

NATO/ EAPC FELLOWSHIP 1998 – 2000

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**THE ROLE OF NATO AND THE EAPC IN SUPPORT OF
LASTING PEACE AND REGIONAL SECURITY
CO-OPERATION IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE (1997-2000)**

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INTRODUCTION

The present report is the result of a two-year research effort deriving from professional and academic interests. The challenge of putting on paper a credible account of events of crucial importance for the future of South-Eastern Europe¹ (hereafter also denominated by the acronym SEE), as seen from the heart of the region, was essential in motivating this effort.

The main hypothesis of the study was determined by the logic of events in the south-eastern part of the European continent following the end of the Cold War and stemming, in particular, from the Yugoslav crisis. There is hardly any need to stress here the importance of ongoing efforts to stabilise South-Eastern Europe, in which the North Atlantic Alliance, as the only organisation, providing credible security guarantees in the Euro-Atlantic area, has played and will play a key role. NATO's expanding role meets the expectations of the new democracies in the region for integration into the Euro-Atlantic community and has become a fact of life. This process from its outset is a two-way movement. Placed in an environment of uncertainty after the end of the bloc-to-bloc division in the continent, young democracies in South-Eastern Europe needed NATO not only to safeguard their security, but also as guarantor of their strategic choice to belong to the community of free and democratic nations. Equally, the Alliance needed to respond to crises and project security in South-Eastern Europe, by extending its partnership tools and opening the prospect for future membership to those states, willing and able to contribute to its goals.

The point of departure for this project was NATO's high-level expression of political will at the Madrid Summit in 1997, recognising the need to build greater stability, security and regional co-operation in the countries of South Eastern Europe and to promote their increasing integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. By that time a significant stabilising and security-projecting role of the Alliance in SEE had already started to take shape. NATO's key contribution through SFOR to keeping and consolidating peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the growing scope and intensity of co-operation among Allies and Partners within the PfP programme, the improved prospects for eventual integration of eligible regional countries in NATO - were the main aspects of this role.

Chapter I provides a general outlook on the security situation in the region in 1997 together with an analysis of the Madrid Summit decisions and their impact on South-Eastern Europe. The Fellow's intention is to demonstrate why and how the Alliance's enlargement policy and the establishment of the EAPC/PfP, plus' cooperative mechanisms were particularly well suited for

¹ For the purposes of this report the term 'South-Eastern Europe' will be used in accordance with its current political and academic usage, denominating a geopolitical space composed of the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the FRY, Greece, the Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey. Simultaneously, the term 'Western Balkans' will be used to define the area, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the FRY, and the Republic of Macedonia.

promoting regional security and defence co-operation. The chapter further analyses the outcome of the discussion on principles and objectives of regional defence and security co-operation, held by an informal working group of the EAPC in the autumn of 1997. The launching of a regional process of such co-operation (the South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial meetings – SEDM) and its Euro-Atlantic orientation are described. Furthermore, an overview of the establishment of the Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe with the participation of 6 countries of the region, on the basis of NATO standards, is provided.

The initial concept of the paper had to be reviewed against the background of the Kosovo crisis and the radical changes in the security environment in SEE as a whole. Regardless of numerous early warning signals, by the end of 1997 nobody could have predicted the eruption of a major international crisis in Kosovo in 1998-1999. At the same time, what had seemed rather improbable and vague in 1997 - a major NATO military operation “out of the Art. V area” and a long-term involvement of the Alliance in peace support and security-building in the Balkans did become a reality.

Therefore, Chapter II simply had to focus on the role of NATO and its Partner states in South-Eastern Europe for crisis management in Kosovo during 1998-1999. A short background on the crisis by the time of its eruption into a major international issue is presented. It is followed by a description of the substantial contribution provided by the Alliance and its Partners to the intensive diplomatic efforts for a peaceful settlement. The chapter further presents the evolution of NATO’s approach to crisis management in Kosovo: from efforts to contain and isolate the conflict by assisting affected neighbouring countries, to contingency planning and credible threats of use of force and finally, to involvement in a major military operation of peace enforcement. A political overview of NATO’s military operation for peace enforcement in Kosovo and an assessment of its tasks and main results is also included. NATO’s air campaign supported by regional Partner nations, was the decisive factor in creating the conditions for a peaceful settlement. In a logical continuation the chapter also describes the key role played by the NATO-led Kosovo Security Force (KFOR) in a challenging post-conflict peace-building effort in Kosovo.

In a more future-oriented perspective, Chapter III examines the role of NATO and its partnership tools in a comprehensive international strategy for lasting peace, stability, development and prosperity in South-Eastern Europe, emerged in the wake of the Kosovo crisis. The chapter analyses the decisions of the Washington Summit in April 1999 outlining a long-term commitment by the Alliance to sustainable peace and security in South-Eastern Europe, to be pursued in parallel with integration of the countries of the region into the Euro-Atlantic community. On a more practical note, the development of NATO’s South East Europe Initiative (SEEI), as a substantive implementation of the guidance given by the Washington Summit, and fully using the potential of the EAPC and the PfP programme in a regional context is analysed. The chapter

further addresses NATO's role in the EU-led Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and examines the Alliance's growing input through the SEEI to projects developed within the Stability Pact Working Table 3 on security issues.

Finally, the conclusions of the report summarise in brief the results of the research and sustain the main hypothesis on the basis of the whole factual material, contained in the three previous chapters.

In short, this paper presents an analysis of the growing key contribution by NATO and its main partnership tools - the EAPC and the PfP, for building lasting peace and security in South-Eastern Europe, seen as a logical evolutionary process, and based on the high-level political guidance, given at the Madrid and the Washington Summits. At the same time, particular attention is dedicated to the active role of regional Partner states and their increased potential to generate stability and security for themselves and their neighbours. A continuation of the process of NATO enlargement with qualified applicants from SEE is considered a logical and necessary development, corresponding both to the interests of the Alliance and to the legitimate aspirations of people in the region for integration in the Euro-Atlantic community of free and democratic nations.

This report does not pretend to present a fully accurate scholarly account on the examined issues. The Fellow's intention has been to give the study a political and analytical character, reflecting trends, experiences, conclusions and "lessons learned", rather than following events chronologically. The paper does not describe in operational detail neither NATO's military involvement in Kosovo, nor its numerous activities elsewhere in the region. It provides instead an analytical overview of facts, trends, aims, results and assessments combined with the Fellow's own comments and reflections. It should be recognised that a complete and comprehensive scholarly analysis of the issues examined in this paper is a task exceeding in magnitude the capacity of an individual researcher.

In order to give more focus to the report and achieve greater policy relevance, the timeframe of the research has been limited to the period 1997-2000, but this limitation has been applied flexibly, when appropriate.

Over the two-year work on the project, kindly supported by the NATO/EAPC Fellowship, the Fellow has reviewed a large amount of available sources and bibliographic material /documents of international organisations, official positions of national governments, reports elaborated by representatives of international organisations, summaries and reports materials from relevant conferences and seminars, books and monographic studies, magazine articles, selected political speeches and press and media reports/, as listed in the Annex. Among others, these included all relevant NATO and EAPC documents, as well as all available press-releases, reports, articles and selected political speeches by NATO officials. With the theme of the study progressively getting into the media headlines in 1998-1999, the Fellow has seen his task become more challenging and responsible. A major challenge was finding the best method of

work in a virtual ocean of everyday media reports and other information related mainly to the Kosovo crisis.

In the context of professional activities and the undertaken research in the two-year period the Fellow has visited several NATO and EU countries and has personally participated in a number of international seminars and conferences pertinent to the contents of the paper. This “practical connection” has been very useful in providing valuable information and opportunities for “reality checks”. A number of informal personal interviews and exchanges with diplomats and high-level officials from NATO, EU and SEE countries, have provided the Fellow with valuable insight on political events. He was also privileged to rely on a number of occasions on the services of the NATO Library in Brussels.

The views expressed in this report are individual responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Republic of Bulgaria.

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This project would not have been possible, without the support of the NATO-EAPC Fellowship programme. The bibliographic sources and other material for it have been compiled by drawing largely on the extremely helpful thematic and other bibliographic references issued by the NATO Library in Brussels.

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CHAPTER I THE MADRID SUMMIT DECISIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON A GROWING ROLE OF NATO AND THE EAPC/PfP FOR PEACE, SECURITY AND REGIONAL COOPERATION IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

§1. Outlook on the security situation in South-Eastern Europe in 1997. NATO's role in the region as shaped by the time of the Madrid Summit.

NATO's security agenda in 1997 was not primarily dominated by crises and challenges in South-Eastern Europe. By that time, however, the region had already occupied a key place in the Alliance's geostrategic thinking and action, being seen as potential source of instability and an inseparable component of the overall Euro-Atlantic security space. Though in 1997 the Alliance seemed largely occupied with issues like internal transformation, enlargement with new members and relations with Russia, it also paid increasing attention to continuing instability in the Balkans and had already developed the necessary tools and channels to deal with security risks and influence decisively the security situation there.

By the time of NATO's Madrid Summit in July 1997 a significant stabilising and security projecting role of NATO in South-Eastern Europe had already started to take shape along the following main lines:

- providing a military component of peace-enforcement, peacekeeping, peace-support, humanitarian and disaster relief operations under a UN mandate (in the cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania)
- providing a security-related and logistic support for the activities of other partner organisations in the civilian aspects of post-conflict reconstruction (in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- providing through the PfP a framework for enhanced military ties and co-operation among NATO members and Partner nations in the region on the basis of NATO standards, thus fostering confidence and conflict prevention
- offering the prospect of NATO's enlargement to eligible countries in South-Eastern Europe, along the criteria established in the Study on NATO enlargement

Most relevant examples of NATO's involvement caused by the need to cope with the Yugoslav crisis were the NATO-led IFOR and SFOR operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They provided a crucial input for the successful implementation of the Dayton-Paris Peace Agreement. The NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) ensured the end of the military conflict, induced compliance with the military aspects of the Peace agreement and guaranteed peace for the post-conflict reconstruction. It also provided substantial support for the civilian component of the Bosnian peace operation and for the work of other international institutions involved, such as the Office of the High Representative, the OSCE, the UN/IPTF, the ICRC, UNCHR and others. After the peace process in BH entered into a consolidation phase, the reduced military

presence of the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR), in accordance with the mandate given by the UN Security Council Resolution 1088 of December 1996, was aimed to further ensure a secure environment necessary for the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a unified and multiethnic state. SFOR tasks also included deterring or preventing resumption of hostilities or new threats to peace.¹ The Stabilization Force also stood ready to provide emergency support to UN forces in Eastern Slavonia.

A key aspect of SFOR's input to military stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina was its support to the confidence-building activities among the armed forces of the Bosnian entities, performed by the OSCE Mission in accordance with Articles II and IV of Annex 1-B of the Peace Agreement. In developing further this support, the NATO Council adopted a programme of security co-operation activities for BH, designed to promote the creation of central defence institutions in the country. The Alliance thus contributed to the creation of conditions for the start of the negotiations on a regional arms control agreement under Art.V Annex 1-B of the Peace Agreement for BH, held under the auspices of the OSCE.

Reflecting the key role of SFOR in the peace process, NATO's Madrid Summit issued a special declaration on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina reaffirming its commitment to security in this country and its long-term interest in the stability of the surrounding region. In view of the continuing fragility and vulnerability of the peace process, after the Madrid Summit SFOR stepped up its activities against violators of the Peace Agreement and intervened decisively to enforce firm and fair compliance. SFOR acted to detain indicted war criminals and supported the High Representative in his efforts to suspend media activities performed in contravention to the Peace Agreement.

Another good example of NATO's involvement in South-Eastern Europe was the action some of its members undertook with respect to the profound political and institutional crisis which occurred in Albania in 1997. NATO acted in a co-operative framework with other international organisations to restore constitutional order and ensure delivery of humanitarian aid to the country. A "coalition of the willing" type of peace operation (Operation "Alba") was performed in the spring of 1997 under Italian leadership involving troops from several NATO members and Partner nations. Under a UN Security Council mandate, this operation involved limited in time and scope multinational military presence on the ground – a Multinational Protection Force, tasked to ensure law and order and provide a secure environment for delivery of humanitarian assistance and holding democratic elections. Later on, after the International Conference on Albania (Rome, July 1997), NATO, through its PfP programme, became actively involved in providing much needed assistance to the new Albanian Government in building up its new armed forces. This experience proved the potential of NATO's PfP mechanism for providing specialised assistance to a Partner nation in a crisis situation.

Though in 1996-1997 the international image of the Balkans continued to be associated with aggressive nationalism, intolerance and instability originating from the Yugoslav crisis, a completely different democratic reality and a new political culture were developing in other areas of the region. In 1997 the democratic and economic reforms, along with integration processes, consolidated and speeded up in a number of countries and resulted in a changed democratic and open environment for interstate relations. SEE Countries that in the past had disputes and lacked communication among each other were getting involved in a regular dialogue.

Despite continuing tension in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Albanian crisis, undemocratic rule in Belgrade and latent tension in Kosovo, the region as a whole was dominated by a positive political trend aimed at speeding up integration of the countries of the region into the European mainstream and turning South-Eastern Europe into a secure and democratic part of the continent. In countries like Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria democracy and market economy were taking deep roots. New democratically elected political leaders embraced firmly Euro-Atlantic values and bravely embarked on radical reforms. Along with NATO members – Greece and Turkey, five other countries – Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, the Republic of Macedonia and Albania were active NATO partners within the PfP and contributors to the SFOR Mission. All five countries identified their future with full membership in the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions and welcomed NATO enlargement in Southeast direction. Within this group Slovenia and Romania were already considered eligible for receiving invitations for full membership at the NATO Madrid Summit. As for Bulgaria, following a period of ambiguity as to its candidacy for NATO membership and after a peacefully resolved financial and political crisis, the new Bulgarian Government declared in spring 1997 full membership in NATO as its leading foreign policy priority. The unambiguous Euro-Atlantic determination of the new Bulgarian leaders and the immediate positive results of their reform policy led to a recognition by some NATO members already in the second half of 1997 that Bulgaria had come close to Romania and Slovenia in its „equal vocation“ to rapidly join the Alliance.² In building up their expectations for the Madrid Summit, these three states flatly rejected the logic of some Western political circles which called for a „limited enlargement“ in anticipation of Russian objections to including SEE countries in NATO. For Bucharest and Sofia this argument was reminiscent of a new „Yalta syndrome“. Moreover, since the NATO-Russia Founding Act of May 1997 explicitly recognised the “inherent right of all states to choose the means to ensure their own security”, the applicant SEE states considered this text to be solving the political obstacles on the road to their NATO membership.

A positive development for SEE was the revival of the process of regional Balkan co-operation (later denominated as the South-Eastern European Co-operation Process – SEECP) which stayed “frozen” during the Yugoslav crisis. Conditions for such a new beginning were created by the progressive

implementation of the Peace Agreements for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the prevailing understanding that stable peace was not possible without regional dialogue and co-operation in line with the best European standards. A fresh start to the process was given at the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of seven Balkan countries in Sofia on 6-7 July 1996. Participating states committed themselves to a process of multilateral co-operation with a clear European orientation acting in close interaction with other initiatives for sub-regional co-operation such as the EU-sponsored Royaumont process and the US-sponsored SECI Initiative. The Thessaloniki meeting of Balkan Foreign Ministers in June 1997 gave further impetus to the process. A special emphasis on co-operation in the military field was envisaged by the decision to convene a regional Meeting of Ministers of Defence.

This positive trend was aptly summarised by the first in history Summit of Heads of State and Government of SEE countries, held in Crete on 4 November 1997, where they solemnly declared that “Europe cannot be complete without our countries and our peoples representing civilisations and historical traditions which are essential to the establishment of a contemporary European identity.”¹

In summary, by the time of the Madrid Summit South-Eastern Europe had acquired a new strategic significance for NATO in its quest to project stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. The Alliance and its regional Partner nations were already involved in preparing to assume enhanced commitments to lasting peace and security in the region, building on existing instruments of co-operation and developing new ones. Candidates for NATO membership perceived their integration in the Alliance not only as a guarantee for their security, but as a matter of civilisation choice and a viable way to ensure their stable economic development and prosperity.

§2. Decisions of NATO 1997 Madrid Summit and their relevance for SEE.

The impact of the NATO Madrid Summit (8-9 July 1997) on the evolving post Cold-War security environment in the whole of Europe was, indeed, more than significant. The Summit marked an important new stage both in terms of NATO’s internal transformation and of its enhanced contribution to Euro-Atlantic security, including through enlarged membership. Most importantly, NATO’s historic decision in Madrid to invite for membership three new democracies from Central Europe, was at the same time accompanied by a firm commitment to further pursue its ‘open door’ policy and make an enhanced contribution to security and stability in other adjacent areas.

