

PART VII

PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

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CHAPTER 23

THE EURO-ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP: THE EURO-ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL AND THE PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

The Alliance's policy of developing partnerships with a large number of non-member countries has played a key role in altering the strategic environment in the Euro-Atlantic area since the end of the Cold War. By promoting political dialogue and cooperation in a wide range of areas, different forms of partnership are helping to create a Euro-Atlantic security culture characterised by a strong determination to apply international cooperation to the task of tackling critical security challenges within and beyond the Euro-Atlantic community.

By stimulating and supporting defence reform in many Partner countries, Euro-Atlantic Partnership is also contributing to democratic transformation. It is helping to build modern, effective and democratically responsible armed forces and other defence institutions, and is assisting Partner countries to manage the social and material consequences of reforms.

Today's challenges to Euro-Atlantic security include threats such as terrorism that have domestic and external sources and are transnational in nature. Increasingly such threats come from the periphery of the Euro-Atlantic area. In this environment, international stability and security depend increasingly on domestic reform and on far-reaching international cooperation. The Partnership has a key role to play in both respects.

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) provides the overall political framework for relations with Partner countries. In addition, each country is able to build up an individual relationship with the Alliance through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) – a programme of bilateral practical cooperation from which Partners can choose activities according to their own priorities.

NATO has also developed special relationships with Russia and Ukraine as well as countries in the Mediterranean region and the broader Middle East. Described in other chapters, cooperation with these countries builds on many of the activities and mechanisms developed in the framework of both the EAPC and the PfP programme – the two complementary pillars that together make-up the Euro-Atlantic Partnership.

The evolution of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership

November 1989 saw the fall of the Berlin Wall, signalling the end of the East-West confrontation that had dominated international relations and divided Europe since the end of the Second World War. Within a short period, the remarkable pace of change in central and eastern Europe left NATO with a new and very different set of security challenges from those that had characterised it previously. Political change on an unprecedented scale had opened up great opportunities for enhancing security in Europe but, inevitably, brought with it new uncertainties and the potential for instability.

Allied leaders responded at their summit meeting in London, in July 1990, by proposing a new cooperative relationship with all the countries of central and eastern Europe. Events accelerated at great speed, and in December 1991 NATO was already launching the first formal institutional structure promoting the new relationship – the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) – a forum which would bring together NATO and its new Partner countries to discuss issues of common concern. It met for the first time on 20 December 1991, the day on which the Soviet Union ceased to exist, and offered the newly independent states help in realising their ambitions to participate fully as democratic countries, both regionally and in the wider world, in addressing multinational concerns.

The sea change in attitudes towards security was also enshrined in a new strategic concept for the Alliance, issued in November 1991, which adopted a broad approach to security reflecting three mutually reinforcing elements: dialogue, cooperation and the maintenance of a collective defence capability. While the defence dimension remained indispensable, the opportunities for achieving Alliance objectives through political means were greater than ever before. Dialogue and cooperation would form essential parts of the approach required to manage the diversity of challenges facing the Alliance. With the Cold War over, these included measures to reduce the risk of conflict arising out of misunderstanding or design and to better manage crises affecting the security of the Allies, steps to increase mutual understanding and confidence among all European states, and new initiatives to expand the opportunities for genuine partnership in dealing with common security problems.

At its inception, NACC consultations focused on residual Cold War security concerns such as the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic states. Political cooperation was also launched on a number of security and defence-related issues. The NACC broke new ground by helping to support reform and build transparency and confidence throughout the Euro-Atlantic area. However, it focused on multilateral, political dialogue and did not provide the opportunity for Partner countries to develop individual cooperative relations with NATO that were tailored to their particular situations and requirements. This changed in

1994 with the launch of the Partnership for Peace. This major programme of practical bilateral cooperation between NATO and individual Partner countries represented a significant leap forward in the cooperative process. Within three years, the progress made was further consolidated with the establishment of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council to replace the NACC and to build on its achievements, paving the way for the development of an enhanced and more operational partnership.

The Partnership process consists in building communication and understanding among all the countries involved, some of which have had longstanding regional, territorial, political, ethnic or religious disputes. Joint activities aimed at finding common solutions to common security challenges have led to important achievements in overcoming past prejudices and in establishing a clear vision of the mutual benefits to be gained from cooperation.

Since the launch of the Partnership process, remarkable progress has been made and the EAPC and PfP programme have become key fixtures of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. There have been setbacks and difficulties, which were perhaps unavoidable given the complex process of political, economic and social change taking place in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. However, within just a few years, the EAPC and the PfP programme have steadily developed their own dynamic, as successive steps have been taken by NATO and its Partner countries to extend security cooperation, building incrementally on the partnership arrangements they have created.

Today, Partner countries consult regularly with the member countries of the Alliance. They develop individual cooperation on issues encompassing many different aspects of defence and security. Their military forces frequently exercise and interact together and their soldiers regularly serve alongside each other in NATO-led peace-support operations. They are also working together with the member countries of the Alliance in a common cause against the threat of terrorism.

The need for NATO itself to undergo far-reaching transformation in order to meet the new challenges of the evolving security environment has had an important impact on the development of partnership and cooperation, the activities and mechanisms of which have had to be adapted to meet NATO's new priorities. Moreover, cooperation has had to be deepened and broadened in order to meet the aspirations of different Partner countries and remain an attractive proposition to them. Consequently, new initiatives were launched at successive NATO summit meetings in Washington in 1999, Prague in 2002 and Istanbul in 2004 to deepen and enhance cooperation between member and Partner countries.

The changing face of partnership

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership has helped prepare some Partner countries for NATO membership. It also provides a unique framework for other countries not seeking Alliance membership to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security.

Over the years, 30 countries have joined the Partnership for Peace, namely Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,* Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Ten of the above Partner countries have since become members of NATO and three candidate countries are working to prepare themselves for future membership (see Part VI).

The successive rounds of enlargement have significantly changed the balance between member and Partner countries. There are marked differences between the situations facing the 20 remaining Partner countries in terms of their situations and development, which has also had a bearing on the focus of partnership activities. Some Partners are in the early stages of developing their defence structures and capabilities. Others are able to contribute significant forces to NATO-led operations and to offer advice, training and assistance based on their own experiences to other Partner countries.

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro have also expressed their desire to join the Partnership for Peace. NATO fully supports this initiative but has set a number of conditions for the accession of both countries to the programme, including full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and, in particular, the detention and handover to the Tribunal of persons indicted for war crimes.

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) brings together a total of 46 countries – 26 member and 20 Partner countries – in a multilateral forum providing for regular dialogue and consultation between them on political and security-related issues. It serves simultaneously as the political framework for the individual bilateral relationships developed between NATO and countries participating in the PfP programme.

The decision taken in 1997 to create the EAPC reflected the recognition by the Alliance that the time had come to move beyond the achievements of the NACC and to build a security forum that matched the increasingly

sophisticated relationships being developed with Partners under the PfP programme. The level of cooperation already achieved was exemplified by the NATO-led peacekeeping operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where troops from 14 Partner countries deployed in 1996 to serve alongside their Alliance counterparts. The transition from the NACC to the EAPC complemented parallel steps to enhance the role of the Partnership for Peace by increasing the Partner countries' involvement in decision-making and planning across the entire scope of partnership activities.

In addition to short-term consultations in the EAPC on current political and security-related issues, longer-term consultation and cooperation takes place in a wide range of areas. These include crisis management and peace-support operations; regional issues; arms control and issues related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; the fight against terrorism; defence issues such as planning, budgeting, policy and strategy; civil emergency planning and disaster preparedness; armaments cooperation; nuclear safety; air traffic management; and scientific cooperation.

The EAPC has at its disposal a range of options which gives it flexibility and allows either for meetings of all the NATO member states and Partner countries or of smaller, open-ended working groups, depending on the subjects under discussion.

Most Partner countries have established diplomatic missions at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, facilitating regular communications and enabling consultation to take place whenever there is a need for it. Meetings of the EAPC are held monthly at the level of ambassadors, annually at the level of foreign and defence ministers and chiefs of defence, as well as occasionally at the summit level or when an exceptional event occurs. In 2005, a new high-level EAPC Security Forum was launched, which will meet annually to discuss important security issues in an informal setting and will bring together senior government officials, parliamentarians, opinion formers and representatives of civil society.

The Partnership for Peace

Based on the practical cooperation and commitment to democratic principles that underpin the Alliance itself, the Partnership for Peace (PfP) seeks to promote reform, increase stability, diminish threats to peace and build strengthened security relationships between individual Partner countries and NATO, as well as among Partner countries.

The essence of the PfP programme is the partnership formed individually between each Partner country and NATO, tailored to individual needs and

jointly implemented at the level and pace chosen by each participating government. Since the creation of the Partnership for Peace, a comprehensive tool kit of practical mechanisms has been developed to support the implementation of PfP aims and objectives and to translate ideas into action. These instruments provide a framework for both bilateral and multilateral actions by extending to Partner countries the opportunity to take part in effective programmes reflecting the substantive nature of their engagement with NATO.

The formal basis for the Partnership for Peace is a Framework Document issued by the Alliance in 1994, together with the invitation to interested countries to participate in the programme. The Framework Document enshrines a commitment by the member countries of the Alliance to consult with any Partner country that perceives a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence or security. Each Partner country also sets out specific undertakings and political commitments to uphold democratic societies, to maintain the principles of international law, to fulfil obligations under the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Helsinki Final Act and international disarmament and arms control agreements, to refrain from the threat or use of force against other states, to respect existing borders, and to settle disputes peacefully. Specific commitments are also made to promote transparency in national defence planning and budgeting, to establish democratic control over armed forces and to develop the capacity for joint action with NATO in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

The choice of individual activities within the PfP framework is based on each Partner country's ambitions and capabilities. The areas selected are put forward to the Alliance in a Presentation Document which serves as the basis for Individual Partnership Programmes jointly developed and agreed between NATO and each Partner country. These two-year programmes are drawn up from an extensive menu of activities reflecting Partnership objectives and priorities. Cooperation focuses in particular on military interoperability and on defence reform and managing the consequences of this reform. It also touches on virtually every field of NATO activity, including defence policy and planning, civil-military relations, education and training, air defence, communications and information systems, defence conversion matters, crisis management and civil emergency planning, information and communications programmes and scientific cooperation.

