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Russia News

Towards greater interoperability

- NATO-Russia Council (NRC) defence ministers endorse a "Political-Military Guidance towards Enhanced Interoperability"
- Russia signs Status of Forces Agreement with NATO facilitating the movement of troops
- Preparations are underway for Russia to support NATO's Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean

→ Secretary General in Moscow

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer visited Moscow for meetings on 24 June with President Vladimir Putin, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Secretary of the Security Council Igor Ivanov. Discussions on the development of the NATO-Russia relationship were frank and constructive. Key themes were a shared determination to enhance political dialogue in the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), to improve the ability of Allied and Russian forces to work together, to cooperate more closely in preventing, combating and managing the consequences of terrorism and to move forward quickly on a proposed NRC pilot project on counter-narcotics training for relevant Afghan and Central Asian personnel.



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President Vladimir Putin greets NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Kremlin on 24 June, before a meeting to discuss how to strengthen cooperation under the NATO-Russia Council

The meetings also provided an opportunity for high-level exchanges of views on the situations in the Middle East, the Balkans (in particular Kosovo) and Darfur. Moreover, De Hoop Scheffer briefed on NATO's operation in Afghanistan, its training mission in Iraq and its ongoing process of transformation.

During his visit, the Secretary General had a lively round-table discussion with key members of the State Duma and Federation Council. He appealed for their support in helping the Russian general public understand better both the nature of Russia's relationship with NATO and the scope and purpose of the Alliance itself. Some public perceptions of NATO in Russia continue to tend to reflect anachronistic Cold War stereotypes, a fact which indicates that not enough has been done to inform the Russian public about NATO: an Alliance that has transformed itself since the end of the Cold War and is developing a mature relationship with Russia based on pragmatic cooperation in an impressive range of areas of common interest and on vigorous and broad political dialogue on current security issues.

Later, in a speech at the Institute of Europe, the Secretary General reiterated this message, saying that in spite of all the progress made over the past four years by NATO and Russia toward building a genuine, sustainable partnership, "public perceptions in Russia, including in much of the political elite, do not seem to reflect this reality". He went on to emphasise that "NATO is Russia's partner in security, and this partnership can go as far as the Russian government, and ultimately the Russian people are prepared to take it. ... The future is in your hands, and in the hands of your political leadership. Only by taking full advantage of the possibilities we have at our disposal for real political dialogue and practical cooperation can we leave behind the suspicions of the past in favour of a common future."



Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov gets down to business with his Allied counterparts in Brussels on 9 June

→ NRC defence ministers meet

The defence ministers of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) met in Brussels on 9 June to take stock of ongoing cooperation and consider future priorities. “Our focus should remain fixed on what is needed in order to make the NATO-Russia partnership increasingly operational, through result-oriented practical cooperation,” said the NRC Chairman, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, opening the meeting.

Interoperability of forces was a key focus of discussions. Ministers endorsed a “Political-Military Guidance towards Enhanced Interoperability between the Forces of Russia and NATO Nations”. The Guidance defines the objective in pursuing interoperability – which is to ensure that, over time, the forces of all services at the three levels of military command and operation (strategic, operational and tactical) in varying degrees develop the ability to operate in synergy in the execution of assigned

tasks – and sets out the methods and mechanisms for achieving this objective in a pragmatic and incremental fashion. Ministers also welcomed Russia’s signature of the Partnership for Peace Status of Forces Agreement (*see next item*). Once it has entered into force, this agreement, together with the Political-Military Guidance, will, inter alia, contribute to improving the ability of forces of Russia and NATO member countries to train, exercise and operate effectively together.

Further, in the context of interoperability discussions, ministers welcomed the development of a comprehensive training programme, which will see Russian vessels use all opportunities for cooperation in 2005 to prepare for providing active support to NATO’s maritime Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean in 2006 (*see p. 5*). They also welcomed progress in military-to-military cooperation, including a special programme of cooperation with Russia’s 15th Motorized Rifle Brigade.

Reiterating their determination to strengthen cooperation in the fight against terrorism, ministers reviewed ongoing cooperation in this area. They also discussed cooperation on different aspects of defence reform and reviewed progress in the fields of logistic cooperation, airspace management, theatre missile defence, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and nuclear weapons issues (*see p. 5*).

Ministers also exchanged views on current international security issues and reviewed the situations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and Central Asia.

→ Russia signs key agreement

NATO-Russia cooperation took an important step forward with the signing by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov of the Partnership for Peace Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), on 21 April, at the beginning of an



Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (left) shakes hands with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, after signing the Status of Forces Agreement, on 21 April

informal meeting of the NATO-Russia Council in Vilnius, Lithuania. “The SOFA will allow us to organise better a rich menu of cooperative activities,” said NATO’s Secretary General to the press after the meeting. “It will save us time by providing a legal basis for movement of people and equipment agreed in advance, and it will allow us to act together in new areas such as strategic lift.”

