



Россия-НАТО

NATO-RUSSIA

forging deeper relations

The creation of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) on 28 May 2002 is a key milestone in NATO history and a decisive turning-point in NATO-Russia relations. It built on the gradual development of NATO-Russia relations since 1991, which were formalised and broadened with the signing of the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security in 1997. Practical cooperation in the Balkans, where Allied and Russian soldiers had been serving alongside each other in NATO-led peacekeeping operations since 1996, had also helped foster mutual trust and confidence between the Russian and Allied militaries, essentially predating the political rapprochement that was to follow.

NATO Allies and Russia meet on an equal basis in the NRC. The driving force behind the new spirit of cooperation is the realisation that they share strategic priorities and face common challenges. This is as true about the common priority to tackle new security threats, such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as it is about the need to pursue defence reform and develop more efficient, deployable and capable armed forces which can work together. The Allies and Russia will not always agree on everything and differences remain on some issues, which will not be solved overnight. But NATO and Russia need each other to meet the challenges of the 21st century. That can only be achieved through open dialogue and mutual confidence, generated by practical cooperation in areas of common interest.

> History: the reluctant partners

NATO-Russia relations formally began in 1991 at the inaugural session of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (later renamed the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council), which was created following the end of the Cold War as a forum for consultation to foster a new cooperative relationship with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It was actually while this meeting was taking place that the Soviet Union dissolved. A few years later, in 1994, Russia joined the Partnership for Peace programme — a major programme of practical security and defence cooperation between NATO and individual Partner countries.

In 1997, NATO-Russia relations took another big step forward with the signature of the Founding Act, which expressed the common goal of building a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area, providing a true basis for the development of a strong and durable partnership. It set up the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) as a forum for regular consultation on security issues of common concern, aimed at helping build mutual confidence through dialogue. In this body, NATO and Russia started developing a programme of consultation and cooperation.

However, lingering Cold War prejudices plagued relations from the outset and prevented the PJC from achieving its potential. In particular, in spite of the Allies' commitment not to deploy nuclear weapons or station foreign troops on the territory of the new members, Russian leaders continued to be suspicious of NATO's enlargement into an area they traditionally considered their buffer zone. In early 1999, when differences arose over NATO's air campaign to end political and ethnic repression in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo, Russia suspended its participation in the PJC. Nevertheless, Russia played a key diplomatic role in resolving the crisis and, throughout, Russian soldiers continued to work alongside NATO counterparts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as did scientists in NATO's Science Programme. In June, when the Kosovo Force was eventually deployed, Russian peacekeepers were a part of it.

Key dates in NATO-Russia relations

1991	Russia joins North Atlantic Cooperation Council	2000	Vladimir Putin becomes President of Russia
1994	Russia joins Partnership for Peace		Broader cooperation in PJC resumes
1996	Russian peacekeepers deploy to Bosnia and Herzegovina		Nuclear submarine Kursk sinks
1997	May 27, Paris, signature of Founding Act and creation of Permanent Joint Council (PJC)	2001	NATO Information Office opens in Moscow
1998	Russian mission to NATO established		September 11, terrorist attacks on the United States
1999	Russia suspends participation in PJC over Kosovo air campaign	2002	NATO opens Military Liaison Mission in Moscow
	Russian peacekeepers deploy to Kosovo		May 28, Rome, signature of Rome Declaration and creation of NATO-Russia Council (NRC)
		2003	May 13, NRC meets for first time in Moscow

> Changing times



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. It is telling that the first world leader to contact the US President that day was President Putin himself.

In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks, Russia opened its airspace for the international coalition's campaign in Afghanistan and arranged to share intelligence on terrorism and Central Asia. This contribution decisively anchored Russia and NATO on the same side of the war on terrorism. 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 to give new impetus and substance to the NATO-Russia relationship.

Intensive negotiations led to agreement on a joint declaration on NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality, which was signed and adopted by the Russian and Allied heads of state and government, at their summit meeting in Rome on 28 May 2002.



