written by Greece's Ambassador to the U.N., Alexandros Mallias.

NATO ENLARGEMENT—THE VIEW FROM ATHENS

An important NATO summit will take place next week in Bucharest, Romania. Our discussion will focus on two main issues: the first, NATO enlargement and developments in the Western Balkans; the second, an evaluation of the Alliance's operations in Afghanistan (ISAF) and Kosovo (KFOR). In both of these U.N. mandated operations, there is an important Greek contribution of 2,000 men.

Greece, for over 15 years now, has held the position that the future of Southeastern Europe lies in its integration into the Euroatlantic Institutions. On the basis of this strategic choice, we support NATO's ''open door'' policy. An open door policy, however, must be based on the principles of good neighborly relations and allied solidarity.

Greece supports the enlargement of NATO in the Western Balkans, with the invitations to Croatia and Albania. It is ready also to welcome the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), provided that our northern neighbor shifts from their nationalistic logic and agree to a mutually agreeable name for international use that differentiates the new Balkan state from the Greek province of Macedonia; a name that will not be a vehicle for propaganda and irredentism against a neighboring NATO member.

Athens has shown its good will towards Skopje in many ways. It has supported its neighbor, both politically and economically, ranking as the number one foreign investor in that country, with $1 billion invested capital that has generated 30,000 new jobs. Most recently, we went the extra mile, or rather the most important mile, when we expressed our readiness to agree to a composite name with a geographic qualifier. This is a major shift from Greece's initial position, which excluded any use of the term ''Macedonia'', in the name of our neighbor.

Some have questioned our stance on the name issue and the possibility of a Greek veto at the NATO summit, if the name issue is not resolved by then. Some are suggesting that we are re-fighting old battles, not seeing the ''big picture'', that we are drawn into the past.

My answer to these claims is that the name issue is not a bilateral one. It is an international issue, which concerns our broader region. Directly, or indirectly, it concerns NATO and the U.N. And, if not resolved now, it may fester to poison future generations, undermining stability and cooperation in the 21st century.

We hope that with active U.N. mediation and U.S. involvement, a resolution of this issue will be achieved before the Bucharest summit.

On this issue, we are not alone. 115 members of the U.S. Congress, from both parties, support House Resolution 356, expressing the ''sense of the House of Representatives that FYROM should stop hostile activities and propaganda against Greece, and should work with the United Nations and Greece to find a mutually acceptable official name''.

A similar resolution, S.R. 300, was introduced in the Senate by Senators Menendez, Obama, Snowe.

The immediate settlement of the name issue before the NATO Summit in a mutually agreeable way, will allow Greece, the U.S.'s strongest ally in the Balkans, to support FYROM's membership to NATO and ultimately to the European Union, a strategic goal also shared by the U.S.

A prerequisite for a proper relationship as allies and partners is that of good neighborliness. We have lived together through good and bad times, we have shared tragedy, but also share hope for a bright future. Let's leave behind the former and invest in the latter.

Greece has called upon FYROM's leadership to act responsibly and show political courage and meet Greece half way. It will be a responsible move on the part of an aspiring candidate, a move that will win them a European future, a future of stability, peace and economic prosperity, based on the principles upon which NATO and the European Union are founded.

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Greece has consistently stated its desire to have the FYROM admitted into NATO provided that they cease the use of the name ''Republic of Macedonia'' and adopt a mutually acceptable name for both parties. Along with the 114 cosponsors, we urge them to take this into consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HUGE COST OVERRUNS AT PENTAGON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, the front page of the Washington Post today carries a story about $295 billion in cost overruns at the Pentagon; $295 billion. That is a mind-boggling, almost incomprehensible figure to anyone who stops to think about it. The headline reads, ''GAO Blasts Weapons Budget.''

Listen to this story. Government auditors issued a scathing review yesterday of dozens of the Pentagon's biggest weapons systems, saying ships, aircraft and satellites are billions of dollars over budget and years behind schedule. The story continues, ''The Government Accountability Office found that 95 major systems have exceeded their original budgets by a total of $295 billion, bringing their total cost to $1.6 trillion and are delivered almost 2 years late, on average.

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Apparently, there are no fiscal conservatives at the Pentagon. Apparently they believe that the Congress will just keep giving them more money, no matter how wasteful or inefficient they become. Of course, almost all the defense contractors hire plenty of admirals and generals, so almost all of these contracts are sweetheart deals anyway.

It is what the International Herald Tribune a few years ago called the ''revolving door'' at the Pentagon. $1.6 trillion in total costs, and $295 billion in cost overruns, and this was just on the major systems. No telling how much more was wasted on the smaller contracts.

$295 billion would run the entire government of Tennessee, schools, health care, roads, prisons, parks, and on and on for the next 11 years.

Then, on top of all this waste, the request for the Iraq War for the coming fiscal year is $189 billion, or over $500 million a day. Apparently we are having so much success over there that we have to give them more money, more troops and more contractors than ever before.

There is nothing fiscally conservative about the war in Iraq. Conservatives, above all, should realize that any gigantic government bureaucracy is always going to ask for more money and always find reasons to justify it.

And Congress is afraid to cut the Defense Department for fear of being seen as unpatriotic. Yet, it is a very false and very blind patriotism that allows the Pentagon to continually waste mega billions and allows the Defense Department to spend like there is no tomorrow.

In a few short years, we will not be able to pay all of our Social Security, Medicare, veterans' pensions, veterans' health care and many other things if we do not bring Federal spending under some type of control.

In a newsletter I sent to my constituents in Tennessee a few weeks ago I wrote these words before I knew about these cost overruns I've spoken about today. ''Jonah Goldberg wrote in a recent issue of National Review that the 'insight that involvement abroad fuels the expansion of the state was central to the formation of the modern conservative and libertarian movements.'

''In other words, perpetual war leads to bigger government and goes very much against traditional conservatism.

''Yet some conservatives have fallen into a trap of never questioning any military expenditure even though there is great waste and overspending in the military just as there is in any giant government bureaucracy.

''Our Constitution is a very conservative document, and our founding fathers felt very strongly that we should have civilian control of the military:

''Service in our military is very honorable and patriotic, but we need strong national defense, not international defense.

''We simply cannot afford to be the policeman of the world, and with the speed of communication and transportation today, we do not need our military in so many countries.

''Conservatives should support an efficient, fiscally conservative military, but it should not believe in turning the Department of Defense into the Department of Foreign Aid as it is in many ways today.''