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Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich is greeted by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer upon arrival at NATO Headquarters

Prime Minister Yanukovich visits NATO

The Ukrainian Prime Minister, Viktor Yanukovich, visited NATO Headquarters on 14 September to outline his government's priorities to NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Allied ambassadors. The Allies welcomed the opportunity to learn more about his plans for taking forward Ukraine's reform efforts and further developing NATO-Ukraine cooperation.

Opening the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, NATO's Secretary General underscored the importance of the NATO-Ukraine Distinctive Partnership for the Allies as well as for security in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond. "Ukraine has demonstrated time and again her capacity to serve as a leading exporter of security," he said, pointing to Ukraine's contributions to NATO-led peace-support operations and missions over the years. "But Ukraine has done more than cooperate with the North Atlantic Alliance to promote external security," he emphasised. "It has used the tools of the Distinctive Partnership to benefit from Allies' experience and expertise, and to advance the aspirations of the Ukrainian people to build a modern, democratic state, supported by capable, accountable defence and security institutions."

Prime Minister Yanukovich reassured the Allies that Ukraine remained committed to its strategy of

developing closer relations with NATO through ongoing cooperation under the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan and through the Intensified Dialogue on his country's membership aspirations and related reforms. However, whereas Ukraine's previous government had been pushing to join NATO's Membership Action Plan as soon as possible, Yanukovich said the Ukrainian people was not yet ready for this step. He said the government would launch a major public information campaign to better explain NATO and its relationship with Ukraine, so as to prepare the way for a future referendum on NATO membership.

Summing up the morning's discussions to journalists afterwards, the NATO Secretary General said that "the prime minister and the NATO ambassadors very much agreed that the Distinctive Partnership, as we call it, between Ukraine and NATO is to the benefit of Ukraine and to the benefit of NATO."

The prime minister likewise pointed to the importance of maintaining close relations between Ukraine and the Alliance. "For Ukraine it is very important now to participate in the creation of the new system of European security and such an opportunity is given to us today with the Intensified Dialogue with NATO and cooperation with NATO. [...] There is no alternative today for the strategy that Ukraine has chosen in its relations with NATO. We understand very well that existing dangers such as terrorism needs [...] the efforts of all the countries of the world." He also

confirmed that the defence and security reforms that Ukraine has launched, with the support of NATO, would be continued and that “the necessary financing will be there.”

When questioned about whether Ukraine would apply for a Membership Action Plan, he explained that “because of the political situation in Ukraine, we will now have to take a pause, but the time will come when the decision will be made.” As to when a referendum on NATO membership could be held, he said that “time will show” and that the country would be ready only when political and economic reforms have been carried out in Ukraine, raising the standard of living and increasing people's well-being.

High-level defence consultations

The fifth informal high-level NATO-Ukraine Consultations took place in Sintra, Portugal, on 5 October. The consultations addressed one of the most important activities on the NATO-Ukraine agenda, namely cooperation in assisting Ukraine to transform its security and defence sectors into democratically controlled and accountable mechanisms that respond to today's security threats and challenges. Views were also exchanged on the nature of 21st century threats, and how best to adapt defence policy and security structures to address them.

Defence ministers and senior officials from Ukraine and NATO countries took part in the discussions. A keynote speech was given by Lech Walesa, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, former President of Poland and former leader of the “Solidarity” movement. His address focused on the transformed political situation in Ukraine and in Central and Eastern Europe, and the place of Europe in a globalising world.

In his opening remarks, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer emphasised that “NATO-Ukraine relations remain high on NATO's agenda, and Allies remain keen to see continuity in Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration policy and implementation of reform. [...] NATO stands ready to continue to assist Ukraine in managing its comprehensive reform programme, but progress will of course depend on the energy and commitment of the new Ukrainian government.”

In the first of three working sessions, participants focused on “Defence policy for an era of multi-dimensional threats”, addressing questions such as: What are the missions for which countries should be preparing their armed forces? What are the new types of operational requirements? What role do the armed forces have in managing internal security risks and in providing support

to civil authorities? In this session, the Ukraine defence minister also presented an overview of efforts undertaken by Ukraine's Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces to better align Ukrainian defence with Euro-Atlantic norms and standards.

The second session looked at “Non-conventional threats and risks to Ukraine's and Euro-Atlantic security.” In the 21st century, traditional military conflicts have to a large extent been replaced by risks such as terrorism, transnational criminal networks, environmental concerns, scarcity of resources, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and internal destabilisation. NATO Allies are transforming their security doctrines, structures and forces, just as Ukraine has launched a National Security Sector Review to transform its security sector, to respond better to today's challenges. Also, in today's world, security is indivisible: threats to security in distant places can impact the security of NATO member countries and Ukraine - national security is related to regional and even global security. It is in recognition of this that Ukraine is working together with NATO keeping the peace in Kosovo, supporting the operation in Afghanistan, providing airlift support in the context of NATO's assistance to the African Union's mission in Darfur, Sudan, and trainers for the NATO Training Mission in Iraq.

The third session examined “NATO-Ukraine cooperation in implementing defence and security sector reforms: progress achieved and priorities for the future”. Defence and security sector reform, and the achievement of a responsible, democratically accountable defence and security sector, is a central issue in Ukraine's transition to a fully-fledged democracy and to Euro-Atlantic integration. NATO-Ukraine cooperation in this area is contributing to the prospects for the success of Ukraine's democratic transformation. Substantial progress has been achieved in several key areas, while much remains to be done.