South-Eastern Europe occupied a special place in this regard. It was for the first time in Madrid that a NATO Summit document referred explicitly and extensively to this geographic region as an area of particular concern and interest. The Alliance recognised the “need to build greater stability, security and regional co-operation in the countries of Southeast Europe, and in promoting their increasing integration into the Euro-Atlantic community”⁴

Moreover, in connection with a future continuation of the enlargement process, the Alliance took account of the positive developments towards democracy and the rule of law in a number of countries in the region, specifically mentioning Romania and Slovenia. This text was obviously a result of a political compromise among the Alliance members and reflected the uneasy 'last minute' decision to invite for membership 3 and not 5 candidates. Though it brought disappointment to the political elite and the public opinion of the two mentioned countries⁵, this text still provided an encouraging signal to the region opening a clear prospect of future NATO enlargement in south-east direction. The compromise formula was obviously also an attempt to strike a balance between invitees and prospective candidates and to accommodate critical views on the need to geographically balance the enlargement with accessions from South-Eastern Europe, where threats to the security of the Alliance might have been more relevant.⁶ Much has been argued on the extent to which the Madrid formula on "enlargement with 3" created a setback in the Euro-Atlantic expectations of leaders and societies in SEE and provoked feelings of new dividing lines across Europe. Life proved that formula to be more stimulating than discouraging. We share the opinion though, that a "bolder decision" at Madrid to include candidates from South-Eastern Europe in the "first wave" of enlargement would have been of direct benefit to the security interests of the Alliance and to stability in the region.

NATO's enhanced commitment in Madrid to projection of stability and security through co-operation in the Euro-Atlantic area was given substance by upgrading and fine-tuning the Alliance's co-operative partnership structures. The Madrid Summit endorsed two major decisions taken earlier at ministerial level - on the enhancement of the PfP and the establishment of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council /EAPC/. Their aim was to raise at a qualitatively new level the political and military co-operation among Allies and Partners, building on the results and experience reached within the PfP and the NACC. Fostering NATO's co-operative outreach activities and in addition to the Founding Act among NATO and Russia and the Charter NATO-Ukraine, the EAPC with its envisaged membership of 44 countries, was expected to complement the work of the OSCE and other relevant institutions such as the EU, the WEU and the Council of Europe.

The establishment of the EAPC and the enhanced PfP was largely underpinned by developments in South-Eastern Europe. NATO's operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina had led to unprecedented in scale and intensity interaction with Partner nations and other international organisations. The experience of interaction among Allies and Partners within SFOR provided the basis for further work to achieve multinational military interoperability and develop capabilities to meet new challenges of regional crisis management. Moreover, the EAPC and the enhanced PfP were obviously meant to further encourage closer links and co-operation between NATO and PfP states that were not among the first invited, or did not have (or were not offered) immediate

prospects for membership including a number of NATO partners from South-Eastern Europe.

The Basic Document of the EAPC, adopted in Sintra - Portugal on 30 May 1997, described it as a new co-operative mechanism and as a framework for expanded political dimension of partnership and practical co-operation among Allies and Partners.⁷ Furthermore, the EAPC was tasked to provide the overarching framework for consultations among its members on a broad range of political and security-related issues. The Basic Document also significantly widened the scope of co-operation among Allies and Partner nations by specifying that subject areas for possible consultations in the EAPC might include but not be limited to: crisis management; regional matters; arms control issues; nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) proliferation and defence issues; defence planning and budgets and defence policy and strategy; security impacts of economic developments. Other possible areas of consultation and co-operation included civil emergency and disaster preparedness, armaments co-operation, nuclear safety, defence related environmental issues, civil-military co-ordination of air traffic management and control, scientific co-operation and, last but not least - issues related to peace support operations. Further to the EAPC Basic Document, the first EAPC Action Plan for 1998-2000 adopted in December 1997 provided for a wide range of activities raising the level of political and military co-operation among members. These activities varied from multilateral consultations on issues of specific security concerns to concrete steps, increasing transparency, predictability and confidence. The guidelines elaborated within the EAPC were further extensively elaborated in terms of practical military co-operation within the enhanced PfP work programme and a strengthened Partnership Planning and Review process /PARP/.

The enhanced Partnership for Peace programme endorsed by the Madrid Summit was given a more operational focus and, while retaining its separate identity, was included in the overall political consultation framework of the EAPC, fundamentally changing the role of partners in decision making and planning activities held together with the Allies. Whereas previously all PfP matters were normally decided by NATO alone, under the enhanced PfP Partner countries were now directly involved in the planning and conduct of activities related, in particular, to possible NATO-led PfP operations and joint exercises. The enhanced PfP had to address the full range of the Alliance's new missions (including peace support, disaster relief and humanitarian operations as well as other "non-Art.V missions) and include all partners who are able and willing to contribute to such missions.⁸

It should be emphasised that two key features of the new partnership system formed by the EAPC and the enhanced PfP were its inclusiveness and its flexibility. The EAPC/PfP'plus' partnership system was not aimed to create a stiff bureaucracy but a flexible framework for result-oriented Euro-Atlantic co-operation which gave NATO Partner nations a more prominent role and had to constantly develop through practice. Thus, while the system did not discriminate

against any Partner country and held open all opportunities for co-operation, it also provided for self-differentiation, leaving to partners the choice to decide for themselves the level and areas of co-operation with NATO. Owing to such flexibility of avenues and formats of co-operation, the EAPC/PfP “plus” system was able to accommodate the interests of both Partner nations aspiring for NATO membership and of all other Partner states. In evidence of this „dual” approach the Madrid Summit Declaration referred to the EAPC as both a general co-operative framework and a tool supporting further NATO enlargement. States aspiring for membership were therefore strongly encouraged for active participation in the EAPC and the PfP, which would deepen their political and military involvement in the work of the Alliance.⁹ These states were also offered to continue their intensified dialogues with NATO on membership issues.

§3. Consultations on enhanced regional security and defence co-operation under the auspices of the EAPC/PfP

The signal from Madrid was well grasped by NATO Partner nations in South-Eastern Europe who officially welcomed the results of the Summit. In a special statement of 10 July 1997 the Bulgarian Government reiterated that rapid accession to NATO remained an immediate national interest and a strategic priority for Bulgaria. At the same time Bulgaria expressed its readiness to fully use the EAPC/PfP ‘plus’ framework for accelerated preparations for membership.

Since the flexible structure of the EAPC allowed to use different formats for consultations and open-ended groups, a discussion started immediately after the Madrid Summit on how best to focus and target the EAPC’s work in order to address security concerns of individual Partner countries. In connection with the Madrid offer to use the EAPC for consultation and co-operation on regional matters, proposals were made to introduce open-ended consultations on regional security issues within the EAPC. In parallel, the prospective future invitees for membership like Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria already pressed for a separate „pre-accession agenda” between them and NATO.¹⁰

At the Madrid Summit Meeting in EAPC format on 9 July 1997 Bulgaria put forward a number of proposals for focusing the EAPC activities in support of enhanced Euro-Atlantic co-operation in South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region, such as:

- political consultations and co-operation on issues concerning regional security and stability, including risks and challenges such as terrorism and organised crime, arms control and non-proliferation issues, environmental challenges etc.
- development of an enhanced military interoperability among SEE countries in order to create regional capabilities for participation in NATO/PfP conflict prevention, crisis management and peace support operations

- measures to assist effective implementation and verification of arms control agreements and CSBM's
- joint elaboration and implementation of infrastructure projects within the scope of the NATO Security Investment Programme, as developed at the Madrid Summit.
- promotion of contacts and co-operation among citizens and NGO's designed to promote the values and principles of the Washington Treaty
- development of principles of Euro-Atlantic regional security co-operation.

As follow-up to these proposals, an initial round of focused discussions on prospects for regional security co-operation in SEE was held by an open-ended working group of the EAPC in Brussels in the autumn of 1997. The discussion contributed to identifying the main areas and principles of Euro-Atlantic regional security co-operation in SEE, noting the existence of a considerable potential for a regional contribution to overall European stability. It was found that the EAPC/PfP frameworks offered useful new mechanisms for such contribution.

A most emphasised point by the participants in the discussion was the Euro-Atlantic character and orientation of the developed joint regional approach to security: regional security and defence co-operation was seen as a major tool to foster the enlargement of the Euro-Atlantic zone of stability in Southeast direction. It was recognised that while the ability of SEE states to address security problems at the local level should be fostered, its interlink with NATO and the EAPC/PfP frameworks remained critical.

The discussion also concluded that enhanced regional security co-operation introducing a regional dimension in the EAPC/PfP frameworks did not mean fragmentation, but rather a reinforcement of the Euro-Atlantic security community. With all its positive effects of mitigating possible tensions among neighbours, regional security co-operation could not be a substitute for the NATO enlargement process and an alternative to early membership in the Alliance of qualified applicant countries.

Furthermore, regional security co-operation was regarded as a test for increased potential and readiness of SEE states to assume greater responsibilities in generating security not only for themselves but for their neighbours, the region and the whole of Europe. A sign of increased security-related responsibility would be a more pro-active and constructive approach in settling together existing unresolved issues.

Participants from SEE nations underlined that such new responsibilities cannot be undertaken exclusively at regional or subregional level but only in the context of enhanced interoperability and prospective full membership in the Alliance. During the discussion a proposal for setting up an EAPC ad hoc Working group on regional security and co-operation in SEE was put forward. At that stage however, it was generally found that setting up new institutional formats might be premature and unnecessary. The need for an added value and

quick result oriented approach was also strongly emphasised. The usefulness of a “clearing house” in order to help avoid duplication of activities was also highlighted.¹¹

As a result of the discussion a list of areas in which there was interest or potential for regional consultations and co-operation through regional exercises, seminars, workshops, joint programmes open to all, organised on an *ad hoc* basis or through the EAPC/PfP was compiled. Those areas included: civilian control of armed forces; international terrorism; illegal arms trade and drug trafficking; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; civil emergency planning and disaster relief; defence planning, budgeting and force restructuring; confidence and security-building measures and arms control issues; security of navigation on the Danube; establishment of regional centres, including regional infrastructure project; establishment of multinational units that can be linked to NATO-led PfP operations; establishment of regional hotline links.¹²

In addition to these indicative areas it was stressed that the EAPC as a whole should be fully involved in consultations on current crises and issues in the region and should consider action to be undertaken to address them. This would also lead to a more active role for the EAPC in NATO-led PfP operations.

The results of the EAPC discussion on security co-operation in SEE were specifically mentioned and positively evaluated at the second EAPC Ministerial Meeting in December 1997 in Brussels.¹³ The EAPC Action Plan for 1998-2000 also included a number of activities supporting the conclusions of the regional security discussion.

§4 Regional security and defence co-operation within the SEDM process:

An initiative of fundamental importance to the implementation of NATO/EAPC objectives in SEE in the spirit of the Madrid Summit decisions was the establishment in the autumn of 1997 of a forum for enhanced Euro-Atlantic regional co-operation among the SEE states in defence and security affairs. This process was launched at a meeting of Ministers of Defence from of South-Eastern European PfP participating States – Albania, Bulgaria, the Republic of Macedonia, Romania and Slovenia, regional NATO member states – Greece and Turkey as well as Italy and the United States, which took place on 3 October 1997 in Sofia. The meeting was convened as follow-up to a previous one held in Tirana in 1996. The specific format of the process (involvement of Italy and US; absence of non-PfP regional countries - Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia) was meant to emphasise the fundamental orientation of participating states towards co-operation with and membership in NATO.¹³ While in the framework of the EAPC the established format of regional co-operation had an open-ended character and pursued also PfP’s more general objectives, in the case of the South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial (SEDM) the baseline was a well focused and practice-oriented process of creating

interoperability with NATO and preparing for membership, using fully EAPC and the enhanced PfP. Moreover, participation in the SEDM process implied adherence to Euro-Atlantic values and recognition of the role of NATO as a “major driving force” in the construction of an inclusive European security architecture, in close co-operation with the WEU. However, SEDM was never meant to be a “closed club”. At the Sofia meeting Ministers agreed to “consider favourably opening of the process to other South-Eastern European countries, once conditions make that appropriate.”¹⁵

As initiator and host of the meeting, Bulgaria was led by the conviction that the PfP states in the region aspiring for NATO membership needed to assume a leading role in fostering regional defence and security co-operation and demonstrate their increased potential to generate confidence and security for their neighbours and for the region as whole. At the same time, as indicated by all participants in the Joint Statement of the meeting, this process was aimed to facilitate integration into European security structures including NATO. The Alliance’s declared intention to extend further invitations in coming years to democratic countries willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership was welcomed. It was stressed that strengthening of the civilian control of military forces and their adaptation through restructuring as to achieve improved interoperability with NATO were essential qualifications for membership in the Alliance. The Ministers also expressed support for the regional dimension of the EAPC and PfP, focused on developments in SEE.¹⁶

As a result of the discussion, three main clusters of follow-up measures were identified in a special annex to the Joint Statement: measures promoting integration into Western institutions, confidence and security-building measures and measures to promote regional defence co-operation. Implementation of these measures was also aimed to assist national defence reforms. Notably, measures related to co-operation in defence reforms and restructuring, defence planning, transparency and interoperability provided a very essential linkage to the core of the Partnership and Review Planning Process within the EAPC/PfP framework. In order to ensure regular continuity of the process it was agreed to hold annually Defence Ministerial Meetings, and regular consultations among Chiefs of Defence Staffs, Deputy MOD’s and on expert level.

In essence, the mainstream of the SEDM process was oriented towards greater confidence building and creating regional mechanisms and capabilities for conflict prevention and crisis management and for regional participation in a whole range of peace support and disaster relief operations. Countries in the region agreed that the implementation of these goals could be achieved only in the context of a greater role of NATO and the EAPC/PfP for lasting security and stability in the region. They also aspired for an increased interoperability with the Alliance facilitating future full membership.

5. The Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe /MPFSEE/

Following an initiative by Turkey, the nations participating in the SEDM process started negotiations on the establishment of a Multinational Peace Force in SEE (hereafter MPFSEE). In less than a year after the launching of the SEDM process, these negotiations led to the conclusion of an Agreement on the Establishment of a Multinational Peace Force SEE signed during the second Defence Ministerial meeting of SEE states on 26 September 1998 in Skopje. This agreement constituted a real breakthrough in the security landscape of SEE by succeeding to bring together former military adversaries in a joint effort to create for the first time in history their own common instrument for strengthening confidence and security in the region. The symbolism of this act lied in the fact that the Balkan countries who had been divided for many years by the existence of military blocs and had largely depended on outside forces to protect them, now agreed to become collective „owners“ of their security.

Seven countries became parties to the Agreement - Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Romania and Turkey. Slovenia and the USA received an observer status.

Proceeding from their joint commitment within the SEDM process, the EAPC and the PfP to contribute to regional security and stability in SEE, the States Parties agreed that MPFSEE would be based on the following principles:

- the initiative is consistent with the purposes and the principles of the UN Charter and is neither directed against any third state, nor intended to form a military alliance of any form against any country or a group of countries.
- the MPFSEE is transparent and open to NATO and PfP nations in the region “able and willing” to contribute constructively at any later stage
- the MPFSEE is in line and supportive of PfP programmes which aim at improvement of the regional co-operation within PfP and shall allow essential co-operation within the framework of the UN, NATO, the OSCE and the WEU.
- all decisions concerning MPFSEE are taken by consensus among the Parties. This agreement does not affect in any way rights and obligations of the Parties stemming from treaties and agreements that they had previously signed.

The Agreement further stipulates that the MPFSEE consists of a joint mechanised brigade which is declared to the UN and the OSCE. The multinational force will be available for employment in UN or OSCE-mandated NATO-led or WEU-led conflict prevention and other peace support operations, including peace-keeping, peace-making, peace-building and humanitarian operations.¹⁷ It could also participate in “coalition of the willing” type international initiatives. The Force will also function “within the spirit” of PfP.

The process of setting up of the MPFSEE drew largely on the experience and expertise of NATO in fostering interoperability and using multinational military formations. Since December 1994 NATO had been developing the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Concept aimed to prepare the Alliance for flexible and quick reaction to new challenges and emergencies other than its

classical collective defence tasks. The CJTF Concept was also developed as a tool to foster interoperability and capabilities for joint operations, involving Partner nations. In this sense the MPFSEE could be considered as a regional implementation of NATO's CJTF Concept. The Brigade is composed on a "call on" principle. Units allocated to it remain in their permanent home-base locations and come together to form the appropriate force for exercises and training activities, as well as for contingencies, should there be a decision by the Parties to that effect.

The political and military consultations and decision making within the MPFSEE follow NATO standards and are conducted through meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Defence, the Chiefs of the general Staffs and a Politico-Military Steering Committee / PMSC/. It is important to underline that a decision for participation in operations and deployments is a collective one, subject to political and military consultations and approved by the Parties through respective national procedures. At the same time participation in a particular force "package" is a purely national preference.

In accordance with an Additional Protocol to the Agreement the Headquarters of MPFSEE is situated in the town of Plovdiv – Bulgaria for a period of four years. It became operational on 1 September 1999. According to the agreed principle of rotation, the Chair of the PMSC, the commander of the Force, the Chief of Staff and other posts in the Headquarters are occupied in turns by representatives of different SEE states.

Another additional Protocol signed in Bucharest in November 1999 establishes an Engineer Task Force and a Crisis Information Network within the MPFSEE. The overall aim is to create flexible and efficient regional conflict prevention and crisis and emergency response capabilities.

In view of the fact that negotiations on the establishment of the MPFSEE provided a good material for further assessment relevant to the implementation of NATO CJTF concept and of similar initiatives in other regions, in June 1998 Bulgaria initiated within the EAPC the elaboration of a Multinational Regional Formations – Common Modalities Concept - MNRF. Such a concept would serve as a useful tool within the EAPC to better define modalities of participation of MNRF in NATO-led operations.