Bilateral programmes and military exercises have helped Partner countries to develop forces with the capacity to participate in peacekeeping activities alongside NATO forces, in accordance with one of the key aims of the Partnership for Peace. Increasingly, they are adapting their military forces to the Alliance's operational norms to help ensure effectiveness in the field and are adopting procedures and systems compatible with those used by NATO.

The Partnership Coordination Cell, established at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE) in 1994, works with both of NATO's Strategic Commands to contribute to this process and helps coordinate PfP training and exercises.

Significant initiatives were launched at the Washington Summit in April 1999 to increase the operational focus of the Partnership for Peace and the involvement of Partner countries in PfP decision-making and planning. These included the introduction of an Operational Capabilities Concept aimed at developing closer and more focused military cooperation and improving the military effectiveness of multinational forces. A Political-Military Framework was developed to strengthen consultation during an escalating crisis which might call for the deployment of peacekeeping troops and to involve Partner countries earlier in discussions of operational planning and force generation matters. A PfP Training and Education Enhancement Programme was also introduced, designed to help improve interoperability and promote greater cooperation and dialogue among the wider defence and security communities in both NATO and Partner countries. There are also a number of recognised PfP Training Centres that contribute to the development of training opportunities for PfP countries. To integrate Partner countries better in the daily work of the Partnership, PfP Staff Elements manned by officers from Partner countries have been established at eight NATO military headquarters.

Guidance on interoperability or capability requirements is provided under a PfP Planning and Review Process designed to ensure that Partner forces are better able to operate with the forces of NATO member countries in joint peacekeeping operations. This process has contributed significantly to the effectiveness of Partner country participation in NATO-led peace-support operations in the Balkans and in Afghanistan. The mechanism used is modelled on NATO's own force planning system and is available to Partner countries wishing to make use of it. Planning targets known as Partnership Goals are negotiated with each participating country, providing a yardstick for measuring progress in the course of extensive reviews. Requirements have become progressively more complex and demanding and are linked to the capability improvements that NATO member states have set for themselves. The Planning and Review Process is also used by Partner countries to develop effective, affordable and sustainable armed forces and to promote wider defence reform efforts.

A Partnership Real-time Information Management and Exchange System (PRIME), developed by Switzerland in 2001, enables Partner and NATO member countries to exchange information and to request or offer participation and resources in the framework of NATO programmes.

Further steps were taken at the Prague Summit in November 2002 to deepen cooperation in the framework of the Partnership. A comprehensive

review of both the EAPC and the Partnership for Peace recommended enhancing cooperation on defence reform, strengthening the political dialogue with Partner countries and further enhancing their involvement in the planning, conduct and oversight of activities in which they participate. A Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism was also launched to provide a framework to enhance multilateral cooperation in combating terror.

To address the reform needs of Partner countries, a new bilateral mechanism was introduced at the Prague Summit in the form of Individual Partnership Action Plans (IPAPs). These allow the Alliance to tailor its advice and assistance to Partner countries which are willing and able to pursue comprehensive reform plans, in particular on issues related to defence and larger policy and institutional reform. Developed on a two-yearly basis, such plans are designed to bring together all the various cooperation mechanisms through which a Partner country interacts with the Alliance, sharpening the focus of activities in order to support domestic reform efforts more effectively. Intensified political dialogue on relevant issues is an integral part of an IPAP process. IPAPs also seek to make it easier to coordinate bilateral assistance provided by individual NATO member countries and Partners, as well as to coordinate efforts with other relevant international institutions. In November 2004, Georgia became the first country to develop an Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO, and such plans are also being developed with a number of other Partner countries.

Building on progress made at Prague, further steps were taken at the Istanbul Summit in June 2004 to strengthen the Partnership, to tailor it to specific, key issues and to address the needs and capabilities of individual Partner countries more directly. Defence reform was recognised as the Euro-Atlantic Partnership's key priority, and a Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building was launched to encourage and support Partner countries in building effective and democratically responsible defence institutions.

Opportunities for Partners to enhance their contributions to NATO-led operations are being increased by involving troop-contributing countries earlier in the decision-making process and providing more possibilities for political consultation. The Operational Capabilities Concept is also being enhanced by measures to promote greater military interoperability as well as the transformation of defence structures in keeping with NATO's own evolving operational roles and capabilities. Work is also being undertaken with a view to organising programmes offered within the PfP framework into overarching objectives and priorities, enabling Partner countries to identify more easily those activities of particular relevance to them.

A decision was also taken at the Istanbul Summit that NATO should place special focus on engaging with its Partner countries in two strategically important regions, namely the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and

Central Asia (Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). A Special Representative has been assigned for the two regions to act on behalf of the NATO Secretary General, as well as two liaison officers. These positions are designed to strengthen NATO's ability to provide tailored assistance and advice on the implementation of relevant aspects of Individual Partnership Action Plans to the countries that have developed them. They are also designed to further cooperation on issues in the Partnership Action Plans on Defence Institution Building and against Terrorism, as well as through the Planning and Review Process which is of particular importance in the context of defence reform issues.

Defence reform

Many Partner countries are faced with the challenge of transforming the Cold War legacies of vast armies and huge stockpiles of weapons and munitions. Carrying out necessary defence reforms to develop the capabilities needed to address today's security challenges and to make effective contributions to crisis management and peacekeeping operations also represents a major task. It is equally important to find ways to manage the social and economic consequences of these reforms.

One of the most important contributions made by the Partnership for Peace has been in the form of the bilateral programmes developed with individual Partner countries to share expertise and provide assistance in tackling the extensive conceptual and practical problems associated with the defence reform process. NATO has also launched a number of initiatives to support the efforts of Partner countries in areas such as the reintegration of military personnel into civilian life, the redevelopment of military sites and the safe disposal of redundant or obsolete weapons and munitions.

Building effective institutions

Effective and efficient state defence institutions under civilian and democratic control are fundamental to stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and essential for international security cooperation. In recognition of this vital link, a new Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building, endorsed by the heads of state and government of EAPC countries, was launched at the Istanbul Summit in June 2004.

This new mechanism aims to reinforce efforts by Partner countries to initiate and carry forward the reform and restructuring of their defence institutions to meet domestic needs and fulfil international commitments. The Action Plan defines common objectives for work in this area, encourages exchanges of

relevant experience, and helps tailor and focus bilateral defence and security assistance programmes.

The most important objectives of the Action Plan target the development of effective and transparent arrangements for the democratic control of defence activities, civilian participation in developing defence and security policy, effective, transparent legislative and judicial oversight of the defence sector, and the introduction of processes that can properly assess security risks and national defence requirements and match them with affordable and interoperable capabilities. The Action Plan also places emphasis on the importance of effective international cooperation and good-neighbourly relations in defence and security matters. Its implementation seeks to make maximum use of existing EAPC and PfP tools and mechanisms, including the PfP Planning and Review Process, a key instrument for implementing the Action Plan's objectives that is being adapted to better fulfil this role. Effective implementation also necessitates the development of a common understanding of standards and concepts related to defence, defence management and defence reform.

The Trust Fund policy

Of particular significance in the area of defence reform has been the establishment of the NATO/PfP Trust Fund policy in September 2000, to provide a mechanism to assist Partner countries in the safe destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines, in support of the implementation of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction. The scope of the Trust Fund policy has been extended to include additional demilitarisation projects aimed at destroying other munitions, small arms and light weapons. Use of Trust Funds has also been broadened to support Partner countries in managing the consequences of defence reform through initiatives such as the retraining of discharged military personnel and the conversion of military bases.

By early 2005, Trust Fund projects had led to the destruction or disposal of some 1.6 million anti-personnel mines in Albania; 12 000 landmines and 7000 tons of surplus munitions and rocket fuel in Moldova; 400 000 anti-personnel mines in Ukraine; 1200 landmines in Tajikistan; and more than 300 missiles in Georgia. Further demilitarisation projects are planned for Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Serbia and Montenegro, and Ukraine.

The Fund mechanism enables NATO member countries to work with individual Partner countries to identify and implement specific projects. In each case, a NATO or Partner country takes the lead in sponsoring and developing the project proposal and identifying potential contributors. The Partner country that benefits directly from the project is expected to take an active part in this

work and provide maximum support to the project within its means. NATO experts provide advice and guidance.

NATO member and Partner countries fund the Trust Fund on a voluntary basis, including through offers of equipment and contributions in kind. In many cases, the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) serves as the executing agency and is responsible for the implementation of technical and financial aspects.

Peace-support operations

Partner countries have played a critical role in the NATO-led peace-support operations in the Balkans and are now also making an essential contribution to NATO's mission in Afghanistan. Their participation in these operations enables them to gain practical experience of working together with Allied forces and of helping restore stability to crisis areas. It also helps ease the burden of these missions on the member countries of the Alliance and provides a visible demonstration of the broad international consensus that exists on the importance of contributing to crisis resolution and preventing the spread of instability.

Soldiers from a large number of Partner countries have become accustomed to working alongside their NATO counterparts, which enables them to learn how the Alliance operates in complex and difficult circumstances. This practical experience, more than any other single factor, has been critical in improving relations and building confidence and understanding between military forces which until the end of the Cold War formed hostile alliances confronting each other across a divided continent. Today, NATO and Partner countries are working together in the field to confront threats and challenges common to all of them.

The individual participation of Partner and other non-NATO countries in NATO-led peace-support operations is subject to financial and technical agreements worked out between each troop-contributing country and NATO, once the proposed contributions to such operations have been assessed. Each contributing country remains responsible for the deployment of its contingents and for providing the support needed to enable them to function effectively. In some cases support is also made available on a bilateral basis by an individual NATO country.

