

The Membership Action Plan was launched in April 1999 to assist countries in preparations for possible NATO membership by providing advice, assistance, and practical support on all aspects of membership requirements. NATO has identified four main categories of cooperation and assistance through MAP. First, NATO assists in the development of a national program that covers political, economic, defense, resource security, and legal requirements for membership. Second, NATO experts provide focused and candid feedback and political and technical advice to the governments. Third, NATO provides an organizational structure to assist in the coordination of defense and security assistance received from NATO member states and other allies. Fourth, NATO provides assistance in the construction of an individual approach to defense planning to include force, personnel, and capability reforms.

MAP implementation is no longer simply an activity that focuses on military and security issues. Interministerial meetings engage other governmental departments in a coordinated and systematic approach with the goal of government-wide reform and progress. These goals include settling international, ethnic or external territorial disputes by peaceful means; demonstrating a commitment to the rule of law and human rights; and promoting stability and prosperity through economic reform, social equality, and environmental responsibility. Each participant is free to choose the elements of MAP best suited to their own national priorities and circumstances. In other words, if approved at the NATO summit at Bucharest, Romania in April, Tbilisi and Kyiv will set their own objectives, targets, and work schedules.

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has been evolving to meet the new security needs of the 21st century. In this era, the threats to NATO members are transnational and far from its geographic borders. NATO's viability as an effective defense and security alliance depends on flexible, creative leadership, as well as the willingness of members to improve capabilities and address common threats.

If NATO is to continue to be the preeminent security Alliance and serve the defense interests of its membership, it must continue to evolve and that evolution must include enlargement. Potential NATO membership motivates emerging democracies to make important advances in areas such as the rule of law and civil society. A closer relationship with NATO will promote these values and contribute to our mutual security.

Three years ago, the U.S. Senate unanimously voted to invite 7 countries to join NATO. Today, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia are making significant contributions to NATO and are among our closest allies in the global

war on terrorism. It is time again for the U.S. to take the lead in urging its allies to recognize the important efforts underway in Georgia and Ukraine, and to offer MAP to both countries this spring.

Both countries have significant amounts of work to accomplish before they can be offered NATO membership. Let me be clear, MAP participation does not guarantee future membership, nor does it consist of simply a checklist for aspiring NATO members to fulfill. It is a guide, not an endorsement to NATO membership.

I am confident that Presidents Saakashvili and Yushchenko understand that NATO membership will not be possible without the support of their respective electorates. In Georgia the issue was put to a referendum earlier this month and 76.22 percent of voters supported NATO membership. Ukrainian leaders have identified the need for a national referendum on this important issue in the future. Alliance membership requires commitment and sacrifice that must have the support of the local population if they are to be successfully implemented.

Last week, former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, Steven Pifer, outlined in the International Herald Tribune several compelling arguments for extending MAP to Ukraine. He said, in part: "Granting Ukraine a MAP at the Bucharest summit . . . would enhance European security and stability . . . [N]one of the arguments against the measure stand up to scrutiny . . . Ukraine has made as much progress on democratic, economic, and military reform as Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Albania when they received MAPs in 1999 . . . Kyiv has demonstrated that it has serious military capabilities and the political will to use them. In recent years, the Ukrainian military has provided the alliance with strategic airlifts; participated, often side-by-side with NATO troops, in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and elsewhere; and made a significant contribution to coalition ground forces in Iraq during 2004-05. Ukraine would be a net contributor to Euro-Atlantic security."

Mr. President, I ask that my colleagues support this important resolution. It sends a strong message to the administration, our NATO allies, as well as to the people of Georgia and Ukraine that we are prepared to work closely with each to contribute to the strengthening of peace and security in Europe and Eurasia.

SENATE RESOLUTION 440—RECOGNIZING SOIL AS AN ESSENTIAL NATURAL RESOURCE, AND SOILS PROFESSIONALS AS PLAYING A CRITICAL ROLE IN MANAGING OUR NATION'S SOIL RESOURCES

Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. VOINOVICH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:

S. RES. 440

Whereas soil, plant, animal, and human health are intricately linked and the sustainable use of soil affects climate, water and air quality, human health, biodiversity, food safety, and agricultural production;

Whereas soil is a dynamic system which performs many functions and services vital to human activities and ecosystems;

Whereas, despite soil's importance to human health, the environment, nutrition and food, feed, fiber, and fuel production, there is little public awareness of the importance of soil protection;

Whereas the degradation of soil can be rapid, while the formation and regeneration processes can be very slow;

Whereas protection of United States soil based on the principles of preservation and enhancement of soil functions, prevention of soil degradation, mitigation of detrimental use, and restoration of degraded soils is essential to the long-term prosperity of the United States;

Whereas legislation in the areas of organic, industrial, chemical, biological, and medical waste pollution prevention and control should consider soil protection provisions;

Whereas legislation on climate change, water quality, agriculture, and rural development should offer a coherent and effective legislative framework for common principles and objectives that are aimed at protection and sustainable use of soils in the United States;

Whereas soil contamination coupled with poor or inappropriate soil management practices continues to leave contaminated sites unremediated; and

Whereas soil can be managed in a sustainable manner, which preserves its capacity to deliver ecological, economic, and social benefits, while maintaining its value for future generations: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes it as necessary to improve knowledge, exchange information, and develop and implement best practices for soil management, soil restoration, carbon sequestration, and long-term use of the Nation's soil resources;

(2) recognizes the important role of soil scientists and soils professionals, who are well-equipped with the information and experience needed to address the issues of today and those of tomorrow in managing the Nation's soil resources;

(3) commends soil scientists and soils professionals for their efforts to promote education, outreach, and awareness necessary for generating more public interest in and appreciation for soils; and

(4) acknowledges the promise of soil scientists and soils professionals to continue to enrich the lives of all Americans by improving stewardship of the soil, combating soil degradation, and ensuring the future protection and sustainable use of our air, soil, and water resources.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3973. Mr. ROCKEFELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 5140, to provide economic stimulus through recovery rebates to individuals, incentives for business investment, and an increase in conforming and FHA loan limits; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3974. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 5140, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3975. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 5140, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.