In short, the establishment of the MPFSEE with the decisive assistance and expertise from NATO is a future-oriented initiative, which definitely contributes to radically changing the image of SEE. It is a unique and innovative instrument for regional security and a new type of multinational military formation, combining collective voluntary contributions by States in the region and thus responding flexibly to their security interests. Using NATO/PfP standards, concepts, regulations and instructions, the MPFSEE directly contributes to achieving military interoperability of NATO Partner states in the region with the Alliance and underpins their membership aspirations.

CHAPTER II THE ROLE OF NATO AND ITS PARTNER COUNTRIES IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN KOSOVO (1998-1999)

§1. Background and development of the crisis at the beginning of 1998.

By the beginning of 1998 the attention of the international community became increasingly seized with a looming new crisis in the Balkans. A violent crisis in Kosovo had been predicted and „announced“ to the international community ever since the break-up of socialist Yugoslavia but it was not until 1998 that it became a priority on the international security agenda.

Much has been written and spoken about the root causes of this crisis. It is not our task here to describe the sources of ethnic tension in the province and the way they have been treated as to erupt in a violent conflict. It is our conviction though, that the main responsibility for the Kosovo tragedy lies with the Yugoslav political leaders of the late 80's and 90's, who, having a broad choice of options at their disposal, did systematically ignore the legitimate interests and peaceful demands of the Kosovo Albanian population (nearly 90% of the province's inhabitants) and addressed them by extreme nationalist attitudes and violent and repressive means. It is also our conviction that the humanitarian catastrophe might have been avoided if a decade, or even five years ago, the Yugoslav leadership had taken bold and creative steps to ensure respect for the legitimate rights of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, instead of persistently violating them.

Our analysis also cannot dwell at length on the flaws of the existing international conflict prevention and crisis management mechanisms, represented by the major security-related international bodies such as the UN, the OSCE, the EU (WEU) and NATO.⁽¹⁾ It is a fact though, that owing to an unfortunate and complex interplay of different factors neither the central government of the FRY, nor the major international institutions acted adequately in response to the early warning signals coming from Kosovo. Throughout the nineties Kosovo was often described as a „powder keg“ or a dormant crisis, however overshadowed by other open issues in former Yugoslavia. This was clearly the case during the negotiation and the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina in autumn 1995.

In 1995-1997 the situation in Kosovo kept a relatively low profile on the agenda of competent institutions such as the OSCE, the UN, the EU and the Contact Group (France, Germany, Italy, Russia the UK and the USA), which after 1992 emerged as a new international mechanism for concerted action (sometimes, unfortunately, inaction) in the context of the Yugoslav crisis. Exertion of greater pressure on the Belgrade government to address seriously the Kosovo problem was inhibited by considerations like „constructive involvement of the FRY in Bosnia“ and „the internal character of the question“. Still, the international community was able to agree on the broad principles to be

followed in a negotiated solution for the Kosovo issue: a) dialogue between Belgrade and the Albanian representatives in Kosovo b) respect for the territorial integrity of the FRY and inviolability of its borders c) substantial degree of autonomy for Kosovo within the FRY d) conditionality of development of political and economic ties with Belgrade on the progress of settlement in Kosovo.

A qualitative worsening of the situation in Kosovo was clearly identified at the beginning of 1998 by two main developments:

- increased activities of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA or UCK - a Kosovo Albanian paramilitary group opposing Serb repression and pursuing independence from FRY by military means) against Serbian police and security forces

- disproportionately heavy military response by the Serb authorities causing massive casualties and intimidation among the Albanian population.

It has been argued that the appearance of the KLA as a much stronger military factor in 1998 than in the previous years was largely due to a massive smuggling of arms for the KLA through the Albanian-Yugoslav border during the Albanian crisis of 1997. If this view is correct, it still remains to be analysed why the Yugoslav authorities actually kept their eyes shut to such a major border smuggling and did not take any strong action to halt it at an early stage.

Violent clashes occurred in Kosovo already in January 1998. In response to attacks and hostage taking by the KLA, the Yugoslav/Serb police and security forces used heavy armaments causing indiscriminate toll on peaceful ethnic Albanians, and performed house to house raids and arrests. A spiral of violence was initiated leading to progressive escalation of the armed conflict and radicalisation and intransigence of both sides' political postures. The excessive use of force by Belgrade triggered extremist terrorist acts by the KLA and led to a rise of its influence among the Kosovo Albanians undermining the moderate leadership of the locally elected president Ibrahim Rugova. Still, the KLA with its limited manpower, poor training and lack of heavy armament was by no means a military match to the Yugoslav army and security forces. Therefore, the armed conflict from its very outset had an asymmetric character. Owing to Belgrade's cruel and disproportionate military action, it degenerated into ethnic cleansing and massive expulsion of the Albanian population.

These developments rapidly turned the unfolding large-scale internal conflict in Kosovo, in which both sides committed atrocities and gross human rights violations, into a major regional and international issue and caused prompt reaction by the international institutions involved – the Contact Group, the OSCE, NATO the EU and the United Nations.

§2. The Role of NATO and its regional Partner countries in support of diplomatic efforts for a peaceful settlement.

From the outset of the international diplomatic efforts for a peaceful negotiated settlement in Kosovo, NATO became actively involved in them, by

providing assessment of the military situation on the ground and by using its mechanisms to prevent a possible spillover to the surrounding region. At their December meeting in Brussels in 1997 NATO Ministers expressed concern over the ethnic tension in Kosovo and called for „mutually acceptable solutions through responsible dialogue“.¹ In March 1998 the North Atlantic Council (hereafter - NAC) supported the statements of the Contact Group, calling for a beginning of a serious dialogue without preconditions between the Belgrade authorities and the leaders of the Kosovar Albanian community in order to develop a mutually acceptable political solution for Kosovo within the FRY on the basis of the principles outlined by the international community.² The recognition within the Alliance that NATO had a legitimate interest in developments in Kosovo was the starting point for a discussion on possible options for NATO action in support of the diplomatic efforts of the international community. Turning its attention to Kosovo, NATO was anxious to preserve and develop further the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

By contrast to previous cases during the last decade, when the reaction of the countries of the region had been slow and uncoordinated, there was a strong regional response to the Kosovo crisis. The worsening situation in the province triggered unprecedented political consultations and co-ordination of efforts among NATO Partner countries in SEE aimed at formulating a common position among the immediate neighbours to the conflict area. A widespread understanding emerged that the Kosovo problem could no longer be regarded as an internal affair of the FRY and was a matter of legitimate concern for both the neighbouring countries and the international community. Following an initiative by Bulgaria, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of five SEE countries - Bulgaria, Greece, the Republic of Macedonia, Romania and Turkey, issued in March 1998 a Joint Declaration (Albania also subscribed to this Declaration later) declaring their serious concern with the regional dimensions of the deteriorating situation in Kosovo. They urged for immediate cessation of violence and for starting a genuine dialogue between the Serb authorities and the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. They also emphasised the basic principles of a lasting solution – full respect for the rights of all Kosovo citizens, respect for existing borders and for the territorial integrity of the FRY, a large autonomy for Kosovo within the FRY. The Ministers urged the organisations of the Kosovo Albanian community to make clear their opposition to violence and condemned terrorist actions to achieve political goals. In a clear message to Belgrade the Ministers stated that prospective integration of the FRY into the international community would largely depend on progress towards the solution of the Kosovo issue.³

A follow-up statement was issued by the same format of Ministers on 25 March 1998, in connection with a meeting of the Contact Group in Bonn with neighbouring states from the region. On many occasions the SEE countries were more radical in their views than the consensus reached within the Contact Group. Addressing a meeting in Brussels of the Intensified Dialogue NATO-Bulgaria on 27 April 1998, the Bulgarian Foreign Minister spoke in favour of

forcing and pressuring both parties in the Kosovo crisis to agree to a framework of principles and parameters for negotiated settlement drawn up by the international community. The Bulgarian Minister also went on to say that the stable democracies of the region formed a “belt of security” around the conflict area. ”Making this belt stronger - she argued - is yet another reason for the inclusion of Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia as full members in NATO and the European Union”.⁴

This was no formal activism. It was precisely the neighbouring countries that were extremely sensitive to the enormous risks of a new major conflict, threatening to cast a shadow over the whole region. Led by bitter previous experience, they were consistently seeking to avoid a repetition of the well-known negative scenario that resulted from the Yugoslav crisis in the mid 90’s. Their democratic leaderships were anxious not to allow that peaceful development be threatened and not to lose the acquired momentum of regional co-operation and Euro-Atlantic integration. They also feared new isolation from the European mainstream.

Though the joint actions of the neighbouring countries could not influence significantly the intransigent position of Belgrade, their effect should not be underestimated. They brought the policy of the international community to the Balkans and stressed the diplomatic isolation of the FRY Government. They also illustrated the growing Euro-Atlantic solidarity of regional NATO Partners and their responsible approach to regional and European security. For the first time in many years in the Balkans the “voice of the region” was prominently heard on an issue of immediate concern. The democratic states in SEE sent a clear signal that they would not tolerate further undemocratic abuse of state power and flagrant human rights violations in the region.

Despite warnings and sanctions on FRY introduced by the international community (a UN arms embargo through UNSC Resolution 1160 of 30 March 1998 and economic sanctions by the Contact Group and the EU)the Yugoslav/Serb forces continued their repressive operations in different parts of Kosovo using heavy artillery and forcing the Albanian population out of their homes. According to reliable estimates, between 200 000 and 300 000 Kosovo Albanians were driven from their homes from April to September 1998.⁵

The growing escalation of the conflict in the spring-summer of 1998 threatened to destabilise the neighbouring countries and the whole region. Hostilities in the immediate vicinity of the Yugoslav border and the numerous border violations led to a dangerous deterioration of Yugoslav-Albanian relations. The threat of a massive flow of refugees to Albania and the Republic of Macedonia putting at risk the internal stability of these countries became imminent.

In the spring of 1998 NATO Partner nations in the region made full use of the mechanisms for intensified dialogue and the EAPC/PfP consultation mechanisms to enter in intensive consultations with NATO on the ways and means to respond to the newly emerged risks for their security. Upon request by

Albania and the Republic of Macedonia, NATO stepped up its assistance through the PfP to these two countries to contain a spillover of the crisis. NATO provided advice on border control issues, held a series of exercises and training activities for their armed forces and submitted advice on dealing with a possible influx of refugees. At the same time the Albanian Government strongly favoured direct military action by NATO against the FRY.

In May-June 1998, in view of the failing diplomatic attempts to induce a meaningful dialogue between the Belgrade government and the Kosovo Albanians, the defying position of president Milosevic and the contradictions between Russia and the rest of the members of the Contact Group as to further military and economic pressure on the Belgrade authorities, credible threat and direct use of military force by NATO in order to coerce the parties to entering into serious negotiations became a possible and desired option for many US and European politicians and found expression in their public statements. In a speech in May 1998 in Oxford NATO's Secretary General J.Solana stressed that „NATO and the international community are not prepared to stand by and watch another part of the former Yugoslavia burn“. ⁶ As previous experience in dealing with the Belgrade leadership had shown, diplomacy, in order to be successful, had to be supported by a credible threat or use of force. The only organization capable of providing such a support was NATO. But though the argument to avoid a „second Bosnia“ by using if necessary military force, had a strong influence on the minds of diplomats and policy makers, at that point of time members of the Alliance could achieve only a broad consensus on going ahead with contingency planning and preliminary elaboration of scenarios for possible use of force. ⁷

The mentioned „low-level“ consensus was reflected in the Statement on Kosovo issued by the Ministerial Meeting of the NAC in Luxembourg on 28 May 1998. NATO reiterated that the *status quo* was unsustainable, urged for a peaceful solution and identified its objectives in the following way:

- to help achieve a peaceful resolution to the crisis by contributing to the response of the international community
- to promote stability and security in neighbouring countries with particular emphasis on Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. ⁸

The Luxembourg and Brussels NATO Ministerial Meetings in May and June 1998 supported further the diplomatic efforts of the Contact Group by demonstrating the resolve of the Alliance to act promptly including through different „use of force“ options. NATO Ministers commissioned a study on possible options for NATO military action in Kosovo in response to a systematic campaign of violent repression and expulsion, as well as the provision of military advice on possible NATO support of UN or OSCE monitoring activities and on possible NATO preventive deployments in Albania and the FYR of Macedonia on a relevant legal basis. It was decided to enhance and supplement PfP activities in both Albania and the FYR of Macedonia to promote security

and stability in these Partner countries and to signal NATO interests in containing the crisis and in reaching a peaceful solution. NATO's military authorities were tasked to conduct as quickly as possible an appropriate air exercise in Albania and the FYR of Macedonia with the aim of demonstrating NATO's capability to project power rapidly in the region. NATO's naval activities and two regional PfP exercises in the two countries were planned for August and September 1998. A NATO/PfP Cell was established in Tirana with the task to enhance the capabilities of Albania's armed forces to ensure the security of its borders. These NATO decisions were consulted with and supported by the EAPC Partner nations. The newly established by the EAPC Euro-Atlantic Disaster response co-ordination centre in Brussels was tasked to provide support to the UNCHR and other international organisations in providing humanitarian assistance to Albania and the FYR of Macedonia.⁹

In a follow-up Statement on the situation in Kosovo adopted in Istanbul on 9 June 1998, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, the Republic of Macedonia and Romania regretted the interruption of dialogue among the parties and expressed concern over the rapid deterioration of the situation. They urged for a more pro-active approach by the international community stressing that "in view of the experiences of the recent past, timely action on the part of the international community is crucial in cases of such escalating crises".¹⁰

The situation in Kosovo continued to deteriorate in the summer of 1998. After serious diplomatic efforts by the Contact Group and a Russian mediation effort, on 23 September 1998 the UN Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, adopted Resolution 1199 which recognised the Kosovo conflict as a threat to regional peace and security. The resolution called for an immediate cease-fire in Kosovo, to be monitored by international monitors, withdrawal of the Yugoslav security forces used for civilian repression, conducting a meaningful dialogue among the parties aimed at a political solution, ensuring the return of refugees and displaced persons and giving full access to humanitarian organisations. Due to strong objections by Russia and China, the resolution did not refer explicitly to possible use of force as a means to ensure compliance and only mentioned possible „further action and additional measures to maintain or restore peace and stability in the region“. ¹¹ Taking into account, however, the approaching winter threatening with a new humanitarian disaster for the over 250 000 refugees and displaced persons as well as the lack of implementation by the Belgrade leadership of Resolution 1199, NATO decided to act promptly in order to stop further escalation and impose a political settlement before winter.

The consideration of options for a possible NATO military involvement in accordance with the decisions of June 1998 had been completed by September with the formulation of three main categories of military options: (1) preventive deployment of troops in Albania, (2) different airborne operations and (3) deployment of ground troops in the framework of a cease-fire or a peace

agreement.¹² In the meantime consensus was building up in NATO on the need to act decisively by backing the political pressure with the credible threat or direct use of military force against targets in the FRY. This led to stepping up qualitatively NATO's involvement in Kosovo.

On 24 September 1998 the Secretary-General was authorised to issue an Activation Warning (ACTWARN) for air operations against FRY targets. On 13 October 1998 the NAC further authorised a next step – issuing Activation Orders (ACTORDs) for limited air operations and a phased air campaign against Yugoslavia. In the case of non-compliance by the FRY of UNSC Resolution 1199, execution of these orders was to start in 96 hours. Though there was no common position among NATO members as to whether the UNSC Resolution 1199 provided a sufficient legal basis for military action, the prevailing view was that the Alliance had to act under exceptional circumstances in order to prevent a humanitarian tragedy in Kosovo.¹³ The execution of the ACTORDs was generally seen as an “extreme scenario”, the threat of airstrikes being the ultimate way of exerting pressure on the Belgrade regime to withdraw its forces from Kosovo, co-operate in stopping the violence and facilitate the return of refugees to their homes. NATO's action provided a substantial backing to the series of diplomatic visits to Belgrade, including by NATO's Secretary General Solana, US Envoys Richard Holbrooke and Christopher Hill, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General W.Clark the Chairman of NATO's Military Committee General K. Naumann.

At that crucial moment NATO's unity and determination to resort to military force in order to enforce implementation of UNSC resolution 1199 played a key role in coercing President Milosevic to cede to international pressure. On 16 October 1998 an Agreement between S.Milosevic and R.Holbrooke was announced whereby the FRY leadership agreed to comply with the requirements of the UNSC Resolution 1199. In particular, the FRY agreed to setting reasonable limits for the presence of its troops in the province (at the level before March 1998) and to allow for the return of the refugees and the displaced persons under international monitoring. Two further agreements were reached on the establishment of a twofold verification regime. On 17 October an Agreement between the FRY and the OSCE was signed on the establishment of the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) consisting of 2000 civil monitors and tasked to verify compliance on the ground. Simultaneously, NATO and the FRY reached an agreement on an Air Verification Mission to support verification by the OSCE with air monitoring. In view of these developments, NATO postponed the airstrikes, extending the time for their execution until 27 October. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council adopted on 23 October 1998 Resolution 1203 formally endorsing both verification missions, and tasking them to verify compliance by the FRY and by „all others concerned“ in Kosovo (an expression clearly aimed at the KLA, but also to the moderate wing of Kosovo's locally elected president I. Rugova) with the cease-fire, the withdrawal of forces and the return of refugees.¹⁴ However, it was

obvious that the Kosovo Albanians, and in particular the KLA, were not officially bound by any concrete commitments and did not represent a homogeneous political force and a negotiating party.