выстраивая углубленные

> NATO-Russia Council innovations

The Rome Declaration established the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) as a mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision, and joint action for member states of NATO and Russia on a wide spectrum of security issues in the Euro-Atlantic region. The NRC's agenda builds upon that laid out in the Founding Act of 1997 but the frequency and spirit of meetings have dramatically changed. First and foremost, in the NRC, Russia and Allies meet as equals — instead of in the bilateral NATO+1 format under the PJC.

The new Council, replacing the PJC, works on the principle of consensus. It is chaired by NATO's Secretary General. Meetings are held at least monthly at the level of ambassadors and military representatives; twice yearly at the level of foreign and defence ministers and chiefs of staff; and occasionally at summit level. An important innovation is the NRC Preparatory Committee, which meets at least twice a month to prepare ambassadorial discussions and to oversee all experts' activities under the auspices of the NRC.

The NRC has created several working groups and committees to develop cooperation on terrorism, proliferation, peacekeeping, theatre missile defence, airspace management, civil emergencies, defence reform, scientific cooperation and on challenges of modern society. Experts have been tasked to take work forward on individual projects in other key areas. Hardly a day goes by without an NRC meeting at one level or another, leading to an unprecedented intensity of contacts and informal consultation in many different fields, conducted in a friendly and workmanlike atmosphere.

The NRC is evolving into a productive mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation and joint action. Already in the first 18 months of its existence, political consultations had been held on the situation in Afghanistan, Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina and practical cooperation was generating concrete benefits in many areas.



President Vladimir Putin:
“We have come a long way
from opposition to dialogue,
and from confrontation
to cooperation.”

> Key areas of cooperation

New security threats

The struggle against terrorism and new security threats are key areas of cooperation that are generating some of the first tangible results of the reinforced NATO-Russia relationship. Joint assessments of specific terrorist threats in the Euro-Atlantic area are being developed and kept under review and the role of the military in combating terrorism is being explored. Cooperation against proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and the spread of ballistic missile technology has intensified: a joint assessment of global trends in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is being prepared and cooperation in theatre missile defence is addressing the unprecedented danger posed by the increasing availability of ever more accurate ballistic missiles. A Cooperative Airspace Initiative is seeking to foster cooperation on air-traffic management and air surveillance, which will enhance air safety and transparency and also help counter the threat of the potential use of civilian aircraft for terrorist purposes.



Military-to-military cooperation

A key objective of military cooperation is to improve interoperability, since modern militaries must be able to operate within multinational command and force structures, when called upon to work together in peace-support or crisis-management operations. A substantial exercise and training programme is being implemented under the NRC. Logistics, including interoperability tests for equipment and procedures in areas such as air transport and air-to-air refuelling, are another focus of activities. Intensified cooperation in search and rescue at sea was initiated after the August 2000 sinking of the Russian nuclear submarine, Kursk, and the loss of its 118 crewmen. A framework agreement between NATO and Russia on submarine crew escape and rescue was signed in February 2003.

Defence reform

Defence reform is another area of shared interest. Russia and NATO countries need armed forces that are appropriately sized, trained and equipped to deal with the full spectrum of 21st century threats. While there is no blueprint for military reform, Russia could benefit from the experience of NATO countries, many of which have introduced fundamental reforms over the past decade to adapt their armed forces to today's requirements. Following an initial brainstorming in October 2002, cooperation has been launched on different aspects of defence reform, such as the management of human and financial resources; macro-economic, financial and social issues; and force-planning. The activities of a successful joint project for the retraining of retired Russian military personnel, set up in Moscow in July 2002, are being expanded. Moreover, the NATO Defense College in Rome set up two fellowships in 2003 for Russian scholars to promote research on defence reform.



NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer: “Russia and the member states of NATO, coming together as truly equal partners, have built a results-oriented partnership based on pragmatism and shared interests.”

Civil emergencies

Russia and NATO have been cooperating since 1996 to develop a capacity for joint action in response to civil emergencies, such as earthquakes and floods, and to coordinate detection and prevention of disasters before they occur. It was a Russian proposal that led to the establishment of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre in 1998. Various disaster-relief exercises, seminars, often including participants from other Partner countries, help develop civil-military cooperation. Under the NRC, work in this area is concentrating initially on improving interoperability, procedures and the exchange of information and experience.

