: Anton Anton, secretar de stat, presedintele ANCS.

<http://independentul.wordpress.com/2008/04/02/geoana-da-sfaturi-ue-si-sua/>

Geoana da "sfaturi" U.E. si S.U.A.

Scris de admin@ pe aprilie 2, 2008

Presedintele P.S.D., Mircea Geoana, fost ministru de Externe, a declarat ieri ca, inainte de a se ajunge la o intelegere strategica cu Rusia, este util ca S.U.A. si U.E. sa aiba discutii prin care sa gaseasca o pozitionare comuna fata de Moscova, inclusiv pe problemele energetice.

In cadrul conferintei „Securitatea Europei Centrale: Putere, Piete si Influenta Internationala”, Geoana s-a referit la posibilitatea unei intelegeri strategice intre U.E. si Rusia, intre S.U.A. si Rusia sau, cel mai bine, intre U.E. si S.U.A., pe de o parte, si Rusia, pe de alta parte. Liderul P.S.D. a mentionat, insa, ca un astfel de acord ar fi bine sa aiba loc dupa discutii U.E.-S.U.A., care apoi, impreuna, sa aiba o abordare comuna fata de Rusia pe problemele de strategie si de energie. Geoana a precizat, insa, ca ar trebui asteptata instalarea noii administratii de la Washington, precum si a noului presedinte al Federatiei Ruse. Geoana a tinut, de asemenea, sa remarce ca exista o diviziune la nivelul Aliantei intre S.U.A. si Canada, pe de o parte, si marii jucatori din Europa pe subiectul acordarii MAP Ucrainei si Georgiei. In acest context, Geoana a precizat ca amanarea unei decizii in privinta Georgiei si Ucrainei va avea pierderi mai mari pe termen lung pentru Alianta, cu toate ca si-a exprimat pesimismul ca cele doua tari vor primi MAP la Bucuresti. In cadrul conferintei „Securitatea Europei Centrale: Putere, Piete si Influenta Internationala”, organizata inainte de Summit-ul NATO, au fost luate in discutie o serie de subiecte legate de securitate si de Alianta Nord-Atlantica. Fostul sef al C.N.I., Sergiu Medar, s-a referit la misiunea NATO de a asigura securitatea, dincolo de componenta militara a Aliantei, dar a tinut sa puncteze rolul Aliantei in consolidarea democratiei. El a mentionat, insa, ca NATO nu este croita pentru a reconstrui un stat, un al doilea pas fiind interventia companiilor private.

http://www.ziare.com/Geoana__UE_si_SUA_ar_trebui_sa_se_inteleaga_inainte_de_a_face_un_targ_cu_Rusia-279522.html

Geoana: UE si SUA ar trebui sa se inteleaga inainte de a face un targ cu Rusia

Marti, 01 Aprilie 2008, ora 16:09

Presedintele PSD Mircea Geoana a declarat, marti, ca, inainte de a se ajunge la o intelegere strategica cu Rusia, este util ca Statele Unite ale Americii si Uniunea Europeana sa aiba discutii prin care sa gaseasca o pozitionare comuna fata de Moscova, inclusiv pe problemele energetice, informeaza NewsIn.

La conferinta "Securitatea Europei Centrale: Putere, Pietate si Influenta Internationala", Geoana s-a referit la posibilitatea unei intelegeri strategice intre UE si Rusia, intre SUA si Rusia sau, cel mai bine, intre UE si SUA, pe de o parte, si Rusia, pe de alta parte.

Liderul PSD a mentionat, insa, ca un astfel de acord ar fi bine sa aiba loc dupa discutii UE-SUA, care apoi, impreuna, sa aiba o abordare comuna fata de Rusia pe problemele de strategie si de energie.

Geoana a remarcat ca exista o diviziune la nivelul Aliantei intre SUA si Canada, pe de o parte, si marii jucatori din Europa, pe subiectul acordarii Planului de Actiune pentru Aderare (MAP) Ucrainei si Georgiei.