The Afghanistan mission

NATO has been leading the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan since August 2003. The mission of this UN-mandated force is to assist the Afghan authorities in efforts to bring peace and stability to

the country, which is recovering from two decades of civil war, and to prevent it from being used again as a base for terrorists.

A number of Partner countries have participated in ISAF since NATO took over leadership of the force. Some of these countries have provided valuable specialised forces such as military police and demining teams. Partner countries in Central Asia have also been instrumental in ensuring that ISAF has had the necessary logistic support in terms of equipment and supplies. Relationships developed through the Partnership for Peace have laid the basis for NATO countries to draw up bilateral agreements for the transit of materiel across these states and the basing of forces and supplies on their territory. Given the diverse ethnic make-up of Afghanistan, several Central Asian Partners have also been able to exercise their influence in other ways in support of ISAF objectives.

The Balkan operations

Partner countries have been an integral part of NATO-led peace-support operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo from the beginning of these operations. In both cases, the largest single non-NATO country contribution to these forces was made by Russia.

Troops from 14 Partner countries were part of the Implementation Force (IFOR) that deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord on 14 December 1995. Initially peacekeepers assisted in the implementation of the military aspects of the peace agreement and subsequently, in the framework of the smaller Stabilisation Force (SFOR) that replaced IFOR in December 1996, they helped to deter a resumption of hostilities and to promote a climate in which the peace process could move forward. Some 21 Partner countries had participated at different times in the NATO-led peace-support operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the time it was concluded in December 2004, when responsibilities for maintaining security were handed over to a follow-on mission led by the European Union.

Troops from a significant number of Partner countries have also participated from the outset in the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) established in 1999. KFOR's mission is to deter renewed hostility, establish a secure environment and support the international humanitarian effort and the work of the United Nations in Kosovo.

Combating terrorism

The fight against terrorism is a top priority for the Alliance and its Partners. The September 11 attacks on the United States led to the first-ever invocation

by NATO of Article 5 (the collective defence clause of the Alliance's founding treaty). Meeting at short notice the next day, EAPC ambassadors, representing countries stretching from North America and Europe to Central Asia, unconditionally condemned the attacks in the strongest terms.

The shared determination to join forces against the terrorist threat was given concrete expression in the launch of the Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism at the Prague Summit. This Action Plan provides a framework for sharing intelligence and expertise and for improved cooperation both through political consultation and practical measures. It is leading to the enhancement of cooperation in areas such as border security, terrorism-related training and exercises, and the development of capabilities for defence against terrorist attacks or for dealing with the consequences of such an attack. It is also helping to promote the physical security and safe destruction of surplus munitions, small arms and light weapons, such as shoulder-fired rocket and grenade launchers.

Tackling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is one of the key security challenges of the 21st century. NATO's dialogue with its Partners plays a distinct role in the achievement of the Alliance's non-proliferation goals, in building up confidence and trust and in creating the conditions of openness and transparency required for non-proliferation efforts to succeed.

The Alliance is seeking to increase common understanding and information-sharing on proliferation-related issues through consultations on both political and defence efforts. A number of Partner countries also have individual expertise and experience which enable them to make a significant contribution to the strengthening of joint efforts in this field.

EAPC workshops on potential risks associated with biological and chemical weapons, as well as research and development into new capabilities and equipment designed to protect against WMD agents and enhance overall preparedness, are helping to facilitate information exchange and to forge best practices.

In addition, disarmament experts from NATO and Partner countries have been able to discuss political and intelligence-sharing aspects of WMD proliferation. In doing so, they have focused on some of the main trends in proliferation and have heard presentations on regional perspectives from non-EAPC countries such as China, Japan, Israel and South Korea. Information has been

exchanged on export control practices and on the implementation of recent non-proliferation initiatives.

Alliance members have also briefed Partner countries on NATO's activities in the specific area of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) defence, and in particular on the creation and deployment of the multinational CBRN Defence Battalion.

Action against mines and small arms

Multilateral initiatives have been launched at the global, regional and local levels to tackle the spread of small arms and to address the need for humanitarian mine action. NATO and Partner countries have sought to complement such efforts by bringing the Partnership's politico-military expertise to bear on these challenges in the Euro-Atlantic area.

The EAPC has set up an *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Mine Action to provide a forum for exchanging information on how best to control the transfer of such weapons, for example, through national export controls and enforcement mechanisms. The PfP programme also seeks to promote training in stockpile management and secure storage, disposal and destruction of surplus stocks, as well as weapons collection and destruction during peacekeeping operations. In addition, tailored assistance is being provided to individual countries on request.

Assistance for the destruction of stockpiles of mines and small arms and light weapons is also being channelled through PfP Trust Funds. Moreover, NATO and Partner troops deployed in the Balkans and Afghanistan peacekeeping operations have regularly assisted civilian organisations in humanitarian demining efforts.

Disaster preparedness and response

Cooperation on disaster preparedness and response, referred to in NATO as civil emergency planning, makes up the largest non-military component of Partnership for Peace activities. Effective responses to disasters call for the coordination of transport facilities, medical resources, communications, disaster-response capabilities and other civil resources. While all countries are responsible for ensuring that plans are in place at the national level for dealing with emergencies, the potential magnitude and cross-border character of some disasters makes it essential to be able to respond effectively to calls for assistance, cooperation and planning at the international level.

Cooperation between NATO and Partner countries in civil emergency planning includes activities such as seminars, workshops, exercises and training courses, which bring together civil and military personnel from different levels of local, regional and national governments. Other international organisations, such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the European Union, are also important participants, as are non-governmental relief organisations.

A Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) was established in 1998, based on a proposal made by Russia, to coordinate crisis management for disasters occurring in the Euro-Atlantic area (see Part II). The Centre acts as a focal point for information sharing and coordinates responses among NATO and Partner countries to disasters in the Euro-Atlantic area. It organises major civil emergency exercises to practise responses to simulated natural and man-made disaster situations including acts of terrorism. Through the development of contingency plans, appropriate procedures and the necessary equipment, as well as common training and exercises, NATO and Partner countries have been able to coordinate assistance effectively, through the EADRCC, in response to several natural disasters as well as refugee relief efforts during the Kosovo crisis.

Work in this field also embraces the sharing of information and participation in civil emergency planning to assess risks and reduce the vulnerability of civilian populations to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction in the context of the Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism. A Civil Emergency Planning Action Plan has been agreed to assist national authorities in improving their civil preparedness for possible terrorist attacks using chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons. The Plan is implemented through a number of mechanisms including the preparation of inventories of national capabilities ranging from medical assistance and radiological detection to identification laboratories, aeromedical evacuation, and the stockpiling of critical items. NATO and Partner countries have prepared and are continuously updating an inventory of national capabilities that would be available in the event of such an attack.

Security, science and the environment

Two distinct NATO programmes bring together scientists and experts from NATO and Partner countries on a regular basis to work on problems of common concern (see also Part X).

The NATO Programme for Security through Science, run by the NATO Science Committee, aims to contribute to security, stability and solidarity among

countries by applying science to problem solving. It supports collaboration, networking and capacity-building among working scientists in NATO, Partner and Mediterranean Dialogue countries. The programme concentrates its support for collaboration on research topics related to defence against terrorism or countering other threats to security. It also seeks to facilitate the sharing and transfer of technology to address particular priorities of Partner countries.

The programme of the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society (CCMS) deals with problems of the environment and society by bringing together national agencies to collaborate on short- and long-term studies in these areas. It provides a unique forum for sharing knowledge and experience on technical, scientific and policy aspects of social and environmental matters among NATO and Partner countries, in both the civilian and military sectors.

CHAPTER 24

NATO AND RUSSIA

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO member countries have regarded the development of a positive relationship and cooperation with Russia as a priority. Over the years, much progress has been made in transforming old antagonisms based on ideological, political and military confrontation into an evolving and formally constituted partnership founded on common interests and continuing dialogue.

Today, NATO member states and Russia meet regularly as equals in the NATO-Russia Council to consult on current security issues and to develop practical cooperation in a wide range of areas of common interest. While differences remain on some issues which may take some time to resolve, the driving force behind the new spirit of cooperation is the realisation that NATO member states and Russia share strategic priorities and face common challenges, such as the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The evolution of relations

The ideological and political division of Europe ended in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in 1991, and with the upsurge of new security challenges in the post-Cold War environment, NATO began establishing new forms of dialogue and cooperation with the countries of central and eastern Europe and the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

In 1991, Russia became a member of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (which was replaced by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997). In 1994, it joined NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP), a major programme of bilateral cooperation. In 1996, after the signature of the Dayton Peace Accord, Russia contributed troops and logistical support to the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Cooperation in complex field conditions in the Balkans significantly reinforced mutual trust and strengthened the political will to take NATO-Russia cooperation to a new level. That transformation occurred in May 1997, with the signature of the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security, which provided the formal basis for NATO-Russia relations. It expressed the common goal of building a lasting peace and established the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) as a forum for consultation and cooperation. As a result,

NATO-Russia relations took on a concrete institutional dimension, in addition to the operational dimension.

In the years that followed, considerable progress was made in building mutual confidence and developing a programme of consultation and cooperation. However, lingering Cold War prejudices prevented the PJC from achieving its potential. In 1999, when differences arose over NATO's Kosovo air campaign, Russia suspended its participation in the PJC, which up to then had met on a regular basis at ambassadorial or ministerial level. Nevertheless, several activities continued without interruption, including peacekeeping in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, Russia played a key diplomatic role in resolving the Kosovo crisis and, in June 1999, when the NATO-led Kosovo Force was eventually deployed, Russian peacekeepers were a part of it.

