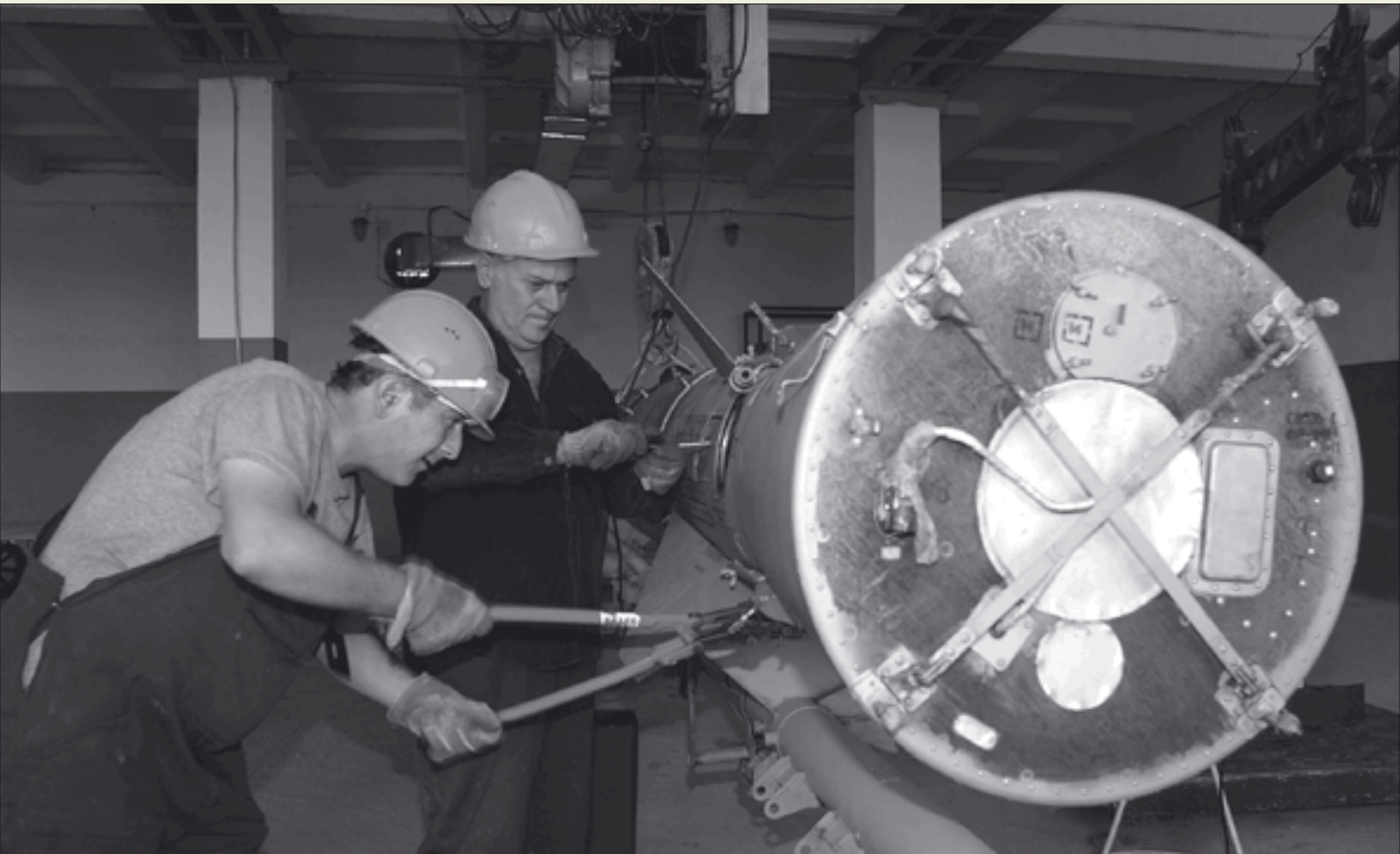




NATO
|
OTAN



Tackling challenges of defence reform

Following the end of the Cold War, the international system experienced many profound and fundamental changes. With the disappearance of the threat of war between East and West, mass armies and huge stockpiles of armaments and weapons are no longer inherently necessary, nor strategically viable. As a result, NATO member countries have been gradually reducing levels of military personnel, equipment and bases. They have also been transforming their forces so that they are better able to meet the complex security challenges of today, such as large-scale terrorist attacks and the possible use of weapons of mass destruction.

