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NATO AFTER ISTANBUL

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Expanding Operations, Improving Capabilities, Enhancing Cooperation

The Istanbul Summit that took place on 28 and 29 June 2004 was a milestone for NATO. Heads of State and Government of NATO's 26 member countries gathered for the first time after the Alliance's fifth and largest round of enlargement. In the Turkish city that connects two continents, Allied leaders reinforced the vital transatlantic link and built bridges of cooperation to other regions. They decided to expand the scope and nature of Allied operations; took measures to continue improving Alliance capabilities; and endorsed initiatives to enhance relations with existing partners and forge relations with new ones. In this way, the Alliance has demonstrated – once again – its capacity to adapt to meet challenges that are very different from those faced in the first decades of its existence.

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The Istanbul package takes forward the transformation process that was set in motion at the Alliance's 2002 Prague Summit. It also reinforces the importance of security cooperation between Europe and North America and the Allies' commitment to maintain NATO – the embodiment of the transatlantic link – as their central institution for collective defence, security consultation as well as crisis management and multinational military actions.

Expanding Operations

The geographic extent of NATO's operations best illustrates how far the Alliance has come since the Prague Summit. In addition to ongoing missions in the former Yugoslavia, the Alliance is running major operations in the Mediterranean and in Afghanistan and assisting the multinational division led by Poland to provide security in south-central Iraq. In Istanbul, Allied leaders took important decisions related to the future of these missions. In response to increased threats posed by international terrorism, NATO has also begun helping provide security during major public events and on other important occasions. During the Istanbul Summit, for example, it was helping Portuguese authorities provide security at the European Football Championships. NATO will also be helping Greek authorities provide security for the Athens Olympics.

Aiding Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, where NATO has led the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) since August 2003, Allied leaders agreed to continue to expand NATO's presence in the country through the establishment of additional Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). These are teams of international civilian and military personnel working in Afghanistan's provinces to extend the authority of the central government and facilitate development and reconstruction. In addition to providing security in and around Kabul, the Afghan capital, and supporting a German-led PRT in Kunduz, NATO announced that it would soon take responsibility for four additional PRTs – the UK-led PRTs in Mazar-e-Sharif and Maimana, the German-led PRT in Feyzabad and the Dutch-led PRT in Baghlan.

In addition to these five PRTs, NATO is establishing a logistics support base near Mazar-e-Sharif and temporary "satellite" presences in Sar-e-Pol, Samangan and Sherberghan. In this way, ISAF will be able to help provide security in nine Afghan provinces. Its area of operations will cover some 3,600 square kilometres in and around Kabul and approximately 185,000 square kilometres in the north of the country. The Alliance is also in the process of filling the requirements for the expansion of ISAF to the west, with a view to establishing new PRTs,

as well as incorporating existing PRTs, currently under the command of the separate US-led Operation *Enduring Freedom*.

NATO will also deploy extra troops in support of the electoral process in the run-up to and during elections, which are scheduled for autumn 2004. Each ISAF-led PRT is to be temporarily reinforced by an additional infantry company (about 100 extra troops). In addition, NATO will deploy a quick reaction force of up to 1,000 troops. Further troops will be put on high readiness for deployment to the area if required.

Increasing involvement in Iraq

On the opening day of the Summit, sovereignty in Iraq was formally transferred to an Interim Government. NATO leaders agreed to assist the new Iraqi Interim Government with the training of its security forces and tasked the North Atlantic Council to develop ways to implement this decision. This was in response to a request from the Iraqi Interim Government and followed unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1546, asking international and regional organisations to contribute assistance to the Multinational Force in Iraq. By training Iraqi security forces and helping develop Iraqi security institutions, NATO will be helping hasten the day that foreign forces will no longer be required in the country.

Evolving engagement in the former Yugoslavia

The nature of NATO's engagement in the former Yugoslavia is changing, though its commitment to long-term stability throughout Southeastern Europe remains as strong as ever. The Alliance is bringing its mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina – the first peacekeeping operation in its history – to a conclusion at the end of 2004. This follows a nine-year military deployment in the country, during which time the numbers of troops deployed were progressively reduced as Bosnia and Herzegovina emerged from conflict and a peace process gradually took root. Some 60,000 troops were deployed in December 1995. Today the force totals approximately 7,000.

The European Union will deploy a new force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which will benefit from ongoing NATO support in accordance with

arrangements made between the two organisations. The Alliance will maintain a military headquarters in the country to assist in areas such as defence reform, counter-terrorist activities and the pursuit of war crimes suspects. In Kosovo, NATO will also retain a robust military presence in the form of the Kosovo Force or KFOR to enhance security in the province and promote the political process.

Improving Capabilities

Since the 2002 Prague Summit, NATO has made great progress transforming the Alliance's military capabilities. It has streamlined the Command Structure and created an Allied Command Transformation. In accordance with other objectives defined at Prague, the NATO Multinational Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Battalion is now fully operational and the NATO Response Force will achieve an initial operational capability later in 2004. In addition, implementation of the Prague Capabilities Commitment is progressing with multinational projects aimed at enhancing military capabilities. Significant advances have been made in strategic sea- and airlift, air-to-air refuelling and with regard to the Alliance's Ground Surveillance system. But military transformation is a long-term endeavour that must continue if NATO is to be able to carry out the full range of its missions, including combating the threats posed by terrorism, failed states and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Making capabilities more operational

NATO leaders endorsed measures aimed at improving the Alliance's ability to take on operations whenever and wherever necessary. They approved high-level political "usability" targets, by which countries are committed to be able at all times to deploy and sustain larger proportions of their forces on Alliance operations. These commitments will help to ensure that the Alliance has a permanently available pool of