Science and environment

Scientific and technological cooperation with Russia, launched in 1998, focused on three specific areas of particular interest to Russia, namely plasma physics, plant biotechnology and the forecasting and prevention of natural and industrial catastrophes. Under the NRC Science Committee, however, a new focus of cooperation is the application of civil science to defence against terrorism and new threats, such as in explosives detection or in examining the social and psychological impact of terrorism. Environmental protection problems arising from civilian and military activities are another important area of cooperation, under the NRC Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society.

Retraining military personnel

In the framework of NATO-Russia cooperation in the area of defence reform, a joint project is successfully helping to tackle the social costs of downsizing in the Russian military by providing redundant military personnel throughout Russia with a focal point of retraining and reintegration assistance. Founded in June 2001 and operational since March 2002, the NATO-Russia Information, Consultation and Training Centre is based at the Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Information Science, which also provides advice. In 2003, the Centre expanded its activities into the regions, establishing local offices in Yaroslavl, St. Petersburg, Chita, Perm, Kaliningrad and Rostov on Don.

A central web site and six regional web sites provide information on retraining, job counselling and placement, setting up small businesses, housing and other subjects relevant to reintegrating into civilian life. Educational and training material is developed and distributed, and seminars on retraining issues are organised in different regions of Russia. The Centre also trains trainers working in the resettlement of military personnel on topics such as relevant legislation, available programmes, the employment market and the creation of small businesses. Already in the first 18 months of its existence, the Centre had trained 210 trainers who are now actively engaged in resettlement activities. Moreover, in 2003, the Centre initiated direct training of discharged military personnel in areas such as computer skills, management and accounting, with some 200 students having participated in courses by October 2003.



Peacekeeping

For over seven years, until their withdrawal in summer 2003, Russia contributed the largest non-NATO contingent to the UN-mandated, NATO-led peacekeeping forces in the Balkans. Russian soldiers worked alongside NATO and Partner counterparts to support the international community's efforts to build lasting security and stability in the region. Russia's decision to withdraw its peacekeepers reflected progress made on the ground in bringing peace and stability to the Balkans.

Russian peacekeepers first deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the Implementation Force (IFOR) — later replaced by a smaller Stabilisation Force (SFOR) — in January 1996, where they were part of a multinational brigade in a northern sector, responsible for an extensive area, conducting daily patrols, security checks, assisting with reconstruction and performing humanitarian tasks, such as helping refugees and displaced people return to their homes.

Russia played a vital diplomatic role in securing an end to the Kosovo conflict, despite political differences over NATO's 1999 Kosovo air campaign. Its troops, originally deployed in June 1999, played an integral part in the Kosovo Force (KFOR) until their withdrawal, working to maintain security in multinational brigades in sectors in the east, north and south of the province; exercising joint responsibility for running the Pristina airfield, alongside a NATO contingent with responsibility for air movement; and providing medical facilities and services in Kosovo Polje.

Close cooperation between NATO and Russia in the Balkans has been critical in improving relations and building trust between the Russian and Allied militaries. The mutual confidence gained should provide a solid basis for further expanding military-to-military cooperation. Moreover, the NRC is developing a generic concept for joint peacekeeping operations, which explores common approaches, establishes a framework for consultation, planning and decision-making during an emerging crisis, and defines issues related to joint training and exercises.

Россия-НАТО

выстраивая углубленные отношения

NATO INFORMATION OFFICE IN MOSCOW

Since opening in February 2001, the NATO Information Office in Moscow has provided a source of accurate and timely information on what NATO does and on developments in NATO-Russia relations. The office liaises with Russian officials, works with the Russian media, co-sponsors conferences and seminars, organises visits to NATO headquarters, and distributes information materials on NATO.

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NATO MILITARY LIAISON MISSION

In May 2002, on the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Founding Act, NATO established a Military Liaison Mission in Moscow. Its main tasks are to liaise with the Ministry of Defence and wider military establishment to promote cooperation, communication and understanding between them and NATO.

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