On 27 October the NAC concluded that Yugoslav/Serb forces were being withdrawn and the security situation in Kosovo was improving. It specifically called on the Kosovar Albanian armed groups to maintain the cease-fire. In order to foster full compliance with the UNSC Resolutions 1199 and 1203 the Council decided to keep the situation under constant review and to maintain both ACTORDS, asking NATO military authorities to remain prepared to carry out these air operations, should they be necessary.¹⁵

The ACTWARN and ACTORD decisions of September-October 1998 involved active consultations with NATO Partner nations in South-Eastern Europe. The planning for airstrikes on FRY implied ensuring access of NATO planes to the air space of neighbouring countries and requesting their logistic support for the operations. For countries like Bulgaria and Romania, but also for Albania, the Republic of Macedonia and Hungary as an incoming NATO member, these were not easy decisions in view of the fact that their direct or indirect involvement in the operation might lead to break-up of diplomatic relations with the FRY and provoke retaliation measures on its part. It was at that point that NATO Partner nations in South Eastern Europe gave proof of their Euro-Atlantic maturity and solidarity. In mid-October 1998 the Bulgarian Government and Parliament gave their consent for access of NATO planes to Bulgaria's air space in conformity with the Bulgarian Constitution, the PfP framework Document and the PfP Status of Forces Agreement. This happened after urgent consultations Bulgaria-NATO in Brussels on the 13 of October in format 16+1, in accordance with the relevant mechanism of the PfP. The Bulgarian public welcomed the fact that in a letter to the Bulgarian Government NATO's Secretary General gave an explicit assurance that NATO will consider very seriously any threat on the part of the FRY on the security of Bulgaria and will act accordingly.¹⁶ This development marked a further step in strengthening the *de facto* allied status of Bulgaria in its preparations for NATO membership. In recognition of the contribution by regional Partners, the Ministerial Meeting of the NAC on 8 December 1998 welcomed the willingness of Partner countries to join with NATO in contributing to the solution of the Kosovo crisis either by participating in the NATO-led air verification mission or by offering the use of their airspace or other facilities in support of NATO's efforts.¹⁷

In November and December of 1998, despite a number of violations to the cease-fire, the conflicting sides in Kosovo appeared to be making progress along the lines of the UNSC resolutions. The OSCE KVM was deployed in about half strength by the end of December 1998 and its presence had an overall positive effect on the situation. The return of refugees and displaced persons was progressing and international humanitarian aid was channelled to the area. The OSCE KVM was however helpless when it came to implementation of the military aspects of the Milosevic-Holbrooke Agreement. It was neither equipped

nor mandated to play a peacekeeping role and enforce the cease-fire. OSCE monitors were unarmed and their protection was left to the Yugoslav army and police, which to a great extent made them dependent and ineffective. At the same time the mutually supportive work of the OSCE KVM and NATO's Air verification mission (Operation "Eagle Eye") through co-ordinated action and exchange of information set a good example of partnership among the two organisations. Since serious concerns emerged about the security and safety of the OSCE verifiers, NATO established in December 1998 the so-called "Extraction Force" (Operation Joint Guarantor) based on the territory of the FYR of Macedonia to provide the ability to withdraw personnel of the OSCE KVM in an emergency. The Republic of Macedonia provided facilities for the deployment of the 2000-strong NATO Extraction Force in the town of Kumanovo, close to the border with the FRY. The experience of the OSCE KVM, however, clearly spoke for the need of an enhanced peace-enforcing and peacekeeping international military presence in Kosovo.

In a Statement on Kosovo, issued at their Ministerial meeting in December 1998 the Foreign Ministers of NATO member states noted that both the Belgrade authorities and the armed Kosovar elements have failed to comply fully with requirements set out in UNSC Resolutions 1160, 1199 and 1203. They clearly outlined the formula for political settlement in the province through a process of open and unconditional dialogue between the authorities in Belgrade and representatives of the Kosovar leadership and through the negotiating process led by Ambassador Christopher Hill. They reaffirmed their support for a political solution which would provide an enhanced status for Kosovo, a substantially greater degree of autonomy and meaningful self-administration, and which would preserve the territorial integrity of the FRY and would safeguard the human and civil rights of all inhabitants of Kosovo irrespective of their ethnic origin.¹⁸ Unfortunately, despite efforts by the international mediators, there was no progress whatsoever in the talks on a political settlement by the end of 1998.

At their EAPC Ministerial meeting in December 1998 in Brussels the Ministers of NATO member states and Partner nations assessed the experience and the future challenges of NATO-Partner co-operation in the context of the EAPC and the PfP. They underlined the importance of the consultations that had taken place with Partners on Kosovo to inform them of the status of NATO's contingency planning and welcomed the expanded opportunities that the EAPC provides for such detailed consultations.¹⁹

By the end of 1998 the efforts for a political settlement had come to a deadlock due to both sides' intransigent positions. In fact, the KLA and the Yugoslav/Serb forces had virtually used the „cease-fire“ period in order to prepare for a new spiral of fighting and violence. Provoked by a number of KLA attacks, the Yugoslav army undertook a series of exercises and raids assembling a large military build-up for a major spring offensive. By mid January it became clear that the cease-fire and the Milosevic-Holbrooke agreement were no longer

observed. The mass killing of 45 Kosovo Albanian civilians in the village of Racak, whose bodies were found and examined by representatives of the OSCE KVM²⁰ was a total shock to the international community and spurred new diplomatic efforts for a political solution. At the request of Albania the Security Council held on the 18 of January an extraordinary meeting in connection with the massacre in Racak. The NAC at its meeting on 17 January also condemned the massacre and reminded that the threat of airstrikes remained valid. On behalf of the NAC, SACEUR General Wesley Clark and the Chairman of NATO's Military Committee General K. Naumann flew to Belgrade to urge the Yugoslav leadership to fulfil its obligations under the October agreements and allow for an impartial international investigation of the Racak killings. President Milosevic was again warned about NATO's credible threat to execute the airstrikes if Belgrade did not desist from its policy of escalating repression. Regrettably, there was no positive reaction from Belgrade.

On 29 January 1999 the Contact Group again took up the initiative of peace and summoned representatives from the Federal Yugoslav and Serbian governments and a delegation of the Kosovo Albanians to a peace conference in Rambouillet near Paris co-chaired by the British and the French Foreign Ministers. The Contact Group demanded that the parties should seize the opportunity to reach a settlement within 21 days and warned that it would hold them accountable if they failed to do so.²¹ The proposal of the Contact Group was reinforced on the same day by a strong ultimatum-like statement by NATO in which the Alliance declared readiness to take whatever measures were necessary to ensure compliance of the parties. The NAC authorised again airstrikes on FRY territory if required, and also warned about possible measures against the Kosovar Albanian side.²²

At the negotiations in Rambouillet from 6 to 23 February, held with the direct involvement of the Contact Group, the parties were presented with a draft interim agreement containing the main principles of the settlement outlined by the international mediators: a transitional period of three years, supposed to end up with a further decision on a final settlement; ensuring substantial autonomy for Kosovo while preserving the territorial integrity of the FRY; deployment of a NATO-led security force, withdrawal of all Yugoslav/Serb troops, except for a limited number of border guards and security forces, and disarmament of the KLA.²³ Though the proposal was certainly not a perfect one, it provided a basis for a fair and balanced accommodation of interests of all sides in Kosovo. Acceptance of the plan required concessions by both parties. Since no agreement could be reached, the talks were then postponed for mid-March in Paris where the parties were expected to sign the Rambouillet accords. While time was running up and fighting on the ground in Kosovo continued, NATO refrained from the execution of the airstrikes giving a chance to diplomacy. In fact, NATO's priority planning was mainly focused on the option of peace. In February 1999 NATO started consultations with Partner nations on preparations and their participation in a NATO-led peacekeeping ground force in Kosovo

(Operation „Joint Guardian“), in order to get ready for immediate deployment after the signature of a peace agreement. Preparations started for a preliminary deployment of the future „Joint Guardian“ units on the territory the Republic of Macedonia. In the case of Bulgaria, on 18 February 1999 the Government instructed the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence to work out together with NATO authorities the parameters of Bulgaria's participation in operation “Joint Guardian”. The Yugoslav leadership, however, refused to accept the deployment of a NATO-led force on its national territory as part of the peace plan.

At the renewal of the peace talks in Paris from 15 to 18 of March, the Kosovo Albanian delegation eventually announced its acceptance in principle of the Rambouillet accords and signed them on the 18 of March. The Serbian delegation however refused to accept the agreement and even tried to backslide from positions it allegedly accepted in February. Field reports in the meantime showed that Belgrade's forces had started pouring back into Kosovo to start a new offensive in clear violation of all previous commitments they had undertaken. In these circumstances the co-chairs adjourned the negotiations, stating that they would not resume unless the Serb/Yugoslav side expressed acceptance of the accords. Thus the Yugoslav leadership was confronted with the choice either to accept the negotiated peace, or face NATO airstrikes.

These developments caused deep concern among the FRY neighbouring countries in SEE. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the South-Eastern Europe Co-operation Process /SEEC/ at their meeting in Bucharest on 19 May 1999 considered with alarm the grave consequences of the growing humanitarian crisis in Kosovo, and in particular the new waves of refugees flooding into the neighbouring countries. They emphasised that the Paris talks might represent a last opportunity for a political settlement of the crisis and welcomed the signing of the Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo (the Rambouillet Accords), in its entirety by the delegation of the Kosovar Albanians. They urged the FRY to sign as well the Agreement at the earliest stage.²⁴

In view of the extremely deteriorated security situation on the ground, the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE decided to withdraw the OSCE KVM on 20 March 1999. After the Serbian parliament confirmed the rejection of the Rambouillet peace, a last unsuccessful attempt to persuade President Milosevic to comply with the demands of the international community and warn him about imminent NATO airstrikes on FRY, was made by the US Envoy R.Holbrooke.

On 24 March 2000, at a time when NATO's orders for airstrikes on FRY territory were already issued, the European Council declared at its meeting in Berlin that the international community had done its utmost to find a peaceful solution to the Kosovo conflict and that „FRY is now facing the severest consequences about which it was repeatedly warned, of its failure to work with the international community for a peaceful settlement“.²⁵ During that day

President Milosevic was given a last chance which he did not take. On the evening of 24 of March 1999 NATO's Operation Allied Force was launched.

In summary, during 1998 and the beginning of 1999, NATO actively intervened as an actor in the international diplomatic efforts aimed at a political settlement of the Kosovo conflict. Its role evolved from military co-operation and assistance to neighbouring countries, contingency planning and verbal threats of use of force - to a direct involvement in a major military operation for peace enforcement in Kosovo. This „last resort“ action was forced by circumstances and became inevitable only after all political and diplomatic options for a solution were exhausted. NATO played the role of a „military arm“ in a „coercive diplomacy“ effort by the international community and its institutions to enforce a peaceful solution to the Kosovo conflict. At all stages of its involvement in Kosovo NATO relied on enhanced interaction with and support by Partner nations in South-Eastern Europe.

§3. A political overview of NATO's military operation for peace enforcement in Kosovo.

It is not our intention to provide in this paragraph a detailed account and analysis of NATO's military operation in Kosovo, but rather a political overview and assessment of its main aims and results.

NATO's military operation (operation „Allied Force“) for peace enforcement in Kosovo could not be compared to any previous operation of the Alliance and will probably remain as a unique experience of the international community. For the first time in its half-century history NATO engaged in a massive and sustained use of armed force. Moreover, in doing this NATO was not fulfilling a mission of collective defence, but a mission outside the territory of its member states, which did not defend territory but Euro-Atlantic principles and values. It was also a military action violating the sovereignty of a country, undertaken without explicit authorisation by the UN Security Council, which gave rise to an intensive debate on the legal grounds of use of force in international relations and the efficiency of the UN system to respond to new challenges similar to those raised by the Kosovo crisis. Without going deep into legal arguments and in view of the existing divergent opinions, the author of these lines finds that a conclusion to be drawn is that Operation „Allied Force“ had sufficient legal grounds *per se*, but should not be seen as a precedent for the future, since the conditions that led to it were, indeed, unique.²⁶

NATO's decision to use force was forcibly determined by a set of imperative factors which left the Alliance without other viable option. First, the decision to use force came as an undesired last resort option, only after all possible diplomatic efforts to impose a peaceful settlement promoted by the international community (through the UNSC resolutions and the Contact Group mediation) were exhausted. Second, the Alliance as a guardian of Euro-Atlantic

principles and values, had a moral imperative to react to the most appalling violations of basic human rights and the indiscriminate use of force by the Yugoslav police and armed forces. Third, the emerging spillover effect of the crisis on neighbouring countries had to be prevented. A fourth key element was obviously the need to preserve NATO's cohesion and credibility. After the numerous threats and warnings to use force in support of diplomatic efforts, the credibility of the Alliance would certainly have been impaired, had it not acted in accordance with previous declarations. Moreover, once the military operation had started, credibility and cohesion had to be sustained by leading it to a successful outcome.

The success of the operation largely depended on the input of the neighbouring NATO Partner countries who agreed to provide access to their airspace, infrastructure facilities and other kind of logistic support for the operation „Allied Force“. This was not an easy decision, since these states were already suffering considerable direct and indirect economic losses from the conflict. Though NATO's rating in general was high among the public opinion in these countries, being involved in a war with a neighbouring country was a feared and a generally unpopular option. Moreover, the provoked massive influx of refugees posed a direct threat to the security and stability of Albania and the Republic of Macedonia. Still, all neighbouring countries supported NATO's operation as a legitimate and necessary act leading as quickly as possible to final peace. NATO's regional Partners were also led by the wish to prove their Euro-Atlantic solidarity and enhance their interoperability and integration with NATO. While excluding the option of being involved directly in military operations against the FRY, they expressed readiness to take part in a post-conflict NATO-led peacekeeping force. In a move of solidarity, the Alliance, through its Secretary-General, offered a considerable level of security guarantees to the “frontline” states. In its Declaration of 25 March 1999 the National Assembly of Bulgaria welcomed the letter of NATO Secretary-General J.Solana in which he assured the Bulgarian authorities that the security of all NATO member countries was indivisibly linked to the security of all Partner countries and that Bulgaria's security was of direct and material concern for the Alliance.²⁷ The Bulgarian Parliament also expressed the solidarity of Bulgaria with the Euro-Atlantic community in its efforts to prevent a further aggravation of the crisis and called on the FRY to sign the peace agreement in order to prevent new human casualties and destruction.

In operational terms, since 24 March 1999 NATO launched a 78 days long campaign of systematic airstrikes aimed to disrupt and degrade the Serb and Yugoslav military potential, deter further military action against the Albanian population and halt the policy of expulsion and ethnic cleansing. To achieve these goals the campaign had to progressively grow in intensity and scope, including targets in the FRY that were believed to be strategically important to Belgrade. The political objectives of the operation were however more profound – to enforce a radical change in the policy of the Yugoslav

leadership and compel it to accept a framework for a political solution along the lines of the Rambouillet package. In its statement of 12 April 1999, the NAC meeting at Ministerial level in Brussels, supporting similar statements by the UN Secretary General and the EU, reaffirmed that NATO's military action against the FRY supported the political aims of the international community: a peaceful, multiethnic and democratic Kosovo, in which all its people can live in security and enjoy universal human rights and freedoms on an equal basis. The Alliance explicitly spelled out the conditions to be fulfilled by the Yugoslav leadership under which the air campaign would be stopped. These included: (1) a verifiable stop to all military actions and the immediate ending of violence and repression; (2) withdrawal from Kosovo of the military, police and paramilitary forces; (3) agreement to stationing in Kosovo of an international military presence; (4) unconditional and safe return of all refugees and displaced persons and unhindered access to the province by humanitarian aid organisations; (5) credible assurance of willingness to work on the basis of the Rambouillet Accords in the establishment of a political framework agreement for Kosovo.²⁸ These political goals were reaffirmed at the Washington Summit on 24-25 April 1999.

The Alliance also made it very clear in a series of public statements that its action was not directed against the Serbian people, but against the repressive policies of the Yugoslav Government and its forces of repression.

Despite the unquestionable superiority of the Alliance's air-power and the campaign's largely predictable outcome, during its course NATO and its Partner countries had to go through a number of critical "trials" such as: the effect of the images of a NATO-led war on the public opinion in NATO and Partner countries; unfounded expectations for a quick Yugoslav capitulation; divided views over a possible NATO ground operation; the inevitably inflicted civilian casualties; destroyed civil infrastructure and other „collateral damage“; and finally, the negative reactions by Russia and China.

However, the greatest challenge for the credibility and the success of the operation, in our view, was caused by the sharply increased magnitude of the humanitarian refugee crisis, right after NATO's airstrikes began. It was at that time that the Serb/Yugoslav forces started, as part of their long planned campaign²⁹, to deliberately chase out thousands of ethnic Albanians out of Kosovo. According to the UNCHR, by the end of April more than 350 000 Kosovo refugees had crossed into Albania and more than 150 000 into the FYR of Macedonia. Other thousands remained in Kosovo struggling to survive in desperate conditions. By the end of May 1999 nearly 1,5 million people (90% of Kosovo's Albanian population before the crisis) were refugees and displaced persons. Nearly a million fled or were forced out of Kosovo. The critical situation in Albania and the Republic of Macedonia required immediate action by the international community.

