

Balkanizing Security: Romania, Bulgaria, and the Burdens of Alliance

Ronald H. Linden, University of Pittsburgh

October 30, 2008

Abstract

Alliances, as George Washington famously warned, can be troublesome. They can entangle. Analyses of events ranging from World War I to the Iraq war have noted the costs and gains of alliances to the predominant or most powerful actor in the alliance. Often these derive from the burdens on the smaller allies, who are expected to conform to modal alliance behavior and who bear the burden of producing the security that an alliance promises at the "front lines". Currently, with post-Cold War alliance structures much more fluid and, some would say, eroding into something quite different, there is a need to pay attention to how such changes are affecting the security and policy choices of alliance members. This is especially true of the Balkans, given its history and its renewed prominence in the strategic perspective of several powerful actors, including the United States, the European Union, and Russia. This paper offers a discussion of the nature of the alliance challenges for Romania and Bulgaria especially as regards the intersection of the issue of Turkish membership in the European Union and these states' ties with the United States. The two states form a useful comparative set because of their similar but not identical recent histories and similar but again not identical patterns of participation, domestic politics, and expectations that are likely to affect their alliance contributions.