In acest context, Geoana a precizat ca amanarea unei decizii in privinta Georgiei si Ucrainei va avea pierderi mai mari pe termen lung pentru Alianta, cu toate ca si-a exprimat pesimismul ca cele doua tari vor primi MAP, la Bucuresti.



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Russia at center of NATO meeting

Advertisement

By Richard Wolf, USA TODAY

KIEV, Ukraine — When the United States and 25 other members of the NATO alliance meet in Bucharest this week to debate matters of war and peace, Russia will be at the center of nearly all the major issues facing the European-based defense organization.

- Two former Soviet republics, Georgia and Ukraine, seek "membership action plans," a key step toward joining NATO. President Bush is firmly on their side. Russia is adamantly opposed.

- Poland and the Czech Republic are negotiating to host U.S. missile-defense systems Bush says would be geared toward intercepting attacks from Iran or elsewhere in the Middle East. Russia is opposed.

Although not a NATO member, Russia also has voiced objections on issues ranging from the war in Iraq to Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia. Outgoing President Vladimir Putin is to make his positions clear in Bucharest.

Bush, who arrived here late Monday night with first lady Laura Bush, will meet today with Ukrainian President Victor Yushchenko before the NATO summit starts Wednesday.

This was to be a week in which Bush, another outgoing president, pushed his freedom-and-democracy agenda ever eastward at the NATO summit. Now he'll go even farther east — to Sochi, Russia, where he and Putin will try to hash out their differences Sunday.

"There may be an opportunity here to ... resolve some outstanding issues so that the relationship is in good shape to be handed over to their two respective successors," says White House national security adviser Stephen Hadley.

Same points of contention

It's a relationship cemented before 9/11. When Bush and Putin first met, "I looked the man in the eye. I was able to get a sense of his soul," Bush said at the time. Last year, they fished together off the coast of Maine. But for all that time, they have agreed to disagree about the same issues — principally missile defense and NATO expansion.

Russia is suspicious that it's the intended target of the missile interceptors and radar to be placed in Poland and the Czech Republic, despite U.S. protestations that Russian missiles could easily overwhelm the system.

Russia also objects to allowing Georgia and Ukraine, both on its borders, to join NATO.

NEW NATO MEMBERS: [Bush backs Georgia, Ukraine](#)

RED LIGHT: [France opposed to the two nations' bid](#)

Ukrainian demonstrators waving communist flags rallied against joining NATO on Monday in Kiev, which was the seat of the first Russian state and has major historical significance to Russia.

"Putin is confident in the weight of Russia's arguments on these issues," Dmitry Rogozin, Russia's ambassador to NATO, said in an advertising supplement to *The Washington Post* last week. "I don't think there are any hotheads in the alliance who would like to see political destabilization in Europe."

Janusz Bugajski, director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies' New European Democracies Project, says Russia's threat of political and economic repercussions amounts to "strategic blackmail." Russia supplies natural gas to much of Europe.

A path toward NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia, Bugajski says, "undercuts Moscow's strategy to bring its former satellites back within the Russian sphere of dominance."

Shoring up relationship

Both presidents have little to lose by seeking to patch their differences in the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains this weekend.

"The last year or so has been a low point," says Philip Gordon, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. "Relations are horrible. We're not agreeing on any of the big issues."

Bush would like to leave the U.S.-Russia relationship solid when he leaves office. "My strategy all along is to keep relations such that (Putin) will actually listen to what I have to say," Bush told foreign reporters last week on the eve of his trip. "So when you hear people say, 'George Bush has got good relations with Vladimir Putin,' there's a reason why."

Putin, who will hand his title to newly elected Dmitry Medvedev next month, "needs this summit to remind everybody he's the man," says James Goldgeier, former director of Russian affairs at the National Security Council under President Bill Clinton.

Some analysts expect Bush and Putin to shake hands and emerge with a framework agreement on less contentious issues, such as controlling loose nuclear weapons and going after terrorists — what Charles Kupchan of the Council on Foreign Relations calls "low-hanging fruit." Russia has agreed to let NATO ship military supplies for Afghanistan across its territory.

"I don't expect there to be any bombshells," Kupchan says.