From 1999 onwards, NATO-Russia relations started to improve significantly. When Lord Robertson became NATO Secretary General in October of that year, he committed himself to breaking the stalemate in NATO-Russia relations. Similarly, in 2000, upon his election as President of Russia, Vladimir Putin announced that he would work to rebuild relations with NATO in a spirit of pragmatism.

Several key events also accelerated this process. On 12 August 2000, the nuclear submarine Kursk sunk killing all 118 crewmen aboard, highlighting the urgent need for cooperation between NATO and Russia in responding to such tragic accidents. The terrorist attacks on the United States of 11 September 2001 also served as a stark reminder that concerted international action was needed to effectively tackle terrorism and other new security threats. In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks, Russia opened its airspace for the international coalition's campaign in Afghanistan and shared intelligence to support the anti-terrorist coalition.

High-level contacts between NATO and Russia in the following months, including two meetings of Lord Robertson with President Putin and a meeting of Allied and Russian foreign ministers in December 2001, explored possibilities for giving new impetus and substance to the NATO-Russia relationship.

The NATO-Russia Council

Intensive negotiations led to agreement on a joint declaration on "NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality", signed by Russian and Allied heads of state and government in Rome in May 2002. In this declaration, which builds on the goals and principles of the Founding Act, NATO and Russian leaders pledged to enhance their ability to work together as equals in areas of common interest and to stand together against common threats and risks to their security.

The agreement established the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), which replaced the PJC. The 26 NATO member countries and Russia participate in the NRC as equal partners, identifying and pursuing opportunities for joint decision and joint action across a wide spectrum of security issues in the Euro-Atlantic area. The change from the PJC to the NRC (which meets “at 27” rather than in the “NATO + 1” format) represented a new philosophical approach to the relationship. This has contributed significantly to creating a strengthened climate of confidence, making political exchange and consultations far more conducive to concrete cooperation.

NRC meetings are chaired by the NATO Secretary General and are held at different levels – at least once a month at the level of ambassadors, twice a year at ministerial level and as needed at summit level. A Preparatory Committee, which meets at least twice a month, supports the work of the NRC and oversees ongoing cooperation. Work in specific areas is developed in the framework of *ad hoc* or permanent working groups. Meetings are also held once a month between military representatives and twice a year at the level of chiefs of defence staff.

The NRC and its subordinate structures operate on the principle of consensus and continuous political dialogue. The members of the NRC act in their national capacities and in a manner consistent with their respective collective commitments and obligations. Both NATO members and Russia reserve the right to act independently, although their common objective in the framework of the NRC is to work together in all areas where they have shared interests and concerns. These areas were identified in the Founding Act and cooperation is being intensified on a number of key issues which include the fight against terrorism, crisis management, non-proliferation, arms control and confidence-building measures, theatre missile defence, logistics, military-to-military cooperation, defence reform and civil emergencies. New areas may be added to the NRC’s agenda by the mutual consent of its members.

The NRC has created several working groups and committees to develop cooperation in these areas and others such as scientific cooperation and challenges of modern society. Views are also exchanged within the NRC on current international issues affecting the security of the Euro-Atlantic area, such as the situations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Georgia, Ukraine, Iraq, and the broader Middle East region. It also helps build political will for undertaking additional joint practical initiatives, such as an ongoing project to explore its potential contribution to combating the threat posed by Afghan narcotics.

Another concrete manifestation of the level of political cooperation achieved by the NRC, stemming from the frank exchanges of views which it facilitates, is the joint statement adopted by NRC foreign ministers on 9 December 2004, at the height of a serious political crisis taking place in Ukraine. The NRC

appealed to all parties to continue to avoid the use or instigation of violence, to refrain from intimidation of voters, and to work to ensure a free and fair electoral process reflecting the will of the Ukrainian people. The members of the NRC reiterated their support for democracy in Ukraine together with the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country – elements considered vital for the common and indivisible security and stability of all.

Since its establishment, the NRC has evolved into a productive mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision-making and joint action and has become a fundamental pillar of the NATO-Russia partnership. The positive evolution of NATO-Russia cooperation offers good prospects for its future and its further concrete development. Maintaining this momentum, based on past political and operational achievements, will be an important factor in developing greater opportunities for future cooperation.

Facilitating contacts and cooperation

A Russian Mission to NATO was established in March 1998 to facilitate NATO-Russia consultation and cooperation. At the beginning of 2001, a NATO Information Office (NIO) was opened in Moscow to improve mutual understanding by disseminating information and publications, and organising conferences and seminars for key target audiences and academies for young students. In particular, the NIO focuses on explaining the rationale for NATO-Russia cooperation, which highlights the increasing number of areas where the interests of NATO member states and Russia converge, such as the fight against terrorism, countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and exchanging experience on defence reform and military transformation.

A Military Liaison Mission was established in Moscow in May 2002 to improve transparency and facilitate regular contacts, exchange of information and consultations between NATO's Military Committee and Russia's Ministry of Defence. In 2003, a direct, secure telephone communication link was established between the offices of the NATO Secretary General and the Russian Minister of Defence. A Russian Military Liaison Branch Office was established at NATO's strategic operational command in Mons, Belgium (the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe, SHAPE) in 2004. Russian officers are also assigned to the Partnership Coordination Cell at SHAPE to facilitate participation in PfP activities.

The fight against terrorism

Nowhere have positions between NATO member countries and Russia converged more clearly than in the fight against terrorism, which has become

a major threat to international security and stability and requires an increasingly coordinated response. In the summer of 2004, a number of tragic events perpetrated by terrorists in Russia brought the NRC together in extraordinary session for the first time in its history. NRC ambassadors strongly condemned terrorism in all its manifestations and renewed their determination to strengthen and intensify common efforts to eliminate this shared threat.

Concrete steps have followed, including the development of a comprehensive NRC Action Plan on Terrorism approved by NRC foreign ministers on 9 December 2004. The Action Plan gives structure and purpose to NRC cooperation in this key area and consolidates NRC cooperation aimed at preventing terrorism, combating terrorist activities and managing the consequences of terrorist acts.

Joint assessments of specific terrorist threats are being developed and kept under review. Three high-level conferences – in Rome and Moscow in 2002 and in Norfolk, Virginia, United States in 2004 – have explored the role of the military in combating terrorism, generating recommendations for ways to develop practical military cooperation in this area. A conference held in Slovenia in June 2005 focused on the challenges encountered by national authorities in Russia, Spain, Turkey and the United States while managing the consequences of recent terrorist acts, and on how lessons learned have since been integrated into policies and practice.

Specific aspects of combating terrorism are also a key focus of activities in many areas of cooperation under the NRC, such as civil emergency planning, non-proliferation, airspace management, theatre missile defence, defence reform and scientific cooperation.

Addressing other new security threats

The unprecedented threat posed by the increasing availability of ballistic missiles is being addressed by cooperation in the area of theatre missile defence, where NATO and Russia have achieved impressive results. A ground-breaking joint Command Post Exercise took place in the United States in March 2004, using a computer-simulated scenario to evaluate an experimental concept of operations on theatre missile defence. This was followed up by a second exercise in the Netherlands in March 2005. The aim is to establish a level of force interoperability that would enable NATO and Russia to work together quickly and effectively to counter ballistic missile threats against NATO and Russian troops engaged in a joint mission. An NRC Interoperability Study in the field of theatre missile defence entered its second phase in 2005.

An NRC initiative on chemical, biological and radiological protection is underway. Joint work is also being taken forward on nuclear issues and cooperation against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

NRC cooperation is also being undertaken in the field of airspace management to enhance air safety and transparency and to counter the threat of the potential use of civilian aircraft for terrorist purposes. Under the Cooperative Airspace Initiative, a feasibility study for reciprocal data exchange is being carried out.

Operational cooperation

For over seven years, until withdrawing its contingents in summer 2003, Russia provided the largest non-NATO contingents to the NATO-led peacekeeping forces in the Balkans, where Russian soldiers worked alongside Allied and other Partner counterparts to support the international community's efforts to build lasting security and stability in the region. Russian peacekeepers first deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina in January 1996, where they were part of a multinational brigade in the northern sector, conducting daily patrols and security checks and helping with reconstruction and humanitarian tasks. Having played a vital diplomatic role in securing an end to the Kosovo conflict, despite differences over NATO's 1999 air campaign, Russian troops deployed to Kosovo in June 1999, where they worked as part of multinational brigades in the east, north and south of the province, helped run the Pristina airfield and provided medical facilities and services.

Building on the experience of cooperation in peacekeeping in the Balkans, a generic concept for joint peacekeeping operations is being developed, which would serve as a basis for joint NATO-Russia peacekeeping operations and should provide a detailed scheme of joint work aimed at ensuring smooth, constructive and predictable cooperation between NATO Allies and Russia in case of such an operation.

In December 2004, modalities were finalised with regard to Russian participation in NATO's maritime Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) in the Mediterranean. Russia's contribution to this operation marks the beginning of a new phase of operational activities involving the development of greater military interoperability in relation to both crisis management and the fight against terrorism. NATO member states have also welcomed Russia's offer to provide practical support for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

On 21 April 2005, in the margins of the informal meeting of NRC foreign ministers in Vilnius, Lithuania, Russia acceded to NATO's PfP Status of Forces

Agreement, thereby establishing a necessary legal framework for further operational activities and intensified practical cooperation.

Defence reform

Russia and NATO member countries share an interest in defence reform, given the common need for armed forces that are appropriately sized, trained and equipped to deal with the full spectrum of 21st century threats. NRC cooperation in the area of defence reform covers many different aspects including resource management, defence industry conversion, defence and force planning, and macro-economic, financial and social issues. Other areas of cooperation include managing military nuclear waste, strategic air transport and military infrastructure engineering, and logistics interoperability, a prerequisite for effective cooperation across the board. Exploratory work on how to improve the general interoperability of NATO and Russian forces is also underway. Moreover, two fellowships for Russian scholars have been set up at the NATO Defense College in Rome to promote research on defence reform.