Coping with the humanitarian catastrophe was in fact the second (perhaps not so spectacular but no less decisive) battle that the Alliance and its partners

fought during the operation. A major international relief effort was set in motion. Large amounts of humanitarian assistance, including from SEE states, were channelled to Albania and the Republic of Macedonia. NATO reacted immediately by ordering its units, deployed in both countries to take a leading role in the humanitarian relief until UNCHR, ICRC and non-governmental organisations could take over. In the Republic of Macedonia NATO troops built refugee camps and a refugee reception centre, performed airlifts for refugees and humanitarian aid and helped with ground transportation. The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Co-ordination Centre in Brussels was also activated by Allies and Partners to assist in the co-ordination of the humanitarian effort. NATO, the OSCE and other organisations involved thus helped to provide food and shelter for thousands of refugees and to alleviate the enormous pressure on the fragile economies and political structures of two Partner nations.³⁰

Whether symbolically or not, the air campaign in Kosovo coincided with the Alliance's 50-th anniversary and the Kosovo issue dominated the deliberations of the NATO Washington Summit on 24-25 April 1999. The Kosovo crisis was defined in Washington as a fundamental challenge to the Euro-Atlantic values defended by NATO since its foundation. The Alliance declared its determination to intensify the military campaign against Belgrade, while reaffirming its support for a political solution on the basis of the conditions outlined by the international community, including through the adoption of a new UNSC resolution on the terms of the peaceful settlement.

Special attention at the Summit was paid to NATO's interaction with Partner countries from SEE neighbouring the FRY. NATO Heads of State and Government acknowledged that the neighbouring states are particularly affected by the humanitarian, political and economic dimensions of the crisis. They also expressed their gratitude for the efforts and solidarity shown by the neighbouring states in support of the Alliance's and the international community's objectives. In this context they reaffirmed that the security of neighbouring states was of direct and material concern to Alliance member states and that NATO would respond to any challenges by Belgrade to the neighbouring states resulting from the presence of NATO forces and their activities on their territory during this crisis.³¹ In a way, as shown by these developments at the Washington Summit, the Kosovo crisis presented challenges, but also new opportunities to NATO Partner countries in SEE to demonstrate their capacity to serve as reliable, de facto allies of NATO. Thus, the neighbouring countries firmly joined with NATO and the EU in applying an oil embargo on the FRY during the military operation, despite the economic losses they systematically endured as a result of the sanctions regime on FRY.

NATO's air campaign concluded when, after intensive negotiations and mediation efforts, the FRY leadership finally accepted on 3 June 1999 the peace plan proposed by the President of Finland and the Special Envoy of the Russian Federation. The plan was a more developed version of the principles previously agreed in May by the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Eight (the seven

industrialised countries and Russia), which emerged as the most authoritative forum for shaping the peace settlement. The imminence of a possible NATO decision to start a land operation and a significant change in the Russian position in favour of a settlement along the lines of NATO-EU conditions also played their role for the Yugoslav backdown.³² The principles of the agreement reached included among others: an immediate and verifiable end to violence and repression in Kosovo; the withdrawal of the military, police and paramilitary forces of the FRY; deployment of effective international civil and security presence (the latter with substantial NATO participation and under unified command and control); safe and free return of refugees. In accordance with the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the FRY, signed on the 9 of June 1999, NATO airstrikes were temporarily suspended. On 20 June, following confirmation from SACEUR that Serb security forces had left Kosovo, the Secretary-General of NATO announced the formal termination of the air campaign.

While analysts and policy-makers continue to dwell on a “cost and benefit” approach to Operation “Allied Force”, in the assessment of NATO’s high level officials the air campaign was a success, both in military and political terms.³³ Clearly, this should not be understood as a claim for perfection, but rather as an objective assessment, based predominantly on the final positive results. It is true that NATO’s operation faced serious criticisms, provided lessons learned and implied risks for the Alliance. However, it is also a fact that most of those who have criticised the use of military force by NATO did not actually point to any serious alternative option.³⁴

True, the Operation “Allied Force” achieved its goals at a substantial cost – in terms of loss of human life, human suffering, destroyed civil infrastructure, environmental damage, economic losses incurred by the neighbouring countries. But it is also true that the international community and the majority of the people in SEE knew that this cost had to be paid in order to prevent a bigger catastrophe and open a new perspective for Kosovo and the region.

The use of military force by NATO could have been avoided if effective conflict prevention measures had been taken within the FRY and by international actors during the last decade. In a more recent perspective, the airstrikes would clearly not have been launched, if the Yugoslav leadership had adopted a reasonable and co-operative attitude whether at the Rambouillet negotiations or after the October agreements of 1998. As a result of the defiant position of its leaders and the continued brutal policy of ethnic cleansing on the ground, the Yugoslav/Serbian side, and eventually the Serbian people at large, ended up in a far worse situation than had been offered to them at Rambouillet in March 1999.

The inevitable negative human and economic effects from the military conflict were the unfortunate price that the Kosovo Albanians, the Serb people, the neighbouring countries, and the international community as a whole had to pay for the lacking or failed efforts to stop the Kosovo conflict earlier. Albeit at

a late stage and at a considerable cost, NATO's military operation supported by Partner nations in the region succeeded in stopping the conflict from spreading to neighbouring states and in reversing the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. The air campaign, with all its costs and benefits, was thus the decisive factor in creating the conditions for a peaceful settlement under the auspices of the United Nations.

§ 4. The Role of NATO and KFOR in the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1244 (Operation "Joint Guardian")

The adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 on 10 June 1999 created the overall framework for a long-term process of peaceful settlement and post-conflict peace building in Kosovo. The text of the Resolution was based on the principles for settlement agreed by the Group of Eight and further elaborated in the text agreed by the FRY on 3 June 1999. Both those texts were annexed to the Resolution. The Resolution itself demanded a complete withdrawal from Kosovo of the FRY military, police and paramilitary forces and established, under the UN auspices, international civil and security presences in Kosovo. The international civil presence (shaped as the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo - UNMIK) had to assume the role of an interim administration tasked to ensure the conditions for peaceful and normal life of all inhabitants in Kosovo. The international security presence, in accordance with Annex 2 of the Resolution, had to rely on a substantial NATO participation and had to be deployed under unified command and control. Its main task was to establish a safe environment for all people in Kosovo and to facilitate the safe return to their homes of all displaced persons and refugees.³⁵

The modalities of the phased withdrawal of the Yugoslav troops from Kosovo and the synchronised deployment of the NATO-led international force (KFOR) were drawn up in a Military Technical Agreement (MTA) between Yugoslav and Serb military commanders and the NATO-designated commander of KFOR Gen. Mike Jackson, signed on 9 June 1999.³⁶ KFOR troops had assembled and prepared to act under NATO command since March 1999 on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. In accordance with the MTA, on 12 June 1999 20 000 multinational KFOR troops moved into Kosovo. They were greeted as liberators by the local population. Many refugees hurried back to their homes following in KFOR's steps. Already in the first weeks of the KFOR's presence nearly 750 000 Kosovo Albanians returned to the province.

KFOR's primary task was to ensure that no „security vacuum“ occurred between the outgoing and the incoming forces, which could have been filled by the KLA or another armed group. By 20 June the Yugoslav withdrawal was completed in accordance with the agreed timetable, and KFOR had already taken control of the province. Kosovo was divided into 5 KFOR sectors, led respectively by Germany, France, Italy, UK and the United States. NATO units provided the backbone of the force, but gradually it included units from more

than 35 countries and its personnel strength reached over 40 000. By the end of June 1999 Russian troops were also integrated within the KFOR's structure.³⁷

NATO Partner countries from SEE were included in the planning for the KFOR from its very outset. Albania and the Republic of Macedonia provided logistic support for the setting up of the force. After the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1244, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia welcomed the launching of the NATO-led KFOR mission and reiterated their readiness to contribute to it by both personnel and logistic support. Bulgaria and NATO expediently negotiated and signed in June 1999 an agreement, whereby armed forces and equipment from NATO member states directed to KFOR received authorisation for transit through Bulgarian territory. Bulgaria also negotiated and signed with the Netherlands an agreement on the modalities of sending a national non-combat contingent to KFOR in partnership with this NATO member state.

KFOR's main tasks, as described in the UNSC Resolution 1244 (1999), included in broad terms the following:

a) deterring renewed hostilities, maintaining and where necessary enforcing a cease-fire, and ensuring the withdrawal and preventing new threats against Kosovo by Yugoslav/Serb forces

b) demilitarising the KLA and other armed Kosovo Albanian groups

c) establishing a secure environment in which refugees and displaced persons can return home in safety, the international civil presence can operate, a transitional administration can be established and humanitarian aid can be delivered;

d) ensuring public safety and order

e) supervising de-mining, border monitoring, protection for freedom of movement

d) support to and co-ordination with the international civil presence (the UNMIK) and with other international organisations.

In a complex and challenging security environment, KFOR proceeded firmly with the implementation of its mandate. KFOR's presence ensured a powerful deterrent against any new Yugoslav threat to Kosovo. The Force assisted and followed closely the process of demilitarisation of the KLA in accordance with Resolution 1244. Following its pledge in June 1999 to disband and demilitarise in a period of 3 months, the KLA handed in its weapons and officially ceased to exist on 21 September 1999. Its members were supposed to either return to civil life, as part of a resettlement programme, or join the civil police or the newly established multiethnic civilian formation for emergency relief and reconstruction – the Kosovo Protection Force, established under the authority of the UNMIK.

Though the security situation on the ground improved throughout the first months of the KFOR mission, it continued to be volatile and unpredictable. The war mentality and the climate of ethnic intolerance largely persisted in the province. KFOR did establish an overall military control but could not cope with

the numerous individual cases of violence and intimidation. It should be noted that NATO's military action had led to a total shift of power in the province in favour of the KLA (by June 1999 it had grown into a considerable force of 20 000 troops) and its supporters who claimed victory in their struggle for independence of Kosovo. Many refugees came back to Kosovo dominated by feelings of violent revenge directed at the Serb population. In a situation of almost total legal vacuum created after the withdrawal of the Serb authorities, KFOR was not able to perform routine police and law-enforcement functions. Though KFOR units paid increasing attention to safeguarding the security of minority populations, they could not prevent a major exodus from the province of about 200 000 Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanians from June to October 1999.³⁸

KFOR's role was instrumental in preparing the ground for effective establishment and work of the international civil presence – UNMIK, led by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Dr. Bernard Kouchner. Co-ordination and synergy of efforts between UNMIK, KFOR and other international institutions involved proved to be of utmost importance for the solution of the long-term common task of building a future democratic, peaceful and multiethnic Kosovo. With KFOR's logistic support the UNMIK deployed its structures in Kosovo consisting of 4 main pillars:

- civil administration (including civil international police - UNIP) under the authority of the United Nations.
- humanitarian assistance activities, led by the UNCHR
- democratisation and institutions building (elections) supervised by the OSCE
- economic reconstruction and development managed by the European Union

The UNMIK established the Kosovo Transitional Council as the highest political consultative body in the UN interim administration, which included representatives from the main political parties and ethnic communities in Kosovo. A critical area for the UNMIK turned to be the need to put in place a provisional judicial and law enforcement system in order to guarantee a minimum of public order and legality. In a parallel effort, the OSCE established a local Police School in order to train personnel for the new multiethnic police service. However, the deployment of the much needed 3 500 strong UN International Police has progressed slowly and has put an additional strain on KFOR to undertake police, protection and border control functions. Apart from its de-mining activities, KFOR has undertaken many other "untypical" tasks – e.g. in support of the UNCHR humanitarian assistance programme and in rebuilding shattered infrastructure – bridges roads and power stations.

In summary, with the signing of the Military Technical Agreement and the adoption of the UNSC Resolution 1244, NATO's role in Kosovo was quickly transformed from an air-launched military action into a major ground peace support operation (combining elements of peace-enforcement,

peacekeeping and peace building). NATO's key contribution through KFOR to the post-conflict rehabilitation of the province clearly demonstrated that its ultimate goal was not to defeat and destroy, but to build in peace a new future for the people of Kosovo.

Working together, UNMIK and KFOR managed to accomplish their immediate short-term tasks in Kosovo, stemming from the UNSC Resolution 1244. The first positive results were achieved - the large majority of Kosovo Albanian refugees and displaced persons returned home and the KLA was demilitarised. Preparations for elections for local self-government in 2000 were launched.

However, the most difficult and complex challenges remain on the long-term agenda. Healing the wounds of war will take time and might even need a change of generations. The road to reconciliation and to building a tolerant, multiethnic and democratic Kosovo will be long and painful, and will require a long-term and consistent engagement by the international institutions, including a robust input by KFOR, NATO and Partner countries. The progressive development of a pluralist democracy and the rule of law in Kosovo, along with a possible democratisation process in the FRY, will allow to address in a radically improved environment the issue of the future status of the province in accordance with the provisions of UNSC Resolution 1244.

CHAPTER III THE ROLE OF NATO AND ITS PARTNERSHIP MECHANISMS IN A COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR LASTING PEACE, STABILITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE /1999-2000/

§ 1. The Washington Summit decisions on enhancing security and stability in South-Eastern Europe.

The Washington Summit in April 1999 commemorated NATO's 50th anniversary in the midst of the most significant military operation that the Alliance had carried out since its foundation in 1949. Despite the shadow of the Kosovo crisis, the Summit's work was extremely productive. The adopted documents provided strategic guidance on the whole spectrum of NATO's development and activities aimed at meeting the challenges of the 21st century. In this way the Washington Summit reviewed and gave a substantive and qualitative impulse to the implementation of the ambitious NATO agenda set out in Madrid in 1997.

Not surprisingly, the main thrust of the Summit's decisions was once more directed to the Alliance's new tasks of ensuring effective conflict prevention, crisis response and crisis management across the Euro-Atlantic area. The adopted new Strategic Concept, outlining the conceptual framework for a continued balance between the Alliance's collective defence tasks and its new missions, stressed on further developing the existing mechanisms for partnership and co-operation. The need for increased interoperability, synergy of efforts and burden sharing within the Alliance and among the NATO members and Partners was emphasised by the new Defence Capabilities Initiative.

The Summit concluded that the EAPC and the enhanced PfP had transformed the politico-military relations across the continent and had been extremely useful tools for consultations and practical co-operation, particularly in the context of the Kosovo crisis. The Summit welcomed the EAPC's enlarged agenda including areas such as peacekeeping, humanitarian de-mining, control over transfer of small arms, and the co-ordination of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. With a view to making the PfP process even more operational, a comprehensive package of new measures was approved, aimed at increasing further the involvement of Partner countries in the planning and decision-making process and their better preparedness for participation in NATO-led PfP operations.

Most importantly, at the Washington Summit NATO reaffirmed the continuity of its policy of enlargement as an evolutionary process and as part of a broader strategy of projecting stability in Europe. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were welcomed as new Allies, whose accession had extended the Euro-Atlantic zone of stability to Central Europe. At the same time NATO political leaders pledged to continue to welcome new members in a

position to further the principles of the North Atlantic Treaty and contribute to peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area.¹

Whereas in Madrid in 1997 South-Eastern Europe was recognised as an area of strategic interest for the Alliance, at the Washington Summit in 1999 it featured as an indisputable priority on NATO's agenda. In parallel to the focus on crisis management in the region, the Summit had to assess the progress made by the candidates for membership from the region. This was by no means an easy task. The "strong" candidates Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria, representing a democratic alternative to the Belgrade regime, were eager to receive in Washington a concrete and clear signal on the immediate prospects for their membership. Equally, Albania and the Republic of Macedonia needed encouragement for their efforts to preserve their young democracies from the turbulence of the humanitarian crisis. After the tragic events in Kosovo, the arguments of the applicant regional NATO Partners were much stronger and substantiated. Thus, in a press interview given during the Washington Summit, the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Nadezhda Mihailova stressed the link between Euro-Atlantic integration and conflict prevention efforts in the region by bluntly stating that "if Bulgaria, Romania and other stable democracies had already been NATO members, the conflict over Kosovo might not have happened at all".² In the run-up to the Summit the following advantages of an accelerated NATO enlargement to SEE were eloquently described by applicant countries: 1) such a step would create a "belt of stability" around the crisis area; 2) the democratic alternative to FRY policy in the region would receive a powerful incentive; 3) NATO's Southern flank would be strengthened; 4) the neighbouring countries to FRY had already acted as *de facto* NATO allies during the crisis without enjoying the guarantees and benefits of real membership. It should be noted that immediate membership of Bulgaria and Romania in the Alliance was strongly supported by Greece and Turkey.³

However, well before April 1999 it became clear that it would be impossible for the Allies to take a consensus decision on a "next wave" of enlargement at the Washington Summit. With a group of 9 new candidates, knocking at NATO's door, it was an increasing challenge for the Alliance to make a selective choice. Therefore, the only possible consensus within NATO was to postpone the decision on a further enlargement until the next Summit, leaving an additional period of time to candidates for preparation and progress on their accession record.