The agreement provides a reciprocal legal framework for the movements of NATO and Partner troops in Russia and of Russian troops on Alliance territory. The SOFA regulates the legal status related to documentation, juridical questions, taxation, customs and other technical details. This will facilitate organising joint training and exercises as well as cooperation and support for peace-support operations, such as the transport of NATO troops to Afghanistan. Most countries belonging to the Partnership for Peace have signed such an agreement.

It is not a “basing agreement”, nor does it automatically allow every kind of transport – the sovereignty of the par-

ties to the agreement is not affected. All of its provisions are applied reciprocally: whatever status NATO troops enjoy while in Russia, Russian troops will enjoy while on NATO territory. The agreement will enter into force once it has been ratified by the Russian parliament.

➔ Nuclear doctrine and strategy

A seminar on nuclear doctrine and strategy was organised under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) on 6 and 7 July, in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. The event brought together nuclear experts and representatives of foreign and defence ministries and national delegations to NATO from Allied countries and Russia, as well as NATO civilian and military personnel.

The 65 participants gained greater insight into the role of nuclear weapons in NATO’s nuclear strategy and Strategic Concept. Comprehensive briefings were given by each of the four NRC nuclear weapon



Participants at a NATO-Russia Council seminar on nuclear doctrine and strategy gather for a photo in the picturesque setting of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, in July

states – France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – on their national doctrines and strategies. Views were also exchanged on nuclear policy issues, clarifying specific points and helping to improve mutual understanding of these issues.

The seminar was part of a continuing NATO-Russia dialogue aimed at building confidence and security on nuclear weapons issues. A similar NRC event was held in the Netherlands in April 2002. Nuclear weapon accident-response field exercises are also being organised: the first, *Avariya 2004*, took place in Russia in August 2004 and the next, *Senator 2005*, will be hosted by the United Kingdom in September.

→ Afghan narcotics

On 19 July, the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Preparatory Committee held a meeting reinforced with national experts on counter-narcotics training techniques and methodology to take forward NRC cooperation against the threat posed by Afghan narcotics. The meeting sought to define an eventual NRC pilot project aimed at training relevant personnel from Afghanistan and the Central Asian transit-route states, in order to contribute to existing international efforts which seek to create a more efficient counter-narcotics capacity in the region. Representatives of the European Commission, the European Council, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime also attended as observers.

The meeting took place in the context of ongoing discussions within the NRC, including at the level of Foreign Ministers, aimed at exploring practical NATO-Russia cooperation on combating the threats posed by trafficking in Afghan narcotics. A previous expert-reinforced NRC seminar on this subject was held in October 2004 (see *Novosti NATO nr. 4/04*).

→ Support for Operation Active Endeavour

In line with the exchange of letters signed by NATO's Secretary General and Russia's Ambassador to NATO in December 2004, plans and preparations are ongoing for Russian support to NATO's maritime Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean, which is aimed at helping deter, disrupt and protect against terrorism.

NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Military Representatives had an extensive exchange of views on the status of preparations, at their meeting in Moscow on 15 March (see *Novosti NATO nr. 1/05*). NATO and Russian military authorities are developing practical modalities that will enhance cooperation in the framework of this operation, particularly in intelligence-exchange and information-sharing. A report to this effect was approved by NRC Chiefs of Defence on 11 May 2005.



Two ships from Russia's Black Sea Fleet berth at the port of Naples, after training exercises aimed at preparing for Russia's future support for Operation Active Endeavour

At their meeting in Brussels on 9 June 2005 (*see p. 3*), NRC defence ministers welcomed the development of a comprehensive training programme, which will see Russian vessels using all opportunities for cooperation in 2005. The same week, a NATO team was visiting Sevastopol to enhance cooperation in the preparation of Russian assets earmarked for the operation.

As part of the ongoing preparations, a group headed by the Commander of the Russian Black Sea Fleet visited NATO's naval headquarters in Naples, Italy, for a briefing on Operation Active Endeavour. Meanwhile, Russian cruiser Moskva and frigate Pytliviy berthed at Naples civilian port, after having conducted a series of successful training activities with an Italian frigate which is part of one of the NATO Response Force maritime groups. The training included manoeuvring together, communication exercises and a boarding demonstration, which will help prepare the crew of the Pytliviy for future support to NATO's maritime operation in the Mediterranean.

→ Lessons learned from recent terrorist attacks

Some 150 participants gathered in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from 27 June to 1 July, for a NATO-Russia Council (NRC) conference on "Lessons learned from recent terrorist attacks: Building national capabilities and institutions". The event was organised in the framework of the NRC Action Plan on Terrorism, which was developed in the wake of the terrorist attack on the school in Beslan, Russia, last September, and approved by NRC Foreign Ministers in December 2004.

Experts from Russia, Spain, Turkey and the United States gave detailed accounts of the terrorist atrocities that have been perpetrated on their territories in recent years. They focused both on the challenges encountered

by their national authorities while managing the consequences of the terrorist acts, and on how the lessons learned from that experience have since been integrated into policies and practice. All stressed the need to continue to share experience and work together to further solidify common defences against terrorism.

