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PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE - AN ENHANCED AND MORE OPERATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Partnership for Peace - a process which brings NATO Allies and Partners together in a vast programme of joint defence and security-related activities - will be given a fresh boost at the Washington Summit.

The PfP process was launched by NATO in January 1994 with the aim of furthering stability and security throughout Europe and it now constitutes a permanent feature of the European security architecture.

Since PfP was introduced, the Allies and Partners have come together in a practical military and defence-related programme that now numbers more than 2,000 events. Ranging from large, military exercises down to small workshops grouping a handful of people, the programme touches virtually all areas of NATO's activity.

PfP is open and transparent and its activities are open to all Partners and Allies.

Another basic principle is that of "self-differentiation". Nations choose from the PfP programme activities which support their national policies and meet their specific requirements and in accordance with their financial means.

PfP covers a broad scope of activities ranging from the purely military to defence-related cooperation in areas such as crisis management, civil emergency planning, air traffic management or armaments cooperation.

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) acts as a political "roof" for PfP and offers Allies and Partners a forum in which to exchange views on common security issues.

The role of the Partners has also been considerably increased in the daily work of PfP, particularly with the establishment at several NATO headquarters of Partnership Staff Elements in which NATO and Partner officers are integrated in international staff functions on a permanent basis.

PfP's basic aims, laid out in 1994, continue to be valid. These objectives include :

- increasing transparency among countries in national defence planning and military budgeting;
- ensuring democratic control of national armed forces;
- the development, over the longer term, of forces in Partner countries that are better able to operate with those of NATO members.

In 1997, the NATO Allies decided to give further impetus to PfP by giving it a more operational role, providing for greater involvement of the Partners in decision-making and planning, and strengthening its dimension of political consultation.

Thinking here was partly influenced by the experience gained through the multi-national cooperation which has taken place through the IFOR (Implementation Force) and then the SFOR (Stabilisation Force) peace-keeping missions in Bosnia.

PfP will be given a further boost in Washington at both the Summit of the NATO Allies and that of the EAPC Heads of State and Government which takes place the day after.

Further proposals for an "Enhanced and more Operational PfP" will be endorsed by Heads of State and Government, building on experience gained so far and providing direction for the operational Partnership of the 21st century.

The enhanced and more operational PfP will be built on three elements. These are :

- A Political-Military Framework for NATO-led PfP operations
- An expanded and adapted Planning and Review Process (PARP)
- Enhanced practical defence-related and military cooperation covering the full spectrum of cooperation in PfP.

Central to this third element have been discussions on an initiative that will increase military cooperation still further to help Partners develop forces that are better able to operate with those of NATO members in future crisis response operations.

This initiative - the "Operational Capabilities Concept for NATO-led PfP Operations" - will place increased emphasis on improving the military effectiveness of multinational forces.

PfP continues to evolve and the Alliance views it as a dynamic process that will progressively draw NATO and Partners closer to each other.

PfP continues to support the transformation of the Alliance and various elements of PfP are related to the Alliance's new roles and missions, thus supporting the revised Strategic Concept.