In an innovative initiative to assist the applicant countries with their preparations for accession to the Alliance, the Washington Summit adopted a Membership Action Plan (MAP) as a practical tool to better adapt and structure each candidate's individual programme for membership in accordance with NATO standards. Without being a set of criteria for membership, the MAP provided a general outline of pre-accession activities in 5 areas (political and economic issues; defence/military issues, resources, security and legal issues)⁴, that each aspirant country could choose to implement on the basis of national

decision and self-selection. Aspiring countries were invited to submit annually their individual national programmes on membership preparation for evaluation by NATO. The Alliance on its part undertook to provide focused assistance and expertise in different areas, as well as an annual feedback report to the applicant countries.

While the MAP did not provide a clear timetable for the next NATO enlargement, it certainly responded to the demand of a number of applicant countries (including Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia) to define in more concrete terms the criteria for membership and to create an evaluation mechanism for the progress of each candidate. Though unsatisfied with the absence of a clear timetable, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia welcomed the adoption of the MAP as a significant enhancement of NATO's open door policy. At the same time, extending new invitations for membership, in the view of the three countries, remained a high-level political (not technical or expert) decision to be taken by the Alliance. The three countries firmly expressed their expectations to receive invitations for membership by the time of the next NATO Summit (tentatively scheduled for 2002). As stated in Washington by the President of Romania E. Constantinescu, 'a deadline after 2002 seems an unfair and remote perspective.'⁵

In assessing the enlargement process, NATO leaders in Washington chose to develop further the Madrid formula on the prospective candidates for membership, this time actually "listing" all nine candidates, starting with Romania, Slovenia and the Baltic states. Bulgaria - a strong candidate after 1997, was mentioned next, followed by Slovakia. The "list" concluded with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania.⁶ The Alliance welcomed the efforts and progress that the aspiring countries had made on the road of political, military and economic reforms and stated that it looked for further progress by these countries in strengthening their democratic institutions and in restructuring their economies and militaries. At the same time, in an obviously compromise-driven text, NATO declared its "expectation to extend further invitations in the coming years to nations willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and as NATO determines that the inclusion of these nations would serve the overall political and strategic interests of the Alliance and that the inclusion would enhance overall European security and stability"⁷. Notably, this formulation was also repeated in the Alliance's new Strategic Concept, which made NATO's commitment even stronger.⁸

In addition to developing the enlargement *dossier*, the Washington Summit issued a strong and encouraging message on NATO's new consistent and long-term engagement with bringing lasting peace to the SEE region. Stability in Southeast Europe in a long-term perspective was unambiguously declared a priority of NATO's transatlantic agenda.⁹

This message did not originate only in the context of the Kosovo crisis. While mainly concerned to give immediate security assurances to the states neighbouring the FRY (see Chapter II, §2), the Washington Summit gave a

political expression to the emerging new thinking in many Western capitals on a broader and comprehensive vision for the future of SEE as a region fully integrated in the European mainstream.

Elements of such a vision were in place well before the Washington Summit. Having become against their will *de facto* hostages of the recurring wars and tensions in the former Yugoslavia, democratic leaders in SEE countries had for quite some time appealed to the West to apply a comprehensive strategy for security, stability and economic development in SEE. The idea of a sort of a new Marshall Plan for the region, evoking a parallel with the post-war recovery of Western Europe and the need for considerable foreign investment in the economic development of the region had been frequently raised. These views proceeded from the fact that key international institutions, as well as the most influential NATO and EU states, had been lacking for too long a strategic vision with regard both to individual countries in SEE and to the region as a whole. The emerging and potential conflicts, as also shown in the case of Kosovo, had served as the determining factor for the international community's approach to the region. The logic of international action had stemmed from a "reactive approach" aimed at controlling emerging crises and in very rare cases such action had managed to overtake the course of events. Moreover, in the efforts undertaken to manage the crises a priority had been given to the military and political measures. The economic and social aspects of conflict resolution had been weakly addressed and a strategy for a long-term "investment in security", in the broadest sense of the term, had been missing.

These ideas received a new start in 1999 in the wake of the international efforts to solve the crisis in Kosovo. On 19 February the USA and France announced a new joint initiative, open for participation to other NATO Allies, in order to "increase co-operation with Southeast Europe emerging democracies on security matters; co-ordinate security assistance to them from NATO countries; promote regional co-operation and economic development."¹⁰

In what might be called a new visionary approach to the problems in the Balkans, NATO's Secretary General J. Solana, speaking at a the Conference "NATO at Fifty" in London on 9 March 1999, stressed, that "the start of the Kosovo Implementation Force should signal the start of a wider initiative to put all parts of the Balkans on the path towards regaining their rightful place in Europe – politically, as well as economically. Without such a comprehensive approach we will never get beyond treating the symptoms only. We must do more than protect the peace. We need to tackle the root causes of these conflicts. We must create the conditions for reconstruction, the climate for reconciliation and we must give strong incentive for progress. That is why the entire Euro-Atlantic community – its nations and institutions – must become engaged. But it is not only an engagement on our part. We need the people of the region to take the responsibility in their own hands, to seize the opportunities that are opened to them. In short, what the Balkans need is a "Partnership for Prosperity".¹¹

These ideas became NATO policy when at the Washington Summit the Alliance leaders concluded that „a new level of international engagement is thus needed to build security, prosperity and democratic civil society, leading in time to full integration (of South-Eastern Europe) into the wider European family“¹². Therefore, NATO not only undertook commitments with respect to the immediate security risks for the countries neighbouring the conflict area, but also pledged a long-term commitment to creating an environment of security and co-operation in the whole region.

A new consultative forum for dialogue on security matters in the region bringing together at an appropriate level NATO member states and all 7 countries neighbouring the FRY /19+7/ was established at the Summit. Notably, the format of participation in these consultations, apart from Albania, Bulgaria, the Republic of Macedonia, Romania and Slovenia, also included Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina who were not EAPC/PfP participants. Thus, the format of NATO-sponsored regional security co-operation was substantially extended.

The Summit further directed the NAC in Permanent Session to give further substance to this initiative, building on, as appropriate, the existing EAPC/PfP framework, inter alia in the following areas:

- consultations in format 19+1 where appropriate
- promotion of regional cooperation in the framework of an EAPC cooperative mechanism taking into account other regional initiatives
- targeted NATO security co-operation programmes for the countries in the region, as appropriate;
- regionally focused PfP activities and exercises;
- better targeting and co-ordination of Allies' and Partners' bilateral assistance in the region.¹³

These NATO activities were seen in the context of supporting and complementing parallel efforts by other international organisations as well as by the countries of the region aimed at forging a better future for South-Eastern Europe - based on democracy, justice, economic integration and security co-operation. The Alliance welcomed the initiative of the European Union for an International Conference on a Stability Pact for SEE as well as the progress of the South-Eastern Europe Co-operation process, stressing the need for coherence and co-ordination between the various initiatives going in the same direction.

In summary, NATO's 1999 Washington Summit provided further strategic guidance on the development of the Alliance's growing role for fostering security and long-term stability in SEE and the integration of the region in the European mainstream. NATO undertook commitments with respect not only to the immediate security risks for the countries neighbouring the conflict area, but to creating an environment of lasting security and prosperity in the region. In a new initiative, it established a consultative forum on security matters in SEE. Particularly important was the Summit's message on fostering membership prospects for qualified states in the region, reflected in the Membership Action Plan. NATO committed itself to working together in

synergy with the EU, the OSCE and international institutions for the implementation of these common goals.

§2. Development of NATO's South East Europe Initiative after the Washington Summit

Following the political decisions taken at the NATO Washington Summit, the senior NATO and EAPC/PfP Committees were tasked to develop NATO's South East Europe Initiative (SEEI) as a comprehensive programme to enhance security and stability in the region and further develop and support regional co-operation on security and defence issues. The overall long-term goal of the SEEI has also been formulated as "the integration of all countries of South East Europe into the Euro-Atlantic Community."¹⁴

Naturally, the SEEI had to build on the already existing activities of the Alliance in SEE: the NATO-led peace support operations of SFOR and KFOR; the consultations and practical co-operation within the EAPC/PfP as instruments of conflict prevention, NATO's support for regional initiatives, as well as NATO's new membership-oriented activities. The SEEI was expected to combine and take all these efforts to a new intensified level, focusing them on direct security benefits for the region. The development of the SEEI also had to identify possible areas for interaction between the Alliance and regional Partner states (including in the new 19+7 format of the Consultative Forum), with a view to complement the efforts of other international institutions, such as the EU and the OSCE, in the framework of the Stability Pact.

In accordance with the Washington Summit mandate, the SEEI developed in 4 main pillars (one new and the other three building on existing tools): 1) Consultative Forum on Security Issues in SEE; 2) regional co-operation of open-ended character within the EAPC; 3) regionally focused use of PfP mechanisms to enhance confidence, transparency and interoperability; 4) targeted security co-operation programmes for countries in the region, as appropriate.¹⁵

The Consultative Forum (19+7) proved its value during the Kosovo crisis and became the only Alliance mechanism for regional security consultations which included Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. The forum met periodically to exchange views on the situation in the region and assess risks, related to Belgrade's policies. It continues to be a mechanism of choice for regional consultations when deemed necessary and useful.

On 1 June 1999 the EAPC in Political Committee session discussed a renewed proposal to establish an Ad-Hoc Working Group (AHWG) on South-Eastern Europe, while taking stock of all activities, carried out as follow-up to the discussions on enhanced regional security and defence co-operation held in an EAPC informal open-ended working group in the autumn of 1997 (See Chapter I § 3). The above proposal received overwhelming political support and

on 9 June 1999 the EAPC at the level of Ambassadors established the AHWG in an open-ended format with the task to focus specifically on prospects for regional security and defence co-operation in SEE, avoiding duplication with other already existing fora. There was an understanding that while regional co-operative initiatives were national responsibility, the EAPC and the PfP could play useful supportive roles, linking regional co-operation to Euro-Atlantic security as a whole. A number of guiding principles of the regional security co-operation in SEE were recalled in this respect: transparency, inclusiveness, non-regionalization of security and linkage to the integration processes.

The first meetings of the AHWG recalled the areas of focused regional co-operation, as agreed in November 1997 (see Chapter I, § 3). Positive note was taken of the successful development of the initiative on the creation of the Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe (SEEBRIG) and the elaboration of the Common Modalities Concept for multinational regional formations. There was a general agreement that the AHWG should concentrate on proposals and ideas of direct practical value and should dedicate more effort to implementation and follow-up.

In July 1999 the AHWG and later the EAPC Ambassadors approved a paper on “Prospects for Regional Co-operation in SEE”, identifying four priority areas for initial focus of work:

- (1) crisis management (to include civil emergency planning);
- (2) defence planning, budgeting and force restructuring, with an initial focus on transparency measures;
- (3) democratic control of the armed forces;
- (4) airspace management, with initial focus on civil-military co-ordination in crises

The AHWG also took note of other proposed areas for attention and possible valuable work. These included: regional approaches to small arms transfers and humanitarian de-mining; multinational formations; enhanced economic co-operation in the field of defence infrastructure (national and transborder); financing of security-related projects; dialogue in the field of defence industries, regionally focused science and ecological projects.¹⁶ The results of this work were conveyed to all relevant NATO fora. In September the AHWG met to consider specific ideas for action in the areas for initial consideration and developed for carrying the work forward. As the practical implementation of these proposals fell normally within the Partnership for Peace, they were referred to the PfP Politico-Military Steering Committee (PMSC) for further action.¹⁷

In the autumn of 1999 NATO/PfP Politico-Military Steering Committee (PMSC) discussed and compiled a list of different forms of regionally focused partnership activities and exercises that could be performed in support of NATO SEEI, including in the 4 areas identified by the EAPC AHWG. In addition to

those, the PMSC highlighted the following 3 areas, in which using the PfP tools for practical co-operation was found to be particularly essential to the SEEI:

- better targeting and co-ordination of Allies' and Partners' bilateral assistance to the region
- supporting co-operative regional frameworks for training and education making use of the PfP Training and Education Enhancement Programme.
- supporting multinational approaches to security and defence, including multinational formations and headquarters.

A number of specific activities and concrete result-oriented proposals were elaborated in each of the mentioned seven key areas of co-operation, most of them envisaging also the inclusion of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia as non-PfP members. The implementation of almost all measures required a leading role to be assumed by states of the region. There was an understanding that priority should be given to the Stability Pact related projects and activities.¹⁸

The thus developed extensive set of areas and activities in support of the NATO SEEI was approved by the North Atlantic Council on 26 November 1999. NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Brussels on 15 December 1999 took note of the intensified schedule of events and activities of NATO-sponsored regional security co-operation. In receiving a consolidated progress report on the South East Europe Initiative, they noted with satisfaction the range of activities already undertaken by the countries in the region and by Allies, with the aim of harmonising assistance programs for the states of the region, as appropriate."¹⁹ The EAPC Ministerial meeting on 16 December 1999 welcomed "the work under way in the EAPC and the PfP to promote further practical regional co-operation in South East Europe, directed at contributing to the building of lasting peace and stability in the region and complementing the work of the Alliance and the Stability Pact."²⁰

The first results of NATO SEEI were already visible a year after it was launched. The schedule of events targeted to enhance contacts among interested countries and stimulate regional security co-operation has become much busier than a year ago. On the basis of the proposals elaborated within the EAPC and the PfP, the countries of the region took a leading role in many areas of co-operation. Bulgaria, for instance, initiated the development of a SEE Security Co-operation Steering Group (SEEGROUP) in order to better co-ordinate and fine-tune initiatives and projects of the SEE countries and channel possible outside support through the NATO SEEI or the Stability Pact. A regional meeting in Sofia on 7-8 March 2000 discussed possible rationale and modalities for the SEEGROUP. Romania offered to take a leading role in the elaboration of a Paper on the SEE common security challenges (SEECAP). The first SEEI Seminar on Regional Co-operation in Civilian Expertise and the Role of Civil Society in Security and Defence Policy Making, with the participation of NATO interested states and the regional PfP countries plus Bosnia and Herzegovina and

Croatia, was held in Sofia on 24-25 February. Other SEEI seminars in Bucharest and Thessaloniki followed suit.

On their part, NATO members held the first tailored Clearing House on SEE in November 1999 in an effort to better target and focus bilateral assistance to the regional Partner countries. Useful proposals for assistance to regional states through the EAPC were launched in the field of mine-action, and in countering excessive proliferation of small arms.

In view of the democratic changes in Croatia since December 1999, the Alliance developed first a targeted co-operation programme with this country and later, in May 2000 reached a decision to invite Croatia to participate in the PfP and the EAPC. The Alliance continued its Security Co-operation Programme with Bosnia and Herzegovina in support of reform and cohesion between the entity armed forces within the country.

In summary, after one year of existence, the NATO SEEI has taken to a new level the focus and intensity of regional security co-operation supported by NATO, through the EAPC and the PfP. NATO Partner countries and candidates for prospective membership in the region have shown increased readiness to take “ownership” of their security. The SEE Initiative has still to develop to its full potential and requires a long-term and sustained commitment on the part of both the SEE countries and NATO. The SEEI activities should continue to develop under constant review to assure efficiency and continuing relevance.

§ 3 The Role of NATO in the Stability Pact for SEE

The Stability Pact for SEE initiative emerged already during the “hot phase” of the Kosovo crisis as a result of the growing recognition by the international community of the urgent need to apply a long-term vision and a comprehensive strategy for ensuring lasting peace, security and economic development in SEE. The Pact’s underlying philosophy was often popularly expressed with the following play of words: the Balkans should be “europeanised”, in order to avoid that Europe is “balkanised”. In a way, similar to the “Marshal Plan” of 1947, this initiative relied on a synergy between local efforts for reconstruction and development and external economic and financial support in order to achieve lasting security and stability.

The idea of a Stability Pact for SEE, binding together different initiatives aimed at stabilising the region, had already been brought up on several occasions within the EU and other international fora, but its implementation had to wait until June 1999. Following a German initiative taken up by the EU, a Conference on South-Eastern Europe was held at the level of Foreign Ministers in Cologne on 10 of June 1999 – the day when the UNSC Resolution 1244 on the post-conflict settlement in Kosovo was adopted. This date symbolised a

transition from peacemaking in Kosovo to post-conflict reconstruction and development of the whole region.

The essence of the Stability Pact document, adopted in Cologne, consisted in the shared responsibility and the joint commitment undertaken by the SEE countries and the international community as to ensuring the European future of the region. The countries of South-Eastern Europe committed themselves to continued democratic and economic reforms, as well as to bilateral and regional co-operation among themselves to advance their integration, on an individual basis, into Euro-Atlantic structures. On their part, the EU Member States and other participating countries and international organisations and institutions committed themselves to making every effort to assist the SEE countries to make speedy and measurable progress along this road.²¹ The Pact thus provided a clear prospect for a phased integration of the countries of the region into the European mainstream, based on the formula “reforms-cooperation-integration”.

In order to ensure continuous implementation of this shared commitment the Stability Pact created a new comprehensive political framework and a follow-up and review mechanism with broad and inclusive international participation. A particular asset of the Pact was that for the first time it brought together in a common effort the countries of the region, EU Member States, the Group of Seven Industrialised Nations plus Russia (G8), the EU, the OSCE, the UN, NATO, the WEU, the Council of Europe, and other international institutions such as: OECD, the World Bank, IMF, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. It was recognised from the outset that coherence, co-ordination and synergy among the different international actors, in accordance with their sphere of competence and real capabilities, had to be pursued actively for the success of the Pact. Most importantly, the Pact envisaged an international donor mobilisation and co-ordination process and convening donor conferences in order to raise financial support for the Pact-sponsored projects.