Expert working groups then discussed in detail national policies and priorities in nine different areas: site security, medical response, civil enforcement and investigations, military roles and tasks, airspace control and monitoring, interagency and vertical coordination, building responsive legislation and institutions, the nature of terrorist organisations and operations, and hostage negotiation and rescue.

The conference was jointly organised by the US Mission to NATO, the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies and the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Under the NRC Action Plan on Terrorism, a wide range of activities are being taken forward in the areas of prevention, combating terrorist activities and consequence management. A Mid-Year Implementation Report of the Action Plan, reviewed by NRC ambassadors on 29 June, points to significant progress in cooperation in airspace management and against the threat posed by Afghan narcotics, as well as in relevant aspects of cooperation on defence reform, civil emergency planning and science.

→ Science meeting in St Petersburg

The NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Science Committee met in St Petersburg on 13 and 14 June – the first time it has met in Russia. During the visit, the Committee was invited to the Khlopin Radium Institute for presentations and demonstrations on technology for explosives detection.

The aim of the meeting was to review activities under the Committee's Action Plan for 2005-2006. Cooperation is focused on six priority topics: explosives detection, the psychosocial consequences of terrorism, the forecasting and prevention of catastrophes, protection against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear agents, cyber security and transport security. Activities can take place in either bottom-up or top-down approaches.

To date, 23 bottom-up activities have been included in the work programme for 2005. In addition, the Committee reviewed proposals for a number of top-down activities, which had been identified earlier in meetings of experts from Russia and NATO member countries. These include a proposal for the development of a stand-off suicide-bomber detection prototype and a workshop will be organised to explore this further by the end of 2005. Another interesting initiative relevant to the fight against terrorism is an upcoming workshop to examine possible analytical work on aircraft collisions with high-rise buildings, extending a bilateral project conducted by the Netherlands and Russia.

→ Conference for senior officers

Over 100 Russian senior officers, who have been selected for the rank of general, participated in a NATO-led conference at the General Staff Academy in Moscow at the beginning of June. The week-long programme was focused on improving interoperability. A wide range of topics was covered, including presentations on NATO's Training Mission in Iraq, Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean, and the NATO Response Force.

German Army General Rainer Schuwirth, the Chief of Staff of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, opened the conference. He emphasised that NATO and Russia had moved on from confidence-building



Senior Russian officers take part in a week-long training programme at the General Staff Academy in Moscow, aimed at improving interoperability with Allied forces

in the 1990's to "building a permanent and reliable strategic partnership". "We address shared threats, shared problems and together we produce common solutions," he said.

The conference was organised and supported by the Allied Command Transformation through the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany, as part of the 2005 Exercise and Training Programme agreed by the NATO-Russia Council. It was the second time that NATO has been invited to send high-ranking officers and civilians to give lectures at the General Staff Academy – the first time was in October 2004 (see *Novosti NATO nr. 4/04*).

→ Transport security

The Russian Ministry of Industry and Energy and NATO co-organized a workshop on transport security, which was held in Moscow on 19 April. The aim of the event was to assess the nature and trends of the transport

security market and the links with defence solutions, as well as to identify promising technologies for potential NATO-Russia industrial cooperation in this area.

Some 70 people took part in the workshop, including representatives of 33 companies or institutes working in the transport security sector in Russia or NATO member countries. Discussions covered many aspects of transport security, including secure data transmission, communications and surveillance networks; systems for managing transport flows; systems for managing, identifying and tracking air passengers when crossing borders; airborne active flight safety systems; coastal surveillance; technologies to detect and disable explosive devices; and systems to monitor and improve information-exchange on the transport of sensitive goods.

Many defence companies are currently seeking to expand into the transport security business on the basis of expertise already developed in the defence sector. This know-how, derived from defence technologies and solutions, gives them a competitive advantage in the transport security market, particularly in view of increased concerns about terrorist attacks.

This event was organised under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council's working group on defence reform as a follow-up to the roundtable discussions on new technologies in defence and security markets, which took place in Brussels in September 2004 (see *Novosti NATO* nr. 4/04).

→ Reserve forces

A working-level roundtable discussion on the role and use of reserve forces took place at NATO Headquarters on 5 April. Organised under the NATO-Russia Council working group on defence reform, the event provided a forum for the exchange of experiences on the specific challenges of the roles, missions, training and utilisation of reserve forces.

Experts from the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Russia and the United States gave presentations focusing on key aspects of their country's experience of using reserves. Presentations from Russia outlined limitations in the present system and areas where change is sought so reserves are better able to support deployable forces; it was also noted that as the army shifts to a professional force, the pool of discharged conscripts would no longer be available for reserve service.

The mechanical aspects of how to attract, train and resource a reserve force were common themes throughout. Operational challenges that were also the subject of lively discussion included subjects such as how to organise reserve forces, maintain standards and determine new roles in the current security environment, as well as the need to balance present and future needs.

NATO-Russia News aims to highlight different aspects of NATO's cooperation with Russia. It is based on *Novosti NATO*, a quarterly newsletter for audiences in Russia, which is published in Russian.

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