Adapting the armed forces to be able to respond to perceived threats is one of the principal aims of defence reform. The experience gained by NATO member countries during this process has translated itself into valuable expertise that Partner countries have shown an interest in sharing. Defence reform, in fact, has become a core element of the Alliance's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme. This cooperation helps to raise awareness among Partners of the consequences of this process so that they can manage the effects more efficiently. It also ensures the assistance of NATO member countries in very concrete projects such as reducing unemployment figures by helping to retrain redundant military personnel, converting military bases to civilian use, destroying surplus munitions which present a security hazard, and reinforcing the democratic control of the armed forces through greater transparency.



→ Did you know?

So far, defence reform has led to the closure of more than 8 000 military bases over a total area of 500 000 square kilometres in Western Europe and North America alone since the end of the Cold War.

>> Defence reform dilemmas

While the advantages to be gained through defence reform are fundamental for the adaptation of defence policies, missions, and force structures, it carries with it social, economic, political and security consequences that in the short term can be difficult to manage. It not only affects the structure of the armed forces, their command, control, communication and intelligence systems, and operational procedures, but also personnel, their families and the areas where they live. Military personnel can lose their jobs, surplus military equipment has to be converted to civilian use or destroyed completely, military bases closed and defence industries restructured. In cases where local activity depends heavily on the presence of a military base or defence industry, some areas suffer severe economic difficulties. For instance, in South East Europe over the next five years, around 3 000 military sites and bases will be closed and roughly 175 000 civilians and military working in the army will lose their jobs.

Governments and decision-makers have to find ways to manage the radical changes of this process against the background of a complex and rapidly evolving international environment. New challenges, such as terrorism, intra-state conflicts and ethnic rivalries, continue to pose a significant threat to the Euro-Atlantic region. Defence establishments across the board must take steps to ensure their armed forces are appropriately sized, trained and equipped to deal with the full spectre of 21st century security threats.



International political and financial support is important in the success of defence reform and its acceptance by governments, parliaments and public opinion. NATO's role is to provide advice and expertise to Partners so that they can tackle this issue effectively and efficiently while minimising its negative consequences.

On the request of Partner countries, the Alliance has launched a number of initiatives in an increasing number of countries. However, if NATO is sending experts, it cannot finance the projects in their totality. It therefore works with international institutions such as the World Bank, the Soros Foundation, the European Commission, and a number of countries that have indicated interest in cooperation and have agreed to consider possible funding arrangements for such programmes. With the support of the Stability Pact, NATO has notified the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Council of Europe Development Bank of the benefits of some of the programmes and projects underway.

>> Turning soldiers into civilians

Military downsizing carries with it the challenge of applying special skills used in the defence sector to civilian occupations. For instance, an infantry soldier trained to fire a number of different weapons systems or to drive a tank will find it difficult to use these skills in a civilian job. With over five million personnel released from the armed forces of NATO Partner countries since the end of the Cold War, the need to provide alternative training and employment is acute.

In early 2000, NATO members stated that the Alliance could play a useful role in assisting countries from the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in their efforts to retrain released military personnel and to facilitate their reintegration into civilian life.

A NATO expert team was subsequently put together by NATO's Economics Directorate and tasked to provide national authorities with advice, analysis, and guidelines in personnel retraining policies and on programmes. Romania and Bulgaria were the first countries to develop retraining programmes. While these programmes are still being pursued, they have already involved some 20 000 officers in each of the countries.

Did you know?

> By mid-2003, close to 11 000 military personnel in Romania alone had made use of NATO's professional development and business counselling services. Over half of these have started their own businesses.

The numerous activities include visiting military bases, counselling soon-to-be released military personnel on how to find a job or start their own businesses, providing language training and opening retraining centres. The NATO team is also offering expertise in dealing with macroeconomic issues, such as defining the place of defence within the national economy and in improving the administration of the armed forces.

A growing number of countries in South East Europe are taking an interest in these programmes, including Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* and Serbia and Montenegro. Other countries, such as Russia and Ukraine, have also been working with NATO in this area.

Joint Working Group on Defence Reform with Ukraine

Every year, hundreds of NATO-Ukraine activities take place as part of the Distinctive Partnership. The NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defence Reform was set up to provide a forum for Ukraine and NATO member countries to discuss issues relating to defence and security sector reform. Cooperation in this area focuses mainly on defence planning and implementation of Ukraine's priorities set out in a package of 80 National Defence Reform Objectives.