Two new initiatives were launched on the margins of the Sintra meeting in support of defence and security sector reform in Ukraine. A letter of intent was signed by 13 Allies and Ukraine expressing their support for the NATO-Ukraine Partnership Network for Civil Society Expertise Development (*see next item*). Also, following the high-level consultations, the inaugural meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Working Group on Civil and Democratic Control of the Intelligence Sector was held in the afternoon. Discussions focused on how to take work forward on supporting Ukraine in establishing effective oversight of its intelligence structures.



Thirteen Allies and Ukraine sign a letter of intent supporting the NATO-Ukraine Partnership Network for Civil Society Expertise Development

Partnership with civil society

The extent to which a government involves civil society organisations in defence and security affairs is a reflection of the philosophy behind the state and the quality of its democratic system. Since independence in 1991, Ukraine has developed an effective network of non-governmental organisations which specialise in international relations, and security and defence issues. NATO and the Allies are determined to assist Ukraine in facilitating the establishment of strategic partnerships between Ukraine's security institutions and civil society.

A letter of intent expressing support for the NATO-Ukraine Partnership Network for Civil Society Expertise Development was signed by the representatives of 13 Allies - Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States - and Ukraine, at the high-level NATO-Ukraine Consultations in Portugal on 5 October. Other NATO member countries may choose to join the initiative in future.

The participating countries declare their strong commitment to maximise the effectiveness of security and defence-related aspects of the Intensified Dialogue with Ukraine, and recognise the fundamental importance of assisting Ukraine in strengthening civil and democratic involvement in and control over security and defence structures. They are convinced that supporting the development of civil society expertise in defence and security issues could help consolidate the development of Ukrainian democracy, contribute to the effective involvement

of Ukraine's civil society in implementing defence and security sector reform in Ukraine, and advance the chances for reaching a national consensus on Ukraine's defence and security policy.

The Network's main objective is to increase interaction between civil society groups and security practitioners in NATO countries and Ukraine. It will provide a framework for open exchanges of views and a free flow of ideas about the roles of civil society in formulating and implementing national defence and security policies and reform processes.

The participating countries will offer practical support for the Network, such as organising and contributing to conferences, seminars, workshops, expert visits and video conferences on specific aspects of civil society involvement in defence and security affairs, and supporting Ukraine's efforts to develop public awareness campaigns on various aspects of Ukraine's defence and security policies. The Network could also participate in selected events organised under the NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defence Reform (JWGDR).

The Network will be established under the auspices of the JWGDR, and the NATO Information and Documentation Centre and the NATO Liaison Office in Ukraine will support the Network's activities. However, it will be up to the authorities as well as appropriate non-governmental organisations and other civil society groups in Ukraine to take the lead in taking this initiative forward. Ukraine has appointed the National Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine as the official contact point in security

sector institutions to facilitate the activities of the Network and the NATO-Ukraine Civil League has offered to play an active role in establishing the Network and promoting its activities among civil society groups in Ukraine.

Strategic airlift agreement ratified

On 5 October, the Ukrainian parliament ratified a memorandum of understanding between NATO and Ukraine on strategic airlift, which was originally signed in June 2004.

NATO lacks sufficient capability for outsize cargo. This is an essential capability in today's security environment, allowing forces to be moved quickly to theatres of operations, whenever and wherever required. Ukraine is one of the few nations that have these large, heavy-lift aircraft. Several Allies are, in fact, already chartering commercially owned Ukrainian Antonovs for the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan and in the framework of NATO's logistical assistance to the African Union's peacekeeping mission in Darfur, Sudan.

The ratification of this framework agreement and its entry into force represents a political commitment on the part of Ukraine to allow NATO to do business with Ukraine's Antonov Design Bureau, whenever the Alliance needs to lease heavy-lift cargo planes. By doing so, Ukraine has solidified its commercial ties with NATO armed forces, becoming a preferred partner for the millions of dollars spent each year by the Alliance to lease such airlift. This is but one example of how working with NATO can bring economic benefits to Ukrainians.



The Allies regularly charter commercially owned Ukrainian Antonovs to transport cargo in the context of NATO operations and missions



Photo by Joris van Boven

Ukraine hosts an exercise to provide interoperability training



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Ukraine hosts exercise

Exercise Cooperative Marlin 2006 - a command post exercise aimed at providing interoperability training to NATO's partner countries - was held at Sevastopol, Ukraine, from 19 to 28 September under the responsibility of the NATO's Maritime Component Command based at Northwood, the United Kingdom.

Military personnel from eight NATO member countries (Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Turkey and the United States), four Partnership for Peace countries (Albania, Croatia, Finland and Ukraine) and one Mediterranean Dialogue country (Israel) took part in the exercise. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which take part in NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, sent observers.

The exercise educated staff from partner countries in Alliance procedures and concepts to enhance mutual understanding and interoperability. After a week-long study period, participants applied NATO procedures in a fictitious crisis-response scenario, during the tactical phase of the exercise. The theoretical training provided in this exercise will be followed up in next year's annual live maritime exercise, Cooperative Mako.

NATO-Ukraine News aims to highlight different aspects of NATO's cooperation with Ukraine. It is based on *Novyny NATO*, a quarterly newsletter for audiences in Ukraine, which is published in both Ukrainian and Russian versions.

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Further information on NATO-Ukraine relations is available at:

(in English) www.nato.int/issues/nato-ukraine

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In Ukraine, further information and publications are available from:

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