The Belgrade government was not invited to the conference in Cologne. It was agreed that the political settlement of the Kosovo crisis and the democratisation of the FRY would be preconditions for its inclusion as participant and beneficiary of the Pact. At the same time modalities were considered for involving the democratically elected government of Montenegro into the Pact’s activities.

Within the Pact’s “umbrella approach”, the leading role indisputably pertained to the EU, as initiator and promoter of the initiative, a major donor of financial and economic assistance for the economic reconstruction and development, and, notably, a guarantor of the integration process. At the same time, though the main focus of the Pact from its outset was believed to be economic reconstruction and development under the leading role of the EU, a comprehensive approach to security and stability in SEE was adopted, including three main dimensions: 1) democratisation and human rights; 2) economic reconstruction, development and co-operation; 3) security issues (including

justice and home affairs and defence issues). A South Eastern Europe Regional Table and three Working Tables were set up to deal with the three respective “baskets”. The structure thus created represented a “type of Helsinki Process for South-Eastern Europe”.²² As the promoter of a comprehensive approach to European security, the OSCE placed the Stability Pact under its auspices.

Shaping the above multidimensional approach and in view of the expressed full support by the Alliance, the Cologne document envisaged a significant role for NATO in implementing the objectives of the Stability Pact in the field of regional security. In para. 26 of the document NATO’s intention to work in co-operation with other Euro-Atlantic structures and with the countries of the region was duly noted. The text, approved by consensus, however vaguely mentioned the Alliance’s commitment to „openness“ and pointed out rather generally that „the enhanced use of NATO‘ consultative fora and mechanisms, the development of an EAPC cooperative mechanism and the increased use of the PfP programmes will serve the objectives of overall stability, co-operation and good neighbourliness“.²³ In fact, largely due to Russian objections, the Cologne document did not reflect fully the Washington Summit decisions on NATO’s contribution to security and stability in South-Eastern Europe, including by further accepting new members. The adoption in Cologne of a vague text on the Alliance’s key role as provider and guarantor of security in SEE and on the prospects for membership open to states from the region, caused serious concern and criticism among candidate countries, such as Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia. Another point of concern for these countries was also the fact that NATO participated in the Stability Pact as facilitator and was not offered the status of a full participant, along with other organisations such as the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

In general, countries like Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia who had already made significant progress on the road to their integration with the EU and NATO feared that the Stability Pact’s focus on co-operation among the countries in the region might adversely affect their individual tracks of integration into EU and NATO. They called for a differentiated approach to each country in the region, taking into account existing diversity, including each country’s involvement and contribution to regional security and stability.

After the official endorsement of the Stability Pact at the Sarajevo Summit of Heads of State and Government on 30 July 1999, the inaugural meeting of the Regional Table was held in September, followed by meetings of the Working Tables. The first meeting of Working Table 3 on security issues (hereafter WT-3) was held in October 1999 in Oslo. Its work was divided in 2 sub-tables – one on Justice and Home Affairs (internal security), and the other on Defence and Security Affairs. There was a general understanding that WT-3 should assume a „catalytic role“ and serve to stimulate, complement and facilitate existing forms of regional co-operation as well as the Euro-Atlantic integration process in the region, without duplicating ongoing activities. The work of the Table thus started with an overview and inventory of ongoing initiatives and activities.

From the outset it was clear that since the Stability Pact was not itself an implementation agency but a political framework, the work of WT-3 had to rely largely on ongoing initiatives of regional co-operation and fully use the expertise of NATO and the OSCE in the area of defence and security affairs, as well as the achievements of the EU and the Council of Europe in the „justice and home affairs“ pillar. NATO presented in detail at the meeting the activities carried out by the Alliance and the EAPC/PfP under the South East Europe Initiative (SEEI). It was stressed that the SEEI, while having an own identity, was supportive and complementary to the goals of the Pact. The representatives of Bulgaria, Slovenia, Romania and Turkey supported this view and pointed to different already existing forms of NATO and EAPC/PfP sponsored regional defence and security co-operation such as the SEDM process (see Chapter I §4) and the Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe. The security-projecting role of NATO's enlargement policy through the MAP towards qualified candidates in SEE was also stressed by a number of countries. However, while the OSCE, for example, was tasked to work on improving military contacts among the countries of the region, NATO's rich expertise and key contribution to defence and security co-operation in SEE did not receive sufficient recognition at the meeting.²⁴

The Sub-Table on Defence and Security Affairs agreed to give priority to projects and proposals to be developed in the following main areas: arms control and verification, confidence and security-building measures, transparency of military budgets; non-proliferation (including small arms and light weapons), de-mining, conflict prevention and crisis management. In many of these areas cross-reference and overlap could be identified with the deliberations within the EAPC (AHWG) on security co-operation in SEE. It should be noted that WT-3 did not take sufficiently into account the differences in the security conditions, existing between areas and countries in SEE, and in many cases followed a „common denominator“ approach. The temporary non-participation of Yugoslavia in the Stability Pact and other regional fora, as well as its possible future integration in a regional security dialogue was considered as one of the main security challenges for the region.

The Oslo meeting of WT-3 in the field of defence and security revealed a particular need to provide the Stability Pact with regular and sufficient information and expertise on the NATO-led activities of regional co-operation, transparency and confidence building, either within the framework of the EAPC/PfP, or in the form of bilateral targeted assistance. NATO responded to this need by establishing a close and cooperative working relationship with the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact and his office in Brussels and by seeking possibilities for synergy between its SEE Initiative and Working Table 3. At its Ministerial meeting in December 1999 the NAC stated that “the Alliance will continue to contribute to the success of the Stability Pact by making available its wealth of experiences and expertise in practical military

and defence-related co-operation and by ensuring that its efforts complement and contribute to the goals of the Pact”²⁵

The second meeting of WT-3, held in February 2000 in Sarajevo, marked a transition of the Stability Pact process to a decisive phase of implementation. The Pact was successful that far in providing an additional momentum to regional co-operation which, however, had to be underpinned by materialising concrete projects through the Pact’s mechanisms. In preparation for the first Financing Conference in March 1999, more than a hundred projects in terms of both internal security and defence issues were presented for consideration at the Sarajevo meeting. Most of them were prepared by the countries of the region, responding to the call for “ownership” over the Stability Pact process. However, as it could have been expected, a number of these projects in fact overlapped and competed with each other. For example, there were numerous proposals for creating unrealistic number of “regional centres” with overlapping activities. Nevertheless, the compiling of such a large “pool” of projects showed the enormous potential for regional co-operation in SEE and proved useful as a starting material for future work.

The Sarajevo meeting of WT-3 (Sub-Table on defence issues) conducted a focused discussion, slightly adjusting the agenda of co-operation, identified at the previous meeting in Oslo. The priority areas with a view to the Financing Conference were defined as: defence economics and demobilisation, arms control and non-proliferation, military contacts, small arms and humanitarian de-mining.²⁶ NATO made a significant contribution to the Sarajevo meeting. A major project elaborated by NATO in co-operation with the World Bank to assist Bulgaria and Romania with developing programmes for retraining and reintegration in civil society of redundant military personnel, released as a result of defence reform, was welcomed and praised as an example of synergy among international institutions and nations within the Stability Pact. In the case of this project, which may also be extended to other countries in the region, NATO’s advice and expertise was combined with financial resources from the World Bank to the direct benefit of the reform process in the SEE countries and with an impact on their internal stability.

The meeting in Sarajevo also took note of NATO’s contribution through the work of the EAPC on the issues of humanitarian de-mining and small arms and light weapons. NATO’s initiative on Regionally Focused Mine Action aimed to bring together various organisations involved in mine action in the region and better co-ordinate their efforts. Work in the AHWG of the EAPC on Small Arms and Light Weapons in such areas as stockpile management, destruction of surplus stocks, improved legislation on transfers and border controls, significantly underpinned the synergetic work of other organisations on this issue, also overseen by the Stability Pact. In a follow-up to the Sarajevo WT-3 meeting, NATO strongly supported the regional Disaster Preparedness and Response Initiative, launched within the Stability Pact on the basis of proposals by Bulgaria, Croatia and the CEI to enhance regional co-operation in

the areas of disaster relief and management. NATO's and the EAPC's expertise and experience in this field, especially within the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Co-operation Centre in Brussels are crucial in supporting these regional efforts.

In general, the results of the Sarajevo WT-3 meeting and of the Stability Pact Financing Conference in Brussels have emphasised the need for more focused work among participants in WT-3 on elaboration and co-ordination of relevant projects that have a predominantly regional character and bring direct positive impact on security and stability in the region. Such co-ordination is first of all necessary among the countries of the region in order to develop synergy of efforts based on commonly defined joint regional interests in terms of defence and security. Therefore, the concept of a Security Co-operation Steering Group (SEEGROUP) launched within NATO's SEE Initiative, should be further developed, including as a possible forum for initiating and co-ordinating projects to be assisted by NATO and the Stability Pact. The existing regional structures such as the South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial (SEDM), the Politico-Military Steering Committee of the MPFSEE and the South-Eastern European Co-operation Process (SEECOP) could be better used for co-ordination of efforts within the Stability Pact. A recent example of such co-ordination was the appeal issued by the Meeting of Senior Officials of SEDM countries, held on 7-8 March in Sofia, for priority consideration by the Stability Pact of two key regional projects related to the operational development of the MPFSEE and the setting up and activation of the SEDM's multinational Engineer Task Force.²⁷

It is obvious that in the future Stability Pact WT-3 should more actively seek NATO's advice, expertise and action in the field of building security and defence co-operation in SEE. In particular, WT-3 could base its review and follow-up agenda on the activities, performed within NATO's SEE Initiative. This proposal becomes even more relevant with the accession of Croatia to the PfP, and with the "opening in principle" of the SEEI for participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. NATO's Consultative Forum (19+7) for consultations with the countries of the region could also be activated to co-ordinate joint projects within the Stability Pact.

NATO's SEE Initiative, together with the SEDM process (possibly soon enlarged with Croatia and in a further perspective with Bosnia and Herzegovina) provide nowadays the most appropriate frameworks for practical security and defence co-operation in South-Eastern Europe. The overwhelming trend, however, is of an ever stronger and growing commitment by the countries of the region to assume "ownership" over their future. Despite continuing problems in the Western Balkans, a new European culture of co-operation is already a fact in South-Eastern Europe. Just two examples:

- last February six South-Eastern European states adopted a Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Co-operation which puts at a new European level political relations among them.

- the Headquarters of the Multinational Peace Force – a modern mechanism for conflict prevention, confidence-building and interoperability, was successfully activated in Plovdiv in September 1999. The operational readiness of the Force including 6 national contingents of SEE states is expected by the end of 2000.

The ultimate task, pursued jointly by NATO's SEEI and the Stability Pact, will be to expand these patterns of positive co-operation to the entire area of South-Eastern Europe and firmly link them to the Euro-Atlantic community.

CONCLUSIONS

This report provides a political overview of the key contribution by the North Atlantic Alliance, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership (EAPC) and the Partnership for Peace Programme (PfP), as well as by regional NATO Partner nations, to lasting peace, security and stability in South-Eastern Europe in 1997-2000.

The initial hypothesis of the project assuming a steadily expanding role of NATO, the EAPC and PfP in South-Eastern Europe as a logical evolutionary process, based on the high-level political guidance from the Madrid and the Washington Summits, is confirmed by all factual material presented in the three previous chapters. NATO's role in SEE as a provider and guarantor of security and stability has increased dramatically over the past several years and, by logic and necessity, will continue to grow in the near future. This thesis is fully sustained by the below following conclusions, which briefly summarise the results of the completed research:

1. The decisions of the Madrid Summit reflected the increased strategic importance of South-Eastern Europe for NATO in its quest to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security. The Summit opened the way for an expanded role of NATO and its partnership structures particularly oriented to South-Eastern Europe that emerged as an area of special concern and strategic interest to the Alliance. This role was shaped along the following main lines:

- providing a military and security component of multidimensional peace support operations
- providing a security-related and logistic support for the activities of other partner organisations in the civilian aspects of peace-building
- providing through the PfP a framework for enhanced military ties and co-operation among NATO members and regional partner nations on the basis of NATO standards, thus fostering confidence and conflict prevention.
- offering the prospect of NATO membership to eligible countries in South-Eastern Europe, thus providing a strong incentive for regional applicant states to firmly proceed with market reforms and democratisation
- stimulating regional security and defence co-operation

2. The Alliance and its Partners played and continue to play a decisive role through SFOR for the consolidation of the comprehensive peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Conditions have been created for the start of negotiations on a regional arms control agreement under the auspices of the OSCE, pursuant to Article V Annex 1-B of the Dayton/Paris Agreements.

3. NATO's increasing commitment to the security and stability of SEE was well served by the establishment of the EAPC and the enhanced PfP programme which provided an inclusive framework for testing innovative

patterns of regional security co-operation, combining political consultations with practical military interaction. PfP. NATO provided targeted assistance through the PfP for preserving the stability of Albania and of the Republic of Macedonia. The input by the EAPC and the PfP was essential for the progress of regional security and defence co-operation developed since 1997 in the framework of the South-Eastern Defence Ministerial Meetings.

4. Despite critical developments in the Western Balkans, in other parts of the region positive strides towards a new democratic security space based on co-operation and inspired by Euro-Atlantic values took deep roots. South-Eastern Europe became also a source of positive news – by the establishment of the regional Multinational Peace Force and by giving evidence of a new European culture of intensive co-operation, leaving behind differences and negative historic perceptions. New democratically elected political leaders firmly embraced Euro-Atlantic values and placed integration with NATO as a top priority of their countries' development.

5. The outbreak of a violent crisis in Kosovo in 1998, caused by Belgrade's policy of ethnic cleansing and KLA's offensive, radically shifted the emphasis of security priorities and concerns in the region and affected negatively the neighbouring countries. Apart from the rising direct and indirect economic losses incurred by them, the provoked massive influx of refugees has posed an imminent threat to their security and stability. The achievements of the Dayton peace process were put into question, together with the implementation of various projects for multilateral regional co-operation. The progress of reforms in NATO Partner countries in the region and their prospects for integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions were challenged.

6. The crisis accelerated new thinking and policy approaches with regard to NATO's crisis management role in the region. Kosovo raised a critical challenge to the fundamental values of the Euro-Atlantic community and to its mechanisms for response to such challenges. It showed clearly that diplomacy might be insufficient and impotent if not backed by a credible military force, also revealing the need for reform of the UN conflict resolution system. NATO actively intervened in the international diplomatic efforts aimed at a political settlement. Its role evolved from preventing a spillover to neighbouring countries, through contingency planning and credible threats of use of force, to a direct involvement in a major military operation of peace enforcement. This „last resort“ action became inevitable only after all political and diplomatic options for a solution were exhausted. NATO played the role of a „military arm“ in a „coercive diplomacy“ conducted by the international community and its institutions to enforce a peaceful solution to the Kosovo conflict. At all stages of its involvement the Alliance relied on consistent support by its Partner nations in South-Eastern Europe.

7. Kosovo put to an early test the emerging crisis management abilities of the Alliance “outside its Article V area”, as well as its newly developed instruments for security co-operation with regional Partner states. It also put to a strain democratic governments neighbouring the FRY and their resolve to be integrated in the Euro-Atlantic community. NATO’s military deployment in Albania and the Republic of Macedonia safeguarded their stability and sovereignty. Through such close interaction the Alliance and its Partners have successfully stood the test of the Kosovo crisis. NATO’s unity remained firm. Albeit at a late stage and at a considerable cost, NATO’s military operation supported by regional Partner nations, succeeded in stopping the conflict from spreading to neighbouring states and in reversing the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. NATO’s air campaign, with all its costs and benefits, was the decisive factor in creating the conditions for a peaceful settlement under the auspices of the United Nations.

8. Operation “Allied Force”, subsequently followed by Operation “Joint Guardian” and the deployment of the NATO-led KFOR as the core of the “international security presence” under the terms of the UNSC Resolution 1244 set new historic landmarks for the Alliance’s crisis management abilities in the region. NATO’s role in Kosovo quickly transformed from air-launched peace-enforcement actions into a major ground peace-support operation. NATO’s key contribution through KFOR to the post-conflict rehabilitation of the province clearly demonstrated that its ultimate goal was not to defeat and destroy, but to build in peace a new future for the people in Kosovo. Apart from fulfilling military tasks, NATO flexibly widened and enriched its scope of action in the area by participating, together with Partner countries and organisations, in humanitarian relief operations and in extending emergency aid to refugees and victims of ethnic cleansing.

9. Lessons from the Kosovo crisis have yet to be analysed in depth but the most significant one of them is that the international community still needs to develop efficient tools and mechanisms for conflict prevention and improve its crisis response capabilities. Equally important is the challenge of rebuilding a war-torn and ethnically divided society when a crisis is over. Healing the wounds of war in Kosovo will take time and significant resources and might even need a change of generations. The long and winding road to a tolerant, multiethnic and democratic Kosovo will require a long-term and co-ordinated engagement by the international institutions, including a robust input by KFOR, NATO and Partner countries. The progressive development of a pluralist democracy and the rule of law in the province, along with a possible democratisation process in the FRY, will allow to address in a radically improved environment the issue of its future status in accordance with the provisions of UNSC resolution 1244.