In June 2001 a NATO-Russia Retraining Centre was established in Moscow for discharged military personnel and their families, and in 2003 a further six regional retraining centres spread throughout Russia were set up.

Military-to-military cooperation

A key objective of military-to-military cooperation is to improve interoperability between Russian and Allied forces, since modern militaries must be able to operate within multinational command and force structures when called upon to work together in peace-support or other crisis-management operations. A substantial exercise and training programme is being implemented.

In the wake of the loss of the Russian nuclear submarine Kursk, in August 2000, joint work has also been undertaken on submarine crew escape and rescue. A Framework Agreement was signed in February 2003, which represented an important step towards standardising search and rescue procedures, collaborating in equipment development, exchanging information and facilitating joint exercises to test procedures.

A framework for reciprocal naval exchanges and port visits is being developed, and possible activities to enhance exercises between NATO and Russian naval formations are being developed. In 2005, training exercises were conducted to help prepare Russian crews for future support for Operation Active Endeavour.

Logistics cooperation

Today's security environment calls for more mobile forces and multinational operations, which require improved coordination and the pooling of resources wherever possible. Various NRC initiatives are pursuing cooperation in the area of logistics on both the civilian and military side. Meetings and seminars have focused on establishing a sound foundation of mutual understanding in this field by promoting information-sharing in areas such as logistics policies, doctrine, structures and lessons learned.

Opportunities for practical cooperation are being explored in areas such as air transport and air-to-air refuelling. Such practical cooperation between NATO and Russia will be significantly facilitated by the PfP Status of Forces Agreement, once ratified, as well as by a Transit Agreement and a memorandum of understanding on Host Nation Support which were being finalised in 2005.

Progress in arms control

NATO and Russia also discuss issues related to arms control and confidence-building measures. Within this framework they have reaffirmed their commitment to the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) as a cornerstone of European security. Progress in this sphere is dependent upon Russia's implementation of its remaining commitments articulated in the Final Act of the 1999 Istanbul Conference of the State Parties to the CFE Treaty, with respect to Georgia and Moldova. NATO member states have stated that fulfilment of these commitments will create the necessary conditions for achieving ratification of the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty by all 30 States Parties to the Treaty and securing its entry into force.

Civil emergencies and disaster relief

Cooperation between NATO and Russia in the area of disaster response dates back to the signing of a memorandum of understanding on civil emergency planning and disaster preparedness in 1996. Practical forms of cooperation include joint work to better prepare for protecting civilian populations and responding to different kinds of emergency situation. A Russian proposal led to the establishment at NATO in 1998 of a Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC), which was used to coordinate assistance from EAPC member countries to refugee relief operations during the Kosovo conflict and has subsequently been called upon to coordinate relief in the wake of flooding, earthquakes, landslides, fires and other disasters in different Partner countries.

In the framework of the NRC, work has initially concentrated on improving interoperability, procedures and the exchange of information and experience. Russia hosted civil emergency planning and response exercises in 2002 and 2004. Russia has co-sponsored an initiative with Hungary to develop a rapid response capability in the event of an emergency involving chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agents.

Scientific and environmental cooperation

Scientific cooperation with Russia dates back to 1998, when a Memorandum of Understanding on Scientific and Technological Cooperation was signed. More scientists from Russia than from any other Partner country have benefited from fellowships and grants under NATO's science programmes.

A key focus of current scientific cooperative activities under the NRC is the application of civil science to defence against terrorism and new threats, such as in explosives detection, examining the social and psychological impact of terrorism, protection against chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agents, cyber-security and transport security. Another area of collaboration is the forecasting and prevention of catastrophes. Environmental protection problems arising from civilian and military activities are another important area of cooperation.

CHAPTER 25

NATO AND UKRAINE

NATO's relationship with Ukraine has developed progressively since the country gained independence in 1991. Given Ukraine's strategic position as a bridge between eastern and western Europe, NATO-Ukraine relations are central to building peace and stability within the Euro-Atlantic region.

NATO and Ukraine are actively engaged in international peace-support operations and in addressing common security challenges. Over the years, a pattern of dialogue and practical cooperation in a wide range of other areas has become well established. A key aspect of the partnership is the support given by NATO and individual member countries for Ukraine's reform efforts, which received renewed momentum following the dramatic events of the 2004 "Orange Revolution" and remain critical to Ukraine's aspirations to closer Euro-Atlantic integration.

The evolution of relations

Formal relations between NATO and Ukraine began in 1991, when Ukraine joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (later replaced by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council) immediately upon achieving independence following the break-up of the Soviet Union. In 1994, Ukraine became the first member state of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to join the Partnership for Peace (PfP). During the 1990s, the country also demonstrated its commitment to contributing to Euro-Atlantic security through its support for NATO-led peacekeeping operations in the Balkans.

In Madrid on 9 July 1997, the Ukrainian president and NATO heads of state and government signed a Charter for a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine. It provides the formal basis for NATO-Ukraine relations and was an opportunity for NATO member countries to reaffirm their support for Ukrainian sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity, democratic development, economic prosperity and status as a non-nuclear weapons state, as well as for the principle of inviolability of frontiers. The Alliance regards these as key factors of stability and security in Central and Eastern Europe and on the continent as a whole.

The Charter also established the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), which is the decision-making body responsible for developing the relationship between NATO and Ukraine and for directing cooperative activities. It provides a forum for consultation on security issues of common concern and is tasked

with ensuring the proper implementation of the Charter's provisions, assessing the overall development of the NATO-Ukraine relationship, surveying planning for future activities and suggesting ways of improving or further developing cooperation. It is also responsible for reviewing cooperative activities organised within different frameworks such as the Partnership for Peace, as well as activities in the military-to-military sphere, developed in the context of Annual Work Plans undertaken under the auspices of the Military Committee with Ukraine.

All NATO member countries and Ukraine are represented in the NUC, which meets regularly at the level of ambassadors and military representatives, and periodically at the level of foreign and defence ministers and chiefs of staff, as well as at summit level. Joint working groups have been set up to take work forward in specific areas, namely defence reform, armaments, economic security, and scientific and environmental cooperation, which are areas identified by the Charter for political consultation and practical cooperation. Other areas include operational issues, crisis management and peace support, military-to-military cooperation and civil emergency planning.

In May 2002, shortly before the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Charter, then-President Leonid Kuchma announced Ukraine's goal of eventual NATO membership. Later that month, at the meeting of the NUC at ministerial level in Reykjavik, foreign ministers underlined their desire to take their relationship forward to a qualitatively new level, including through intensified consultations and cooperation on political, economic and defence issues.

The NATO-Ukraine Action Plan

The NATO-Ukraine Action Plan was adopted at a NUC meeting of foreign ministers in Prague in November 2002. The Action Plan is built on the Charter, which remains the basic foundation underpinning NATO-Ukraine relations. Its purpose is to clearly identify Ukraine's strategic objectives and priorities in pursuit of its aspirations for full integration into Euro-Atlantic security structures and to provide a strategic framework for existing and future cooperation. It also aims to deepen and broaden the NATO-Ukraine relationship and sets out jointly agreed principles and objectives covering political and economic issues, information issues, security, defence and military issues, information protection and security, and legal issues.

The adoption of the Action Plan – at a time when the Alliance expressed grave concerns about reports of the authorisation at the highest level of the transfer of air-defence equipment from Ukraine to Iraq – demonstrated the strength of the Allies' commitment to develop strong NATO-Ukraine relations and to encourage Ukraine to work towards closer Euro-Atlantic integration. NATO countries urged Ukraine to take the reform process forward vigorously

in order to strengthen democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the market economy. They also emphasised that helping Ukraine to transform its defence and security sector institutions is a key priority of NATO-Ukraine cooperation.

To support the implementation of the Action Plan's objectives, Annual Target Plans are agreed within the framework of the NATO-Ukraine Commission. Ukraine sets its own targets in terms of the activities it wishes to pursue both internally and in cooperation with NATO. The NUC monitors their implementation; assessment meetings are held twice a year while a progress report is prepared annually.

Taking stock of progress under the Action Plan in mid-2004, the Allies emphasised the need for Ukraine's leadership to take firm steps to ensure a free and fair electoral process, guaranteed media freedoms and rule of law, strengthened civil society and judiciary, improved arms export controls and progress on defence and security sector reform and the allocation of financial support to its implementation. They also acknowledged the substantial progress that had been made in pursuing defence reform in Ukraine in 2004, in particular the completion by Ukraine of a comprehensive defence review, which called for a major overhaul of Ukraine's defence posture to be coupled with major modernisation of the Ukrainian armed forces.

In the autumn of 2004, the Allies closely followed political developments surrounding the presidential elections in Ukraine, where the legitimacy of the results of the second round was contested by the opposition and by international observers, leading to the Orange Revolution of popular protest and a court-ordered re-run of the second round. Under these circumstances, it was decided to postpone a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission at ministerial level, scheduled for December 2004, until a later date. In announcing this decision, NATO's Secretary General emphasised that respect for free and fair elections constituted one of the basic principles underlying the Distinctive Partnership.

Viktor Yushchenko won the re-run of the second round. Shortly after his inauguration in January 2005, he was invited to a summit meeting in Brussels on 22 February. NATO leaders expressed support for the new President's ambitious reform plans for Ukraine, which corresponded broadly to the objectives undertaken by Ukraine in the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan. They agreed to sharpen and refocus NATO Ukraine cooperation in line with the new government's priorities.

The Intensified Dialogue

Two months later, at the NUC meeting of foreign ministers in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 21 April 2005, the Allies and Ukraine launched an Intensified

Dialogue on Ukraine's aspirations to NATO membership. The first concrete step in this process was taken on 27 June 2005, during a visit by the Secretary General to Kyiv, when the Ukrainian government formally presented an initial discussion paper.