As part of this programme, NATO has set up a foreign language training plan to help former or soon-to-be released military personnel find a civilian job. In 2001, NATO, in cooperation with the Ukrainian government's National Coordination Centre for Professional Adaptation of Military Servicemen, agreed to expand the programme to include business training courses that would complement the language training and facilitate re-entry into the civilian economy. A wide number of subjects are covered, including marketing and sales theory, book-keeping, and financial management. An indicator of the programme's success is the high proportion of former active-service officers who have found a job in the civil sector.

Additionally, pilot projects have been set up to improve civilian participation in defence decision-making. They illustrate the crucial role of having a reliable system of civilian control over the military and good civil-military relations in a democratic country.

Tackling challenges

Converting military bases

Current defence and budgetary realities have led many governments to close large numbers of military bases. This trend has several consequences – some negative in the short term, but a majority of others positive in the mid to long term.

Local communities and land developers are challenged with finding new and innovative ways to clean up the sites and to provide new uses for them. Environmental clean-up is a major issue and community re-development continues to be a priority. Another factor that must be taken into consideration is the economic survival of the host towns and cities, especially those where military bases are the only major employer.

Some bases are being converted to civilian use such as schools, universities, healthcare centres, parks and wildlife preservation areas, and prisons. This will lead to the creation of new jobs, the diversification of local economies and the stabilisation of communities. The benefits of these base conversion projects are likely to be significant, although it may take up to 20 years to be able to truly measure them.

Did you know?

> In Bulgaria, over 600 military bases are being closed over the next few years. In Romania, this number is closer to 200 military bases.

> The Romanian Ministry of Defence transferred ownership of an air base on the Black Sea coast to the municipality of Mangalia, which built housing there for former military personnel, a kindergarten and a sports centre, financed by private investors and the Romanian government.

> In Simitli, in the south-west of Bulgaria, the closure of a motorised infantry base and an aluminium mine has led to a 70 per cent unemployment rate in the area. NATO is helping to launch a reconversion project that will allow a fire service, an emergency medical service and a plastic recycling firm to be based there. As a result of NATO's endorsement, the European PHARE programme approved the project and three European companies have been invited to conduct a feasibility study.

NATO-Russia Information, Consultation and Training Centre

In March 2002, the NATO-sponsored Information, Consultation and Training Centre in Moscow started work on assisting in the resettlement of military personnel throughout Russia. The centre provides discharged or soon-to-be discharged military personnel and their families with information on how to overcome the challenges of adapting to new lives outside the military. The centre focuses on website development and running train-the-trainers courses.



Students of the NATO-Russia Information, Consultation and Training Centre

So far, it has established a central website in Moscow and six regional websites that provide information on job counselling and placement, housing, professional retraining, small business development and other topics relevant to the reintegration into civilian life. (Visit the web site at: www.centre.russia-nato.info).

The centre has already trained 210 trainers who are active in teaching former colleagues about issues such as Russia's legislation on the social protection and resettlement of military personnel, the Russian employment market and the creation of small and medium-sized businesses. It also trains students in areas such as computer techniques, management and accounting and organises seminars and distributes educational and training material.

of defence reform

“The Conversion of Military Sites in South East Europe” project is an initiative of the Economics Directorate of NATO’s Political Affairs and Security Policy Division. Its aim is to help Partner countries minimise the detrimental effects of military base closures while maximising the benefits. It is also increasing regional cooperation between the participating countries and facilitating the exchange of information among them. Target countries include Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*.

A NATO Expert Team has been set up to provide advice and recommendations to national authorities and help them find productive new uses for military bases that are to be converted to civilian use.

“Our aim is to help build concrete capacity in South East Europe so that countries of the region can tackle the problems of converting and redeveloping former military sites and bases. The pilot projects are intended to help start the process of developing comprehensive base closure and conversion strategies through practical demonstrations of the principles and possibilities.” NATO Expert Team Leader

Several pilot projects are helping to develop a strategic approach to military base closures and site redevelopment in these countries, such as those run in Romania (Fundulea and Mangalia) and Bulgaria (Simitli, Razgrad, Dalgopol and Silven). Other potential pilot projects are being discussed with the countries concerned.



Destroying munitions

Throughout the Cold War period, many countries in the Euro-Atlantic region stockpiled mass quantities of munitions and weapons to be used in the event of war. These stockpiles are no longer required and as such have become a security hazard for local populations. Their destruction has therefore become an important part of the defence reform process.



In September 2000, NATO established a Partnership for Peace Trust Fund to assist Partner countries in the safe destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines, munitions, and small arms and light weapons. Under this Trust Fund, NATO works with individual Partners to develop tailor-made projects to destroy their excess stockpiles.

