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Russia News

Focus on a more operational partnership

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- NRC experts observe an exercise in the United Kingdom involving a nuclear weapons accident
- Russia participates in an industrial exhibition on non-lethal weapons

→ Informal defence talks



NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe General James L. Jones has a chat with Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov at the informal meeting of the NATO-Russia Council in Berlin, Germany

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov met his counterparts from NATO countries for a working lunch in Berlin, Germany, on 14 September. This informal meeting of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) provided an opportunity to exchange views on the state of NATO-Russia defence cooperation and on what priorities to pursue next year.

Pointing to a solid record of achievements in the NRC framework on defence and military issues, NRC Chairman Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said the "focus should remain fixed on making the NATO-Russia partnership increasingly operational". An important step in this direction is the Status of Forces Agreement (*see NATO-Russia News 2/05*), which Minister Ivanov said he hoped would be ratified by the Duma early next year.

The fight against terrorism is a key priority for the NRC, as was demonstrated by the minute's silence to commemorate the victims of terrorist attacks, which was observed at the start of the meeting. Ministers examined

the scope for intensifying the already close cooperation in this area and, in this context, they welcomed Minister Ivanov's announcement that Russian ships would be ready to support NATO's anti-terrorist operation in the Mediterranean in January 2006.

Afghanistan was another key topic of discussion. Allied ministers updated Minister Ivanov on the NATO-led operation to help stabilise the country. They also had an opportunity to return to discussing NRC practical cooperation on Afghanistan, in particular with regard to the threats posed by trafficking in Afghan narcotics, taking into account commitments undertaken by NRC member states in the framework of the Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics. Ministers welcomed the progress being made in developing an NRC pilot project on counter-narcotics training for Afghan and Central Asian personnel.

Ministers also discussed operational issues related to the Balkans, Iraq and Darfur as well as hearing a briefing from Minister Ivanov on the recent Sino-Russian military exercise.

→ Nuclear weapons accident-response exercise

Nearly 60 civilian and military experts from 23 NATO countries and Russia observed an exercise to test preparedness in the case of an accident involving nuclear weapons, which was organised by the United Kingdom on 14 and 15 September.

Exercise Senator 05 simulated a scenario in which a road convoy transporting nuclear weapons was involved in an accident, resulting in the release of radioactive material. It was the latest in a series of regular exercises held in the United Kingdom to test the effectiveness of the Ministry of Defence's Nuclear Accident Response Organisation and the ability of the armed forces and emergency services to cope with such an event. Over

700 people, including some 200 UK Army and Royal Air Force personnel as well as about 100 people from local government and police, fire and ambulance teams were involved in the exercise, which took place at a military site near Edinburgh in Scotland.

The NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Nuclear Experts Group was invited to observe the exercise with a view to sharing information on how countries that possess nuclear weapons would respond to this type of emergency. Such exercises are also useful in promoting transparency and building confidence. Russia hosted NRC experts at an exercise held near Murmansk in August last year, which simulated an attack on a nuclear weapons convoy (see *Novosti NATO 3/04*). The United States has offered to organise a similar event in Wyoming in June next year and France will conduct an exercise in 2007.

“All of the countries that observed the exercise and in particular the Russians were very impressed with the openness, the level of detail that was provided and the willingness to answer questions,” said Guy Roberts, NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for NATO’s policy on weapons of mass destruction, in an interview given after the event. “I think what was most impressive about this particular exercise was how well civilian



Simulating public information and media coverage was an important part of Exercise Senator 05

organisations cooperated with military organisations to respond to this kind of emergency. This was something that was new to the Russians and was commented on repeatedly by all the countries that attended the exercise.”

→ Non-lethal weapons exhibition

The autumn meeting of NATO’s Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD), which is open to Partner countries, took place at NATO Headquarters on 26 and 27 October. In parallel, an industrial exhibition devoted to non-lethal weapons technologies provided 21 companies from NATO member states and Partner countries, including Russia, with an opportunity to display their latest technologies and products in this field.

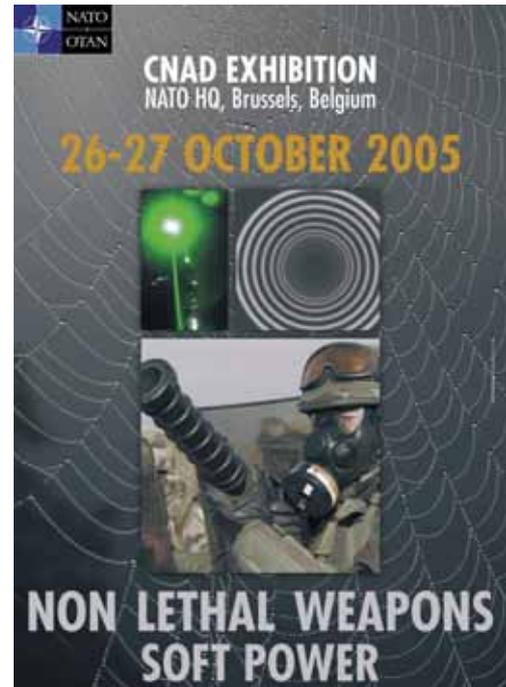
Non-lethal weapons have become an essential tool for modern militaries in today’s extremely complex security environment. The threat of terrorism, in particular, compels armed forces, working together with police and special forces, to consider a wide range of alternative technologies and tactics to safeguard our security. Specifically, forces are increasingly called upon to operate in urban environments and to combat insurgents and