The discussion paper addressed key issues set out in the 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement (see Part VI) – domestic and foreign policy, defence and security sector reform as well as legal and security issues – and highlighted in specific terms those areas where progress would be needed to bring Ukraine's aspirations closer to reality. This paper has provided the basis for the holding of structured expert discussions, launched in September 2005, which give Ukrainian officials the opportunity to learn more about what would be expected from Ukraine as a potential member of the Alliance and also allow NATO officials to examine Ukrainian reform policy and capabilities in greater detail.

At Vilnius, the Allies and Ukraine also announced a package of short-term actions designed to enhance NATO-Ukraine cooperation in key reform areas: strengthening democratic institutions, enhancing political dialogue, intensifying defence and security sector reform, improving public information, and managing the social and economic consequences of reform. These are high priorities for the Ukrainian government, as they are vital to the success of the democratic transformation that the Ukrainian people demanded in December 2004. These are also areas where NATO can offer specific expertise and, in some cases, material assistance.

The Intensified Dialogue addresses issues specifically related to Ukraine's possible NATO membership. The package of short-term measures is designed to focus practical cooperation in support of urgent reform goals. Both of these initiatives are intended to complement and reinforce existing cooperation in the framework of the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan.

The launch of the Intensified Dialogue with Ukraine marks a real milestone in NATO-Ukraine relations and in Ukraine's pursuit of Euro-Atlantic integration. It is a clear signal from NATO Allies that they support Ukraine's aspirations. Nonetheless, this process does not guarantee an invitation to join the Alliance – such an invitation would be based on Ukraine's performance in the implementation of key reform goals. NATO and individual Allies are committed to providing assistance and advice, but the pace of progress remains in Ukraine's hands.

Facilitating contacts and cooperation

Ukraine was one of the first countries to open a diplomatic mission to NATO in 1997, and a Military Liaison Mission was opened in 1998. Ukrainian

military personnel also serve at the Partnership Coordination Cell located at NATO's military operational headquarters in Mons, Belgium.

In May 1997 NATO opened an Information and Documentation Centre (NIDC) in Kyiv. The role of the Centre is to provide a focal point for information activities designed to promote the mutual benefits of Ukraine's partnership with NATO and explain Alliance policies to the Ukrainian public. The Centre seeks to disseminate information and stimulate debate on Euro-Atlantic integration and security issues through publications, seminars, conferences and information academies for young students and civil servants. Moreover, the Centre has recently opened a series of information points in several regions of the country outside Kyiv.

A civilian-led NATO Liaison Office (NLO) was established in Kyiv in April 1999 to work directly with Ukrainian officials to encourage them to make full use of opportunities for cooperation under the NATO-Ukraine Charter and the PfP programme. It is active in supporting Ukraine's efforts to reform its defence and security sector, in strengthening cooperation under the Action Plan, and in facilitating contacts between NATO and Ukrainian authorities at all levels. The Office also has a military liaison element that works closely with Ukraine's armed forces to facilitate participation in joint training, exercises, and NATO-led peacekeeping operations. In August 2004, a NATO-Ukraine Defence Documentation Office was also opened to improve access to documentation for units and staffs of the armed forces involved in PfP activities.

Peace-support and security cooperation

Ukraine has over the years contributed an infantry battalion, a mechanised infantry battalion and a helicopter squadron to the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Deployments to the NATO-led operation in Kosovo have included a helicopter squadron as well as nearly 300 peacekeepers, who continue to serve in the US-led sector as part of the joint Polish-Ukrainian battalion.

Ukraine is further contributing to international stability and the fight against terrorism by providing overflight clearance for forces deployed in Afghanistan as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), or as part of the coalition forces under the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom. Some 1600 Ukrainian troops were also deployed to Iraq, as part of a Polish-led multinational force in one of the sectors of the international stabilisation force, which includes peacekeepers from several NATO and Partner countries.

The Allies have welcomed Ukraine's offer to support Operation Active Endeavour, NATO's maritime operation in the Mediterranean aimed at helping

deter, disrupt and protect against terrorism. An exchange of letters signed by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Minister of Foreign Affairs Borys Tarasyuk in Vilnius on 21 April 2005 set out agreed procedures for Ukraine's support. This paved the way for contacts at the working level to discuss plans to integrate Ukraine's contribution into the operation. Ukraine's support will further enhance NATO-Ukraine cooperation against terrorism and interoperability between NATO and Ukrainian military forces and add another concrete dimension to Ukraine's already impressive array of contributions to Euro-Atlantic security.

Defence and security sector reform

Cooperation in the area of defence and security sector reform has been crucial to the ongoing transformation of Ukraine's security posture and remains an essential part of its democratic transition. Since gaining independence in 1991 and inheriting a significant part of the armed forces of the former Soviet Union, Ukraine has been in the process of establishing and then reforming its armed forces and other parts of its security structures in order to bring them in line with the requirements of the changed security environment, democratic conditions and available resources. It has sought NATO's support in helping to transform massive conscript forces into smaller, professional, more mobile armed forces capable of meeting its security needs as well as contributing actively to European stability and security. Priorities for NATO in this context are the strengthening of the democratic and civilian control of Ukraine's armed forces and improving their interoperability with NATO forces.

Recognising the importance of this process, NATO has extended practical assistance in managing defence and security sector reforms. The NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defence Reform (JWGDR) is the primary focus for cooperation in defence and security sector reform. It was established in 1998, under the auspices of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, to pursue initiatives in the area of civil-military relations, democratic control of the armed forces, defence planning, policy, strategy and national security concepts. All NATO member countries and Ukraine are represented in annual meetings of the JWGDR at senior level, co-chaired by NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Defence Policy and Planning and the Deputy Secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council and bringing together high-ranking officials from NATO member states and Ukraine. Once a year, the JWGDR organises high-level informal consultations on defence reform and defence policy involving Ukrainian and NATO Defence Ministers, as well as key defence and security experts.

The JWGDR allows Ukraine to draw on the experience and expertise of NATO countries and serves as a channel for providing assistance. It also

provides the institutional basis for cooperation with ministries and agencies engaged in supporting defence and security sector reform in Ukraine. Key aspects of cooperation have included helping Ukraine to develop a new security concept and military doctrine, as well as providing support for defence budgeting and planning, military downsizing and conversion, the establishment of rapid reaction forces, professionalisation of the armed forces and the completion and implementation of a comprehensive defence review.

The JWGDR has launched several initiatives aimed at supporting the transformation of the Ukrainian security posture, including the use of the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) to support reforms in individual components of Ukraine's security sector, the provision of assistance in managing the process of the defence review, the organisation of roundtables with the Ukrainian Parliament (the Verkhovna Rada), with the participation of NATO experts and representatives of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (see Part IX), on topics linked to the legislative programme of the Ukrainian Parliament, support for efforts to strengthen the role of civilians in the Ministry of Defence and establish an effective defence organisation, the arrangement of meetings to harmonise bilateral assistance to Ukraine, and various forms of cooperation with the Ukrainian Border Guard, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Emergencies. Activities are thus not limited to the armed forces or the Ministry of Defence but aim to provide support for reforms undertaken in all the security sector institutions.

Ukraine's drive to reform its defence and security sector also benefits from participation in the Partnership for Peace and in the PfP Planning and Review Process, which enables joint goals to be developed for shaping force structures and capabilities to help Ukraine to meet its objectives for interoperability with the Alliance. Ukraine's participation in other PfP activities, through its annual Individual Partnership Programme, has also remained steady and, in 2005, is expected to include participation in some 400 activities, including language training, military exercises and consideration of operational concepts.

Much-needed assistance in implementing demilitarisation projects is being channelled through PfP Trust Funds, which permit individual NATO countries to pool voluntary financial contributions so as to increase their collective impact on the demilitarisation process. The first such project, implemented by the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) as the executing agency, resulted in the safe destruction of 400 000 landmines and was the first step in destroying Ukraine's stockpile of almost seven million anti-personnel mines. Canada was the lead country for the project, supported by financial contributions from Hungary, Poland and the Netherlands. A second PfP Trust Fund project to destroy 133 000 tons of conventional munitions, 1.5 million small arms and other weapons was launched in 2005. The first three-year phase of

the project, which is to be carried out over an estimated twelve years, will be led by the United States. It will be the largest demilitarisation project of its kind ever undertaken.

Economic aspects of defence

Cooperation with Ukraine on economic aspects of defence has two main axes: retraining activities, and institutional dialogue, concentrating on issues related to defence economics, economic security and economic aspects of defence industry restructuring and Euro-Atlantic integration.

As part of the dialogue in this area, exchanges of experience are promoted with experts on security aspects of economic developments, including defence budgets and management of defence resources and their relationship with the macro-economy and restructuring in the defence sector. Courses in defence economics – covering the whole budgetary process from financial planning to financial control – have also been organised.

Managing the economic and social consequences of defence reform is a key area of cooperation. Under an agreement with Ukraine's National Coordination Centre, which is in charge of social adaptation of discharged military servicemen, NATO is financing and implementing language and management courses in Ukraine. NATO has doubled the resources devoted to cooperation in this area, following the launch of the Intensified Dialogue with Ukraine.

Military-to-military cooperation

Cooperation between NATO and Ukrainian militaries is developed in the framework of the NATO-Ukraine Military Work Plan under the auspices of the Military Committee with Ukraine. A key focus is to help Ukraine implement its defence reform objectives, complementing the work carried out under the JWGDR with military expertise.

NATO military staff have also taken the lead in developing a legal framework to enable NATO and Ukraine to further develop operational cooperation. These include the PfP Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and its additional protocol, which was ratified on 1 March 2000 by the Ukrainian Parliament and entered into force on 26 May 2000. This agreement exempts participants in PfP events from passport and visa regulations and immigration inspection on entering or leaving the territory of a receiving state and thereby facilitates Ukrainian participation in PfP military exercises. A memorandum of understanding on Host Nation Support, ratified in March 2004, addresses issues related to the

provision of civil and military assistance to Allied forces located on, or in transit through, Ukrainian territory in peacetime, crisis or war. A Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Airlift was signed in June 2004, which will permit Ukraine to make a substantial contribution to NATO's capability to move out-sized cargo.

