

THE U.S. AND NATO: AN ALLIANCE OF PURPOSE



(State Department photo — Janine Sides)

When President George W. Bush welcomed NATO's newest members at the accession ceremony at the White House on March 29, 2004, he noted that unity and commitment to freedom had carried the Alliance to victory in the Cold War and would do so again in the war against terror.

"Today, our Alliance faces a new enemy, which has brought death to innocent people from New York to Madrid. Terrorists hate everything this Alliance stands for. They despise our freedom, they fear our unity, they seek to divide us. They will fail. We will not be divided," he said. "Together, Europe and America can lead peaceful nations against the dangers of our time. Europe and America can advance freedom, and give hope and support to those who seek to lift the yoke of isolation and fear and oppression. That is the mission that history has set for NATO — this great and confident alliance of 26 nations — and we proudly accept this mission."

The NATO Alliance is today, as it has been since its founding 55 years ago, a unique and invaluable organization. It is, as NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer has said, "a place where North America and Europe come together to discuss the most serious political issues on our agenda. It is where the countries that share most profoundly our common values agree on common action. And it is the platform for the most effective militaries in the world to defend our security, our values, and our interests, wherever required, together."

When the 26 members of the Transatlantic Alliance meet June 28-29 in Istanbul, they will continue the transformational dialogue begun two years before in Prague and seek profound cooperation to meet the security challenges of this age.

This issue of U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda examines the newly expanded NATO Alliance through a range of perspectives in articles, commentary, and references from national security experts within the administration, the Congress, and the public research and academic sectors.