The projects are designed specifically to help Partners ensure that the destruction process is safe, environmentally friendly and in line with international standards. In many cases, the projects also help Partner countries meet their obligations under the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty. The projects attempt to use local resources and facilities, where possible, to reduce operating costs. In addition, NATO experts train local people in the destruction process to help create jobs and teach new skills.

NAMSA – the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency – oversees the Trust Fund projects, which are funded by NATO member and Partner countries on a voluntary basis. So far, projects have been carried out in Albania, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

- In Albania, 1.6 million anti-personnel mines have already been successfully destroyed.
- In Moldova, 12 000 landmines have been destroyed and 7 000 tonnes of surplus munitions and rocket fuel eliminated.
- In Ukraine, the last of the country's 400 000 anti-personnel landmines earmarked for destruction under the Trust Fund were wiped out in May 2003. A second Trust Fund project to destroy 133 000 tonnes of conventional munitions plus 1.5 million small and light weapons in Ukraine is in the early stages of development.

Further projects are under preparation in Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Serbia and Montenegro.

In addition, the scope of the NATO Trust Fund process has been broadened to include both retraining and base conversion.



Did you know?

Plastics from the destruction of Ukraine's anti-personnel mines were recycled to manufacture this children's toy.

Working together for results

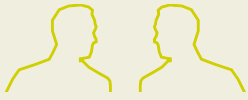
Defence reform is a core element of NATO's Partnership activities. In addition to their obvious benefits, defence reform projects also contribute to NATO's overarching objective of bringing Partners closer to European and Euro-Atlantic institutions and structures. Reformed defence and security structures spend scarce resources more efficiently, are less of a burden to the overall economy and are able to work more effectively with other Partner countries.

In addition, these defence reform projects are helping to strengthen regional cooperation. Regional cooperation allows countries to pool their resources, share ideas and solve problems together. It also helps to build trust and confidence.

NATO's defence reform projects demonstrate that NATO is familiar with and understands the difficult challenges of defence reform and is prepared to do more than simply talk about them. Although there is no single proven model or magic formula for pain-free reform, NATO is working closely with Partners to make defence reform a win-win process for all those involved.

What is the South East Europe Initiative?

The South East Europe Initiative (SEEI) is a NATO programme which aims to integrate the countries of the region – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* – into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. It promotes regional cooperation, builds platforms for common crisis management and defence management and for transparency in defence planning by giving advice and expertise and implementing concrete projects. Some of NATO's defence reform activities with Partners are conducted under this programme.



One Minute Interview

>> **Efrem Radev, Director, Resettlement Programme for Bulgaria**

What do you think will be the greatest achievements of the base conversion project in Bulgaria?

A successful pilot project will enhance credibility and help secure long-term support among the national, regional and local authorities and decision-makers. The conversion of former military bases will provide a mechanism for the orderly transition from military to civilian use. It will advance new employment prospects and enhance environmental protection. In the short to medium term, the projects will help to improve the standard of living in the areas directly affected by base closure and increase prosperity. Over time, increased prosperity should help stability and security in the region.

One Minute Interview

>> **Spresa Jusufi, Chairwoman, South East Europe Initiative Group (SEEGROUP)**

How is the SEEGROUP encouraging defence reform by its members?

In support of defence reforms in participating countries, a number of activities were undertaken by the Group, such as the SEESTUDY project, a comparative study of the national defence strategies of various countries of the region. This project will be a major step forward in promoting regional security and will support the ongoing defence reforms of these countries. This is also true of the SECHANGE project to set up a central network structure to exchange information that may be relevant to the evolution of common security perceptions established in the SEECAP document, which was adopted by foreign ministers of SEEGROUP countries in May 2001.

SEEGROUP also followed and facilitated the ongoing projects of the different Southeast European countries to retrain redundant military personnel and to convert military bases to civilian use. On 20 June 2003, a high level briefing on these two topics, under SEEGROUP auspices, was held in Brussels. This very successful event contributed to the better preparation of the Berlin conference on conversion of military bases, organised by NATO's Economics Directorate. SEEGROUP will continue to be engaged in this field.

- For more information see:
- NATO web site - www.nato.int
 - Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council - www.nato.int/issues/eapc/index.html
 - Partnership for Peace - www.nato.int/pfp/index.html
 - NATO's South East Europe Initiative - www.nato.int/seei/home/htm
 - NAMSA - www.namsa.nato.int
 - The disposal of Albania's anti-personnel mine stockpiles - http://www.nato.int/issues/alb-demin/mines_albania_eng.pdf

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(*) Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.