A wide range of PfP activities and military exercises, sometimes hosted by Ukraine, allow military personnel to train for peace-support operations and gain hands-on experience of working with forces from NATO countries and other partners. Senior Ukrainian officers regularly participate in courses at the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy, and the NATO School at Oberammergau, Germany. Contacts with these establishments have been instrumental in setting up a new multinational faculty at the Ukrainian Defence Academy.

Armaments cooperation

Technical cooperation between Ukraine and NATO in the field of armaments focuses on enhancing interoperability between defence systems to facilitate Ukrainian contributions to joint peace-support operations. Cooperation in this area started when Ukraine joined the PfP programme and began participating in an increasing number of the armaments groups which meet under the auspices of the Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD) – a senior NATO body which identifies opportunities for cooperation between countries in defence equipment procurement processes, focusing in particular on technical standards. A Joint Working Group on Armaments, which met for the first time in March 2004, is supporting the further development of cooperation in this area.

Civil emergency planning

Ukraine's western regions are prone to heavy flooding; NATO countries and other partners provided assistance after severe floods in 1995, 1998 and 2001. Since 1997, in accordance with a memorandum of understanding on Civil Emergency Planning and Disaster Preparedness, a key focus of cooperation has been to help Ukraine to prepare better for such emergencies and to manage their consequences more effectively. PfP exercises, including one held in Ukraine's Trans-Carpathian region in September 2000, help to test disaster-relief procedures. A project was launched in 2001, involving neighbouring countries, to develop an effective flood-warning and response system for the Tisza River catchment area. PfP exercises also help develop plans and effective disaster-response capabilities to deal with other natural emergencies such

as avalanches and earthquakes, or man-made accidents or terrorist attacks involving toxic spills or chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agents.

Science and environmental issues

Ukraine's participation in NATO science programmes began in 1991 and has since been boosted by the creation of a Joint Working Group on Scientific and Environmental Cooperation. Over the years, Ukraine has been second only to Russia in terms of benefiting from NATO grants for scientific collaboration. In addition to applying science to defence against terrorism and new threats, in line with the new direction of NATO's science programme, Ukraine's priority areas for cooperation include information technologies, cell biology and biotechnology, new materials, environmental protection, and the rational use of natural resources. Environmental cooperation focuses in particular on defence-related environmental problems. NATO has also sponsored several projects to provide basic infrastructure for computer networking among Ukrainian research communities and to facilitate their access to the Internet.

Public information

As the Intensified Dialogue process moves forward, it will be important for the Ukrainian administration to convince the Ukrainian people that its ambitious reform programme and its aspirations to NATO membership are in the country's interest. It is clear that many people in Ukraine are still suspicious of NATO and associate the Alliance with Cold War stereotypes. The Allies have offered, as part of the short-term actions agreed at Vilnius, to cooperate with the Ukrainian authorities in raising awareness about what NATO is today and in better explaining the NATO-Ukraine relationship. Encouraging people to take a fresh look at the Alliance would allow them to discover how NATO has transformed itself since the end of the Cold War and has developed new partnerships throughout the Euro-Atlantic area to meet new security challenges, including a strategic relationship with Russia. The Ukrainian public also needs to be made more aware of the pattern of dialogue and practical, mutually beneficial cooperation between NATO and Ukraine, which has become well established in a wide range of areas over the past decade. This shared experience of cooperation will provide a solid foundation for the further deepening of the NATO-Ukraine relationship in the years to come.

CHAPTER 26

COOPERATION WITH COUNTRIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION AND THE BROADER MIDDLE EAST

NATO is developing closer security partnerships with countries in the Mediterranean region and the broader Middle East. This marks a shift in Alliance priorities towards greater involvement in these strategically important regions of the world, whose security and stability is closely linked to Euro-Atlantic security.

The current drive towards increasing dialogue and cooperation with countries in these regions builds on two key decisions taken at the NATO summit meeting in Istanbul in June 2004. Countries participating in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, which had been launched ten years earlier, were invited to establish a more ambitious and expanded partnership. In parallel, a new, distinct but complementary Istanbul Cooperation Initiative was launched to reach out to interested countries in the broader Middle East region with a proposal to enhance security and stability by fostering mutually beneficial bilateral relationships.

Building bridges with the Mediterranean region and the broader Middle East are as important for NATO as overcoming the legacy of the East-West division in the 1990s. The challenges are different but just as complex. As was the case then, a major effort is required to overcome prejudices, tackle misperceptions, and build trust and understanding.

The importance of security and stability in these regions

There are several reasons why it is important for NATO to promote dialogue and foster stability and security in North Africa and the broader Middle East. One key reason is that a number of today's security challenges – terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failed states and transnational organised crime – are common to both NATO member states and to countries in these regions. As a consequence, they require common responses. Moreover, in addressing these challenges, NATO is becoming more engaged in areas beyond Europe including a security assistance operation in Afghanistan, a maritime counter-terrorist operation in the Mediterranean and a training mission in Iraq (see Part IV). It is important to discuss these developments with countries in the Mediterranean region and the broader Middle East.

The potential in these regions for instability due to many unresolved political, social and economic issues is also a concern. In the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a major source of tension. Progress towards a lasting and comprehensive settlement of this conflict should be a priority for the countries of the region and for the international community as a whole. While NATO as such is not involved in the Middle East peace process, the Allies support the objectives of the Road Map – an initiative outlining steps to be taken towards a permanent settlement of the conflict, which is sponsored by the two parties directly concerned and the Quartet of the European Union, Russia, the United Nations and the United States.

Energy security is another concern, since as much as 65 per cent of Europe's imports of oil and natural gas passes through the Mediterranean. A secure and stable environment in the Mediterranean region is important not only to Western importing countries but also to the region's energy producers and to the countries through which oil and gas transit.

The Mediterranean Dialogue

NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue was initiated in 1994 by the North Atlantic Council in order to contribute to regional security and stability, achieve better mutual understanding and dispel misconceptions about NATO's policies and objectives among Dialogue countries. Over the years, the number of participating countries has increased: Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia joined in 1994, followed by Jordan in 1995 and Algeria in 2000.

The Dialogue reflects the Alliance's view that security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean. It has formed an integral part of NATO's adaptation to the post-Cold War security environment and has been an important component of the Alliance's policy of outreach and cooperation.

Initially, NATO wanted to create a forum for confidence-building and transparency in which Allies could learn more about the security concerns of Dialogue countries and dispel misperceptions about NATO's aims and policies. Since then, political discussions have become more frequent and intense, and the Dialogue has been given more structure and opportunities for more concrete cooperation.

The launch of the Mediterranean Dialogue and its subsequent development have been based upon important principles:

- The development of the Dialogue is based on joint ownership. This encompasses respect for the specific regional, cultural and political situation of each individual Mediterranean partner and takes these factors into account in the context of the Dialogue. It makes it clear

that the Dialogue is to be perceived as a two-way street, with partner countries participating as shareholders in a cooperative effort. It draws on the experience gained and the added value resulting from the development of NATO's other partnerships.

- The Dialogue is progressive in terms of participation and substance. This flexibility has allowed the number of Dialogue partners to grow and the content of the Dialogue to evolve over time.
- All Mediterranean partners are offered cooperation activities and discussions with NATO on the same basis. Dialogue countries are free to choose the extent and intensity of their participation, allowing a certain degree of self-differentiation. This non-discriminatory framework is an essential feature of the Dialogue and has been key to its development.
- The Dialogue is intended to reinforce and complement other international efforts such as the European Union's Barcelona Process (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership) and the Mediterranean Initiative of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The Dialogue has both a political and a practical dimension.

The political dimension

The political dialogue consists of regular bilateral meetings, involving individual Dialogue countries and NATO member countries, as well as multilateral meetings involving all seven Dialogue participants in joint meetings with NATO member countries. (Within NATO, the bilateral meetings are referred to as "NATO + 1", while those including all participants are called "NATO + 7" meetings.) They each take place at ambassadorial and working levels. The political dialogue also includes multilateral conferences at ambassadorial level and visits by senior officials.

Political consultations with individual participating countries are held annually both at ambassadorial and working level. These discussions provide an opportunity for sharing views on a range of issues relevant to the security situation in the Mediterranean, as well as on the further development of the political and practical cooperation dimensions of the Dialogue.

The Istanbul decision to create a more ambitious and expanded framework for the Mediterranean Dialogue calls for an enhancement of the political dialogue, including the organisation of ministerial meetings and the possibility of adopting at the earliest possible time a joint political declaration. On 8 December 2004, NATO foreign ministers and their counterparts from the

Mediterranean Dialogue countries met for the first time at ministerial level at a working dinner held to mark the tenth anniversary of the Dialogue.

This meeting highlighted a common view among the participating countries with regard to the need for enhanced public diplomacy in order to build up a more positive image, greater confidence and trust, and better understanding of NATO's policies and objectives among the countries of the region. As part of this process and reflecting the new dynamic in the Dialogue, the NATO Secretary General met heads of state and government and key ministers in a series of landmark visits to Dialogue countries in late 2004 and early 2005.

The practical dimension

The Mediterranean Dialogue also aims at pursuing practical cooperation. Since 1997, an Annual Work Programme has been established including seminars, workshops and other practical activities. The Work Programme has subsequently been expanded to include an increasing number of activities covering 21 areas of cooperation, notably in the fields of information, science and the environment, civil emergency planning, crisis management, defence policy and strategy, border security, small arms and light weapons, humanitarian mine action, defence reform and defence economics, as well as consultations on terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The military dimension of the Annual Work Programme entails invitations to Dialogue countries to observe and participate in NATO/PfP military exercises, attend courses and other academic activities at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany, and the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy, and visit other NATO military bodies.

