



Written by [Gary Benoit](#) on September 15, 2008

Must America's Fate Be Tied to NATO and Georgia?

This frightening transfer of power entangling America's fate with that of other countries in North America and Europe is spelled out in Article 5 of the [North Atlantic Treaty](#):

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.



Though the North Atlantic Treaty allows for responses short of military ones, the key segment in interpreting the level of response is that "an armed attack against one or more ... shall be considered an attack against all." That is, a member of NATO should respond as if the attack occurred against that nation, even if the attack occurred against another member of the NATO alliance. This understanding is also the understanding of Senators [Lindsey Graham and Joe Lieberman](#), who coauthored an opinion piece in the August 27, 2008 *Wall Street Journal* stating: "The credibility of Article Five of the NATO Charter — that an attack against one really can and will be treated as an attack against all — needs to be bolstered."

Why would the U.S. government entangle itself in the NATO military alliance? Why would the American people tolerate any such entanglement? In 1949, the United States was in the midst of the Cold War, and NATO was presented to the American people as a necessary bulwark against communism. American troops remained in Europe based on the alliance, and the U.S. government — and U.S. taxpayers — assumed much of the budgetary burden of providing for the defense of Western Europe against the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites.

But the Cold War that provided the rationale for NATO ended with the crashing down of the Berlin Wall, the opening of the Iron Curtain, and the apparent death of Soviet communism. Yet NATO did not die with the Cold War. In fact, it has expanded.

NATO began with 12 member nations, which meant that the United States, as a founding member of the alliance, had committed itself to defending any of 11 countries if any of those countries were attacked. But over the years the number of countries belonging to NATO has more than doubled to 26, which



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means that according to the North Atlantic Treaty we are now committed to coming to the aid of any of 25 countries if any of the 25 are attacked.

This expansion of NATO's membership, and of our treaty obligations under NATO, has included countries that were part of the old Soviet bloc. In 1999, the former Soviet satellites of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia) became NATO members. In 2004, other Eastern European countries joined: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

And there may be more to come. The possible membership of Georgia has been in the news lately because of the fighting between Georgia and Russia. Of course, if Georgia were already a member of NATO, then the United States would have been required to come to Georgia's defense by the North Atlantic Treaty, in contravention of our Constitution and despite the wishes of Congress or the American people.

The Georgia-Russia conflict should serve as a wakeup call that the United States should get out of NATO so that we can avoid going to war except when necessary, based on our own Constitution. Well, it should serve as a wake-up call. But unless the American people themselves kick up a firestorm of opposition against our continued membership in NATO, both Democrat and Republican leaders can be expected to support NATO as well as the inclusion of Georgia in NATO.

When Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah [Palin](#) was asked recently by ABC's Charles Gibson if she was in favor of "putting Georgia and Ukraine in NATO," she replied: "Ukraine, definitely, yes. Yes, and Georgia." Gibson also asked: "And under the NATO treaty, wouldn't we then have to go to war if Russia went into Georgia?" Palin answered: "Perhaps so. I mean, that is the agreement when you are a NATO ally, is if another country is attacked, you're going to be expected to be called upon and help."

That answer is in accord with John McCain's views. In his article published in the August 14, 2008 *Wall Street Journal*, [McCain](#) said: "As the NATO secretary general has said, Georgia remains in line for alliance membership, and I hope NATO will move ahead with a membership track for both Georgia and Ukraine."

Palin's answer is also in accord with administration policy. "I believe that NATO benefits with a Georgian membership," President [Bush](#) said when he met Georgian President Saakashvili on March 19. "I believe Georgia benefits from being a part of NATO." On [April 2](#), Bush said while in Bucharest for the NATO Summit: "My country's position is clear: NATO should welcome Georgia and Ukraine into the Membership Action Plan [a step to NATO membership]. And NATO membership must remain open to all of Europe's democracies that seek it, and are ready to share in the responsibilities of NATO membership."

But what if the Democratic Party captures the White House and Barack Obama is elected president? Wouldn't Obama oppose our NATO military entanglement? No! In a March 3 statement on NATO and the upcoming Bucharest summit, Obama said: "Ukraine and Georgia have also been developing their ties with NATO. Their leaders have declared their readiness to advance a NATO Membership Action Plan, MAP, to prepare for the rights and obligations of membership. They are working to consolidate democratic reforms and to undertake new responsibilities in their relationship with the Alliance. I welcome the desire and actions of these countries to seek closer ties with NATO and hope that NATO responds favorably to their request, consistent with its criteria for membership."

Obama continued: "NATO stands as an example of how the United States can advance American national security — and the security of the world — through a strong alliance rooted in shared



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responsibility and shared values. NATO remains a vital asset in America's efforts to anchor democracy and stability in Europe and to defend our interests and values all over the world."

Yet NATO "advances" our security by committing the United States to come to the defense of any of 25 nations that might be attacked. And both Republican McCain and Democrat Obama are apparently comfortable with this incredible treaty obligation, and with expanding the obligation to include Georgia. Never mind that if Georgia were already part of NATO, we'd have already been dragged into a war against Russia based the treaty obligation.



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