Both military personnel and civilian emergency services took part in Exercise Senator 05, which simulated an accident involving a road convoy transporting nuclear weapons

terrorists, who – among other things – use human shields, violate the laws of war and hope to promote collateral damage as a means of advancing their agendas. The ability for forces to take action against terrorists or insurgents without harming innocent civilians, friendly forces or infrastructure assets is a crucial capability. It is also useful to be able to capture a terrorist or insurgent alive. Having non-lethal weapons greatly expands the range of options available to military commanders and their forces, making them more flexible and responsive.

A NATO policy on non-lethal weapons was approved in 1999 and the Defence Capabilities Initiative launched during the Washington Summit listed non-lethal weapons as one of the Alliance shortfalls. This led to extensive research by NATO's Research and Technology Organisation, including a multinational effort aimed at generating recommendations for the use of such weapons in future peace-enforcement operations. In October 2003, under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council, Russian experts and representatives from most



NATO nations gathered to examine the use of non-lethal weapons in terrorist situations. In June 2005, an expert team under the aegis of the CNAD NATO Army Armaments Group started work on promoting the standardisation and greater interoperability of non-lethal capabilities. Meanwhile two other expert teams from the Research and Technology Organisation are respectively assessing the effectiveness of non-lethal weapons and quantifying their effects on human beings.

The CNAD exhibition provided an opportunity to bring together technological and industrial knowledge from ten NATO countries and three Partner countries. The aim was to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and know-how; to foster closer cooperation between defence industries and research and technological institutions; and to allow companies to present their most innovative concepts and designs. The presence of the senior defence procurement officials from all NATO and Partner countries, gathered at NATO Headquarters for the plenary meeting of the CNAD, ensured high-level visibility.

The Rosoboronexport State Corporation, the sole state intermediary agency for Russia's military exports/imports, which is supported by the State Enterprise "Special Technology and Telecoms" Research and Production Association of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, displayed various non-lethal equipment. Russia's Federal Research and Development Institute, Federal Security Service and Ministry of Internal Affairs also contributed to the exhibition.

→ Disease surveillance workshop

Experts on proliferation issues from NATO member countries and Russia held a workshop at NATO Headquarters on 19 October to exchange information on disease surveillance systems for armed forces, territories and populations. The aim was to explore opportunities for practical cooperation against biological weapons and agents. The workshop was held under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) as part of a series of workshops focusing on specific opportunities for practical cooperation on protection from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and agents.

Work in this area was launched after a successful first exploratory workshop, which took place in Poland in December 2003. This was reinforced in December 2004, when NRC foreign ministers decided to initiate practical cooperation on protection from nuclear, biological and chemical agents. In June 2005, NRC defence ministers took note of ongoing efforts to broaden and strengthen cooperation in evaluating and responding to threats posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Further workshops exploring specific opportunities for practical cooperation in this field are currently being planned for 2006 and 2007.

→ Submarine rescue

According to the team from the United Kingdom that helped rescue seven Russian sailors from a submarine on 7 August, a recent NATO exercise had provided valuable practice for the operation.

A remote-controlled UK Royal Navy Scorpio 45 spent five hours cutting the fishing nets and cables that had trapped the Russian submarine at a depth of 190 metres off the Kamchatka peninsula. Previous rescue attempts had failed and, after three days under water, the crew was beginning to run low on oxygen and suffer from exposure to low temperatures.

Only a few weeks earlier the Scorpio and its team had been put to extensive use during a NATO submarine rescue exercise, Sorbet Royal 2005, held in the Mediterranean from 17 to 30 June. "The success of



A remote-controlled UK Royal Navy Scorpio 45 is lowered into the water



The UK Scorpio mini-sub is prepared for transport by air

such operations depends a great deal on the skill of the pilot in manoeuvring the Scorpio underwater,” said Neil Hopkins, a member of the UK Submarine Escape and Rescue Project. “During Sorbet Royal, the Scorpio was in the water for two weeks carrying out complicated tasks day in and day out.”

The rescue operation also benefited from work carried out in the NATO-led Submarine Escape and Rescue Working Group – of which Russia is a member – which facilitates the exchange of information on available rescue techniques and equipment. This Group has established an International Submarine Escape and Rescue Liaison Office in Norfolk, Virginia, the United States, which runs a database through which information and offers of assistance from around the globe are channelled.

This meant that the UK team had full access to the specifications of the stricken Russian submarine and knew what equipment would be needed. “Knowing the specifications and having the right gear in place is essential in what is a race against time” said Commander Gavin Short, a submarine expert in NATO’s International Military Staff.

NATO and Russia signed an agreement on mutual help and cooperation in the area of submarine crew search and rescue in February 2003. This has paved the way for information exchange and cooperation on procedures, equipment, and exercises.

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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In Russia, further information and publications are available from:

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