The military programme also includes port visits by NATO's Standing Naval Forces, on-site training of trainers by mobile training teams, and visits by NATO experts to assess possibilities for further cooperation in the military field. Consultation meetings on the military programme involving military representatives from NATO and the seven Mediterranean Dialogue countries are held twice a year. In an early manifestation of the enhancement of the Dialogue, the first formal meeting of the NATO Military Committee at the level of chiefs of defence staff, with the participation of the seven Dialogue countries, took place at NATO Headquarters in Brussels in November 2004. Discussions included a strong focus on the need for efficient counter-terrorist intelligence sharing and ways of facilitating cooperation to achieve this.

The practical interaction between NATO and Mediterranean Dialogue countries is well embodied by past and present contributions made by Egypt, Jordan and Morocco to NATO-led operations in the framework of the

Implementation Force (IFOR) and the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Kosovo Force (KFOR).

Towards a genuine partnership

Measures to strengthen cooperation with Mediterranean Dialogue countries were introduced at NATO summit meetings in Washington (1999) and Prague (2002). At the Istanbul Summit in 2004 the Dialogue was taken one step further with the aim of elevating it to a genuine partnership.

Taking advantage of the fact that opportunities for effective cooperation with Dialogue countries have increased, Allied leaders proposed a more ambitious and expanded partnership. This decision sought to take into account the interests of Dialogue countries and to draw on the experience and tools developed by NATO in other partnership frameworks. The overriding objectives of the Mediterranean Dialogue remain the same but the future focus is on developing more practical cooperation. Specific objectives are to enhance political dialogue, to achieve interoperability (that is, to improve the ability of the militaries of Dialogue countries to work with NATO forces), to contribute to the fight against terrorism and to cooperate in the area of defence reform.

Proposals are to expand and strengthen practical cooperation in a number of priority areas including a joint effort aimed at better explaining NATO's transformation and cooperative efforts; promoting military-to-military cooperative activities aimed at interoperability; improving the scope for the participation of Dialogue country forces in NATO-led crisis response operations such as disaster and humanitarian relief, search and rescue, and peace-support operations; promoting democratic control of armed forces and facilitating transparency in defence planning and budgeting; combating terrorism, for example through effective intelligence sharing and cooperation in the context of NATO's maritime anti-terrorism measures in the Mediterranean; contributing to NATO's work on the threat from weapons of mass destruction; promoting cooperation in the sphere of border security, for example in connection with combating terrorism or countering the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and illegal trafficking; and enhanced cooperation on civil emergency planning, including the possibility, in the case of disaster situations for Mediterranean partners, to request the assistance of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre, which is based at NATO Headquarters.

Cooperation in a number of other areas is also being pursued. These include airspace management, armaments, conceptual aspects of defence and security, defence reform and defence economics, scientific and environmental issues, logistics, medical matters, meteorological issues, oceanography,

standardisation, exercises and training, and military education, training and doctrinal issues.

Enhanced cooperation may include increased use of mechanisms such as the Trust Fund Policy that has provided support for projects such as the destruction of landmines and other munitions in a number of Partnership for Peace countries, the development of action plans and individual cooperation programmes, and greater opportunities for participation in educational and training programmes and in exercises. Provision for appropriate legal and security measures and liaison arrangements to facilitate the full participation of Mediterranean partners in these enhanced activities would also be required.

The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

In a separate but complementary undertaking at the June 2004 summit meeting, the Alliance launched an Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and invited interested countries in the broader Middle East region to take part, beginning with the member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). Of these, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates had already accepted the invitation by mid-2005; the Alliance hopes that the others will also do so. The objective is to foster mutually beneficial bilateral relations with the countries of the region as a means of enhancing regional security and stability, with a particular focus on practical cooperation in the defence and security fields. Key priorities are the fight against terrorism and countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Initiative complements other international processes and initiatives relating to the area, including NATO's parallel but distinct Mediterranean Dialogue, but does not duplicate any of them nor seek to create a political debate over issues more appropriately handled in other fora.

The Initiative is open to interested countries in the region which subscribe to its aims and are willing to develop and implement agreed work plans reflecting their individual ideas and proposals. As with the Mediterranean Dialogue, it is based on the principle of joint ownership, which means fully respecting the mutual interests of NATO and of the participating countries, taking into account their diversity and specific needs. It will focus on practical cooperation in areas where NATO can "add value" – in other words areas such as security in particular where NATO's strengths and experience can be drawn on to create opportunities for contributing to longer-term security and stability in the region through forms of cooperation not available in other contexts.

The practical implementation of this Initiative will be based on specific activities involving different forms of cooperation and assistance, applying

lessons learned and appropriate mechanisms and instruments derived from other NATO initiatives including the Partnership for Peace and the Mediterranean Dialogue. Such activities, tailored to individual needs, may include advice on defence reform, budgeting and planning and on civil-military relations; military-to-military cooperation aimed at improving interoperability including through participation in selected exercises and education and training programmes; case-by-case participation in NATO-led peace-support operations; fighting terrorism through information sharing and maritime cooperation, for example; contributing to Alliance work on the threat from weapons of mass destruction; promoting cooperation in the sphere of border security, for example in connection with combating terrorism or countering the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and illegal trafficking; and cooperation in areas relating to civil emergency planning. NATO has developed a menu of practical activities in these priority areas which forms the basis of individual work plans to be jointly developed and implemented with interested countries.

As in the case of the Mediterranean Dialogue, an underlying requirement for the success of the Initiative is the development of ownership of its objectives and activities by the countries of the region. Recognising this requirement, the policy document issued by NATO in July 2004 refers to the need for a clear understanding of NATO and of the objectives of the Initiative among governments and opinion-formers in participating countries. It proposes that consideration should be given to a joint effort of public diplomacy and a process of regular consultation, to ensure that the views of participating countries are taken into account as the Initiative is gradually developed and implemented.

CHAPTER 27

COOPERATION WITH COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

Conflict and instability in the Balkans in the 1990s posed direct challenges to the security interests of NATO member countries as well as to wider European peace and stability. This led the Alliance to undertake peace-support and crisis-management operations first in Bosnia and Herzegovina and later in Kosovo and then the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (see Part IV).

In 1999, the Kosovo crisis led the international community to reassess its engagement in the region and to adopt a more comprehensive approach to fostering security and stability. This was manifest in the launch of NATO's South East Europe Initiative as well as the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.¹ Since then, NATO's involvement in building security and stability in southeastern Europe has expanded beyond peacekeeping to promoting security cooperation in the region.

The South East Europe Initiative

NATO's South East Europe Initiative (SEEI) was launched at the Washington Summit in April 1999 to promote regional cooperation and long-term security and stability in the region.

The initiative was based on four pillars: a Consultative Forum on Security Issues on South East Europe, an open-ended *Ad Hoc* Working Group (AHWG) on Regional Cooperation in South East Europe under the auspices of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), Partnership for Peace (PfP) working tools, and targeted security cooperation programmes for countries in the region.

The Consultative Forum met initially at summit level on the margins of the NATO's Washington Summit and has subsequently met at ambassadorial level at NATO Headquarters. It currently includes NATO countries, four southeastern European Partner countries (Albania, Croatia, Moldova and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*), and Bosnia and Herzegovina and

1 The Stability Pact was initiated by the European Union in May 1999. It was subsequently formally adopted at an international conference held in Cologne, Germany on 10 June 1999 and placed under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. It is designed to contribute to lasting peace, prosperity and stability in southeastern Europe through coherent and coordinated action, by bringing together the countries of the region and other interested countries and organisations with capabilities to contribute. It establishes specific mechanisms to coordinate joint actions.

Serbia and Montenegro, which are not yet part of the EAPC or the Partnership for Peace.

The EAPC-AHWG identified ideas on promoting regional cooperation that will be further developed. These ideas have been incorporated into a set of activities modelled on activities carried out under NATO's PfP Programme.

The methodology of the PfP initiative has been used to address a number of issues which are important to southeastern Europe, including transparency in defence planning, crisis management and defence management. Activities such as workshops on those topics have been designed to have a region-wide focus. Some of them have been led by the participating countries in the region, facilitated by NATO, and others by NATO itself. Intended to complement each other, they are helping to promote stability through regional cooperation and integration.

A South East Europe Security Cooperation Steering Group (SEEGROUP) has been established to coordinate regional projects. The SEEGROUP meets regularly at NATO Headquarters in Brussels and has focused increasingly on expanding the role of the participating countries in the management of regional projects and in the implementation of an annual Action Plan. Projects include a comparative study of the national defence strategies of the countries in the region (SEESTUDY); an exchange of politico-military and other early-warning, conflict-prevention and crisis-management information (SECHANGE); work on reduction of the proliferation and improved control of small arms and light weapons; border management and security; support for defence reforms; improvement of cooperation in enhancing counter-terrorism capabilities (SEEPRO); civil emergency planning activities; and the instigation of a clearing-house approach for the exchange of security-related information.

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro have expressed their desire to join the Partnership for Peace. NATO is prepared to welcome them as Partner countries once they have met a number of conditions, which include full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia – in particular, detaining and turning over to the Tribunal persons indicted for war crimes – and key defence reforms. To help these countries carry out the necessary reforms, a special Security Cooperation Programme with Bosnia and Herzegovina was launched in 1997, a series of "Measures of Cooperation with Serbia and Montenegro" was introduced in June 2004, and a Tailored Cooperation Programme was launched in July 2004.

NATO provides advice and expertise on the retraining of military officers discharged as part of force structure reforms in partner countries of the region. This takes the form of a NATO project, carried out in the framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe in cooperation with the World Bank and

other donors. It originally applied to Bulgaria and Romania while they were preparing for NATO accession. By mid-2002, over 5000 military officers had taken advantage of the retraining programmes. The process was then extended to other countries of the western Balkans, for example Albania, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.* This has offered an opportunity for new members of NATO that had benefited from this project to become providers of expertise to other partner countries. Work on the closure of military sites in southeastern Europe and their conversion to civilian use has also been also initiated.