10. Developments in 1998 and 1999 showed the timeliness of the Madrid decisions to develop further the tools of partnership and co-operation between NATO and Partner states in South-Eastern Europe. Without the political consultations and co-operation within the EAPC and the military interoperability created within the enhanced PfP, the efficient performance of the Alliance in and around Kosovo, including rapid deployment capabilities, communications and logistic support, would have been a much more difficult task. The EAPC was also actively used to consult with partners in the region and help co-ordinate a common approach to the crisis. These developments have once more underscored the imperative need for accelerating the integration process and speeding up membership plans for new democracies in South-Eastern Europe.

11. The Kosovo conflict served as a catalyst for a breakthrough of new thinking on how to bring lasting peace and stability to the south-eastern part of Europe. While a few years ago the approach of the international community in the region had been mostly one of 'delayed and *ad hoc* reaction to crises', in 1999 a new strategic vision re-emerged, calling for a comprehensive and sustainable international strategy of long-term stabilisation, security and integrated development of South-Eastern Europe and for a synergy of international and regional efforts for achieving these goals. The idea of a new Plan Marshal for SEE has materialised in an enhanced level of international engagement in the region through the launching of the Stability Pact initiative.

12. NATO's 1999 Washington Summit provided further strategic guidance on the Alliance's growing role for security and long-term stability in SEE and for inclusion of the region into the European mainstream. The Alliance unambiguously declared its aim of making stability in South-Eastern Europe a priority on the transatlantic agenda and committed itself to working in synergy with the EU and the OSCE to support the nations of South-Eastern Europe in forging a better future for their region - based on democracy, justice, economic integration and security co-operation. NATO undertook commitments not only with respect to the immediate security risks /including security assurances/ for the countries neighbouring the conflict area, but to creating an environment of lasting security and prosperity. In a new initiative, it established a Consultative forum /19+7/ on security matters in SEE.

13. Implementing the political guidance of the Summit, the Alliance has developed the South East Europe Initiative /SEEI/ which has taken to a new level the focus and intensity of regional security co-operation supported by NATO, through the EAPC and the PfP. NATO Partner countries and candidates for prospective membership in the region have demonstrated increased readiness to take "ownership" of their security. NATO's SEE Initiative, together with the SEDM process (possibly soon enlarged with Croatia and in a further perspective

with Bosnia and Herzegovina) provide today the most appropriate frameworks for practical security and defence co-operation in South-Eastern Europe. The SEE Initiative has still to develop to its full potential and requires a long-term and sustained commitment on the part of both Allies and regional Partners.

14. At Washington the Alliance also issued a strong signal fostering membership prospects for qualified regional candidates through the Membership Action Plan. One year after the launching of the MAP process, applicant states have already felt its benefits for their individual membership programmes. However, the decision on a future NATO enlargement remains a political one. Without doubt, the implementation of the MAP cannot serve as a substitute for political will to invite new countries for membership. It should rather underpin and justify new bold political decisions in this direction.

15. The EU has initiated the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe as a comprehensive political framework for follow-up and review of measures for long-term stabilisation and development of the entire region, from the perspective of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The Pact implied a shared commitment and a pragmatic distribution of roles among different international organisations and the countries of South-Eastern Europe. This initiative, met with justified expectations by people in the region, has now entered its decisive implementation phase when it either must show substantial results or lose credibility. It should now use the created mechanism for attracting strategic investment and speeding up the implementation of projects that are of direct benefit to people in the region.

16. The implementation of the Pact's security dimension (overseen by the Working Table 3 on security issues) reaffirms the key role of NATO for the long-term security and stability in the region. The NATO SEEI, the EAPC/PfP, the new Consultative forum and the SEDM process are well-suited to complement and implement the Stability pact's goals in terms of regional security. They can be used for promoting relevant security projects to be implemented with Stability Pact's assistance. Involvement by NATO and its structures in the region remains indispensable, but the ultimate goal would be to develop reliable regional mechanisms designed to prevent the outbreak of new conflicts and contain and resolve existing ones.

17. The Stability Pact Working Table 3 should continue to seek NATO's advice, expertise and action in the field of promoting security and defence co-operation in SEE. At the same time, it should rely on the active role of NATO Partner and applicant states in the region and their increased potential to generate stability and security. It is only through the joint action of the international community and the countries in the region that the future of South-

Eastern Europe as an integral part of the Euro-Atlantic geopolitical space can be guaranteed.

18. The growing commitment and ability shown by NATO partner and applicant countries in the region to assume “ownership” over their future testifies that despite continuing problems in the Western Balkans, a new European culture of co-operation and integration is already a fact in South-Eastern Europe. This development cannot go unnoticed. Democracies in SEE express their just expectations that the implementation of the Stability Pact will speed up their membership in the European Union and NATO.

19. In this context, a continuation of the process of NATO enlargement with qualified applicants from SEE and other regions would be a logical and necessary development. Without doubt, the best policy of long-term conflict prevention in response to present and future challenges to security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area would be the enlargement of the Alliance with qualified candidate countries from South-Eastern Europe, capable and willing to assume the responsibilities of membership and of generating security for themselves and their neighbours. Thus, a NATO political decision in 2002 to extend invitations for membership to Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia would best serve both the interests of the Euro-Atlantic community and the most cherished aspirations of the people in South-Eastern Europe.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

- ¹(1) See text of UN Security Council Resolution 1088/12 Dec.1996 S/RES/1088 (1996)
- (2) See Statement by French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine at the NAC Ministerial Meeting 16.12.1997
- (3) Joint Statement by the Heads of State and Government of Countries of South Eastern Europe, Crete, 4 November 1997
- (4) Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation - in *NATO Communiqués and Statements 1997*, NATO Office of Information and Press, Brussels, 1998, p.33-34
- (5) This text was also subject to unofficial criticism in Bulgaria for not mentioning at all this country.
- (6) See Statement by Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini at the NAC Ministerial Meeting 16.12.1997
- (7) Basic Document of the EAPC - in *NATO Review*, vol.45, no.4, July –August 1997, p.11
- (8) Balanzino Sergio Deepening Partnership: The Key to Long-Term Stability in Europe *NATO Review* vol. 45, no. 4, July-August 1997 p.10
- (9) Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation - in *NATO Communiqués and Statements 1997*, NATO Office of Information and Press, Brussels, 1998, p.33
- (10) This proposal was finally materialized at the 1999 Washington Summit by the adoption of the Membership Action Plan.
- (11) Account on the basis of personal interviews with participants in the consultations
- (12) EAPC document EAPC (PC) D(97)5 See also Mihailova N. Security in South-Eastern Europe and Bulgaria's policy of NATO integration – in *NATO Review* vol.46-no.1 Spring 1998 p.9
- (13) Meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Chairman's Summary. Brussels, 17.12.1997
- (14) Russia presented serious objections to the format of the SEDM process, while Ukraine insisted on being included as participant or observer
- (15) Joint Statement of the Meeting of Ministers of Defence in Sofia, 3 October 1997
- (16) Ibidem
- (17) The Agreement notably excludes participation of the MPFSEE in peace enforcement actions. See Agreement on the Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe signed in Skopje on 26 September 1998

CHAPTER II

⁽¹⁾ For a comprehensive analysis on the subject see Sophia Clement *Conflict Prevention in the Balkans: case studies of Kosovo and the FYR of Macedonia*. Chaillot Paper no.30, ISS of the WEU, Paris, 1997

¹ Ministerial Meeting of the NATO Council. Final Communiqué, Brussels 16.12.1997

² NATO Press Release (98) 29

³ Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Countries of South-Eastern Europe - Sofia, 10 March 1998 - UNSC document - S/1998/234

⁴ Intensified Dialogue NATO-Bulgaria. Speech by Mrs. Nadezhda Mihailova, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Brussels 27 April 1998 (available on the NATO web-site www.nato.int)

⁵ Kosovo/Kosova As Seen, As Told. OSCE Office for Democratic institutions and Human Rights, 1999, p. 6

⁶ Solana Javier NATO and European Security into the 21st Century. Speech to the Oxford University Union Society, 13 May 1998 (NATO website edition)

⁷ Leurdijk Dick A. Kosovo: A case of 'coercive diplomacy' *Helsinki Monitor* no.2 /1999, p.10

⁸ Statement on Kosovo Issued at the Ministerial Meeting of the NAC – Luxembourg, 28.05.1998

⁹ Statement on Kosovo Issued at the Ministerial Meeting of the NAC in Defence Ministers Session , Brussels 11 June 1998.

¹⁰ Declaration on the situation in Kosovo by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of SEE countries, Istanbul, 9 June 1998

¹¹ See text of UN Security Council Resolution 1199 of 23 Sept. 1998 – S/RES/1199 (1998).

¹² Leurdijk Dick A. Kosovo: A case of 'coercive diplomacy' *Helsinki Monitor* no.2 /1999, p.10

¹³ See Statement by NATO Secretary General Javier Solana of 13 Oct. 1998, *Atlantic News* no.3049, 14.10.1998

¹⁴ See text of UNSC Resolution 1203 of 24 October 1998 - S/RES/1203 (1998)

¹⁵ Secretary General's Statement to the press following the meeting of the NAC on 27 Oct. 1998 - in: *NATO Review* no.4-vol.46, Winter 1998, p.12

¹⁶ The contents of this letter was quoted in the Bulgarian press on 14 October 1998

¹⁷ Statement on Kosovo, issued at the Ministerial Meeting of the NAC, Brussels 8 Dec. 1998

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Chairman's summary of the meeting of the EAPC - Brussels, 8 December 1998

²⁰ Kosovo/Kosova As Seen, As Told. OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 1999, p. 354

²¹ Contact Group Statement, London: 29 January 1999 - UNSC document S/1999/96

²² Statement by the NAC on Kosovo, 29 January 1999 – NATO Press Release

²³ See: Rambouillet Accords: Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo UNSC document S/1999/648

²⁴ Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Countries of South-Eastern Europe Co-operation - Bucharest, 19 March 1999 – UNSC document S/1999/319

²⁵ Statement by the European Council on Kosovo, Berlin 24 March 1999

²⁶ For a profound analysis on the subject see: Roberts Adam NATO's 'Humanitarian War' over Kosovo – *Survival*, vol.41/no.3, Autumn 1999 p.102-123

²⁷ Declaration of the National Assembly of Bulgaria in connection with the crisis in Kosovo and the intervention by the international community - Sofia, 25 March 1999.

²⁸ The situation in and around Kosovo. Statement Issued at the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Brussels, 12 April 1999 – NATO website edition

²⁹ As later reports testified, Belgrade had a pre-planned strategy (Operation Horseshoe) to drive definitively the local Albanian population out of Kosovo.

³⁰ For a detailed account see: Balanzino Sergio NATO's Humanitarian Support to the Victims of the Kosovo crisis. – in *NATO Review*, vol.47-no.2, Summer 1999, p. 9-13

³¹ See Statement on Kosovo issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the NAC in Washington, 23-24 April 1999; Chairman Summary of the meeting of the NAC at the level of Heads of State and Government with countries in the region of the FRY, 25 April 1999. In : *The Reader's Guide to the NATO Summit in Washington, 23-25 April 1999*, NATO Office for Information and Press, Brussels, 1999 p.29-31.

³² See: Roberts Adam NATO's 'Humanitarian War' over Kosovo – *Survival*, vol.41/no.3, Autumn 1999, p.118

³³ Clark Wesley K. When force is necessary: NATO's military response to the Kosovo crisis – in: *NATO Review*, vol.47-no.2, Summer 1999, p.18

³⁴ See for example: Mandelbaum Michael A Perfect Failure *Foreign Affairs* vol.78, no.5 September /October 1999, p.2-8.

³⁵ S/RES/1244 (1999) (and annexes), adopted on 10 June 1999

³⁶ Military Technical Agreement between the International Security Force (KFOR) and the governments of the FRY and the Republic of Serbia, signed on 9 June 1999 (available at NATO-KFOR websites: www.nato.int; kforonline.com)

³⁷ See Jackson Mike KFOR: Providing security for building a better future for Kosovo – *NATO Review*, vol.47-no.32, Autumn 1999, p.16-19

³⁸ For a detailed account of human rights violations in Kosovo in the period June-October 1999 see: Kosovo/Kosova As Seen, As Told Part II. OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 1999

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¹ Washington Summit Communiqué, in: *The Reader's Guide to the NATO Summit in Washington*, NATO Office for Information and Press, Brussels, 1999, p. 15

² See Mrs. Mihailova's interview: States Like Bulgaria Need to Develop to Serve as Model to Yugoslavs *International Herald Tribune*, 27.04. 1999

³ See for example 'Joint Statement of NATO Enlargement' by the Presidents of Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, Sinaia, 12 March 1999

⁴ See Membership Action Plan - in: *The Reader's Guide to the NATO Summit in Washington*, NATO Office for Information and Press, Brussels, 1999, p.73

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- ⁵ Remarks by President Emil Constantinescu at the NATO Summit Meeting with the neighbouring states on Kosovo, 25 April 1999 (NATO website edition)
- ⁶ Washington Summit Communiqué - in: *The Reader's Guide to the NATO Summit in Washington*, NATO Office for Information and Press, Brussels, 1999, p. 15
- ⁷ Ibidem.
- ⁸ The Alliance's Strategic Concept – in: *The Reader's Guide to the NATO Summit in Washington*, NATO Office for Information and Press, Brussels, 1999, p. 54
- ⁹ Statement on Kosovo issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the NAC Meeting, 23-24 April 1999 in: *The Reader's Guide to the NATO Summit in Washington*, NATO Office for Information and Press, Brussels, 1999, p. 30.
- ¹⁰ Joint Press Conference by President Clinton and President Chirac. Released by the Office of the Press Secretary. Washington D.C., 19 February 1999
- ¹¹ Javier Solana's Speech at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), London, 9 March 1999 (available on NATO website - www.nato.int)
- ¹² Washington Summit Communiqué, in: *The Reader's Guide to the NATO Summit in Washington*, NATO Office for Information and Press, Brussels, 1999, p. 18
- ¹³ Ibidem.
- ¹⁴ Meeting of the NAC in Foreign Ministers Session, 15 December 1999, Brussels – in: *NATO Review* vol.48 –Spring-Summer 2000, p.D2
- ¹⁵ Summary Consolidated progress report on development of the South East Europe Initiative – EAPC document EAPC /C/D(1999)33 (annex) of 30.11.1999
- ¹⁶ EAPC documents: EAPC(PC)D(99)9 of 14.07.1999; EAPC/C/ D(1999)33 (annex) of 30.11.1999
- ¹⁷ Chairman's Report on the Implementation of the EAPC Action Plan in 1999. EAPC Document EAPC /C/ D(1999)34 of 26 November 1999, p.4
- ¹⁸ Document EAPC/PfP(PMSC)N(1999)94 (annex) of 26 November 1999
- ¹⁹ Meeting of the NAC in Foreign Ministers Session, 15 December 1999, Brussels – in: *NATO Review* vol.48 –Spring-Summer 2000, p.D2
- ²⁰ Meeting of the EAPC in Foreign Ministers Session, 16 December 1999, Brussels – in: *NATO Review* vol.48 –Spring-Summer 2000, p.D7
- ²¹ Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, adopted in Cologne, 10 June 1999
- ²² Bodo Hombach The Stability Pact: Breaking new ground in the Balkans – in: *NATO Review*, vol.47 – no.4, Winter 1999, p. 21.
- ²³ Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, adopted in Cologne, 10 June 1999 (available on website – www.stabilitypact.org)
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- ²⁵ Meeting of the NAC in Foreign Ministers Session, 15 December 1999, Brussels – in: *NATO Review* vol.48 –Spring-Summer 2000, p.D3
- ²⁶ Chairman's Conclusions from the Sarajevo Meeting of the Working Table on Security Issues – Sarajevo, 15-16 February 2000 (available on website - www.stabilitypact.org)
- ²⁷ Chairman's Summary from the Meeting of Senior MFA and MOD Officials of States, participating in the SEDM process, Sofia 7-8 March, 2000

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LIST OF USED ACRONYMS

AHWG	- Ad hoc Working Group
CJTF	- Combined Joint Task Force
CSBM	- Confidence and Security-building Measures
EU	- European Union
EAPC	- Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
FRY	- Federal republic of Yugoslavia
G-8	- Group of Eight
IFOR	- Implementation Force
KFOR	- Kosovo Security Force
KLA	- Kosovo Liberation Army
KVM	- OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission
MAP	- Membership Action Plan
MNRF	- Multimnational regional formation
MPFSEE	- Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe
MTA	- Military Technical Agreement
NAC	- North Atlantic Council
NATO	- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OSCE	- Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PfP	- Partnership for Peace
PMSC	- Politico-Military Steering Committee
SACEUR	- Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SEE	- South-Eastern Europe
SECI	- Southeast European Cooperative Initiative
SEDM	- South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial Meetings

SEECF	- South-Eastern Europe Co-operation Process
SEEGROUP	- Southeast Europe Security Co-operation Steering Group
SEEI	- NATO South East Europe Initiative
SFOR	- Stabilisation Force
UK	- United Kingdom
UN	- United Nations
UNHCR	- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIP	- United Nations International Police in Kosovo
UNMIK	- United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNSC	- United Nations Security Council
US	- United States of America
WEU	- Western European Union
WT-3	- Stability Pact Working Table 3