

House Passes Resolution Supporting a NATO Membership Plan for Georgia and Ukraine

On Tuesday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed, H. Res. 997, a resolution supporting a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) for Georgia and Ukraine. Gus, who is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Europe, co-sponsored the resolution and supported its passage.

On several occasions, Gus has met with officials from the Ukrainian government, including Ukraine's Ambassador to the United States, on the strategic necessity for the United States to support Ukraine's NATO MAP.

H. Res. 997 recognizes the "lasting stability and security in Europe and Eurasia require the military, economic, and political integration of emerging democracies into existing European structures." Furthermore, it states that "NATO members can and should play a critical role in addressing the security challenges of the post-Cold War era in creating the stable environment needed for emerging democracies in Europe and Eurasia."

The resolution also acknowledges that "participation in a Membership Action Plan does not guarantee future membership in the NATO Alliance" and U.S. support for Georgia and Ukraine in NATO MAP "demonstrates support for the development of democratic institutions in those countries, the process of defense reform and respect for human rights, and does not represent a hostile attempt to expand the Alliance at the expense of the security of any country."

President Bush, who is in Bucharest for this year's NATO Summit, on Wednesday put the weight of the United States behind a NATO MAP for both Georgia and Ukraine.

From Reuters...

"My country's position is clear -- NATO should welcome Georgia and Ukraine into the Membership Action Plan," Bush said in a keynote speech, hours before an expected clash on the issue at a summit of the 26-nation defense alliance.

Gus had this to say following the passage of H.Res. 997...

"The passage of today's resolution makes clear the intent of this Congress to see Georgia and Ukraine on the path toward NATO membership.

"Although Russia and NATO allies like Germany remain solidly opposed to Ukraine and Georgia membership plan, there must be a continued effort toward integrating these two nations into Western and transatlantic structures.

"A NATO MAP is not membership, but a pathway toward membership where Georgia and Ukraine can work with our allies under an established and defined framework on any existing issues and differences.

"NATO MAP will ensure continued peace and democratic development in both of these countries, as well as result in a deeper relationship with existing NATO members.

"We have witnessed the benefits NATO membership has created for countries like Romania, Poland and Bulgaria. Ukraine and Georgia's membership should be no different, especially considering the progress they have made towards free and transparent democracies.

"Ukraine, in particular, remains one of America's staunchest allies in the Global War on Terror, participating in nearly all current NATO operations around the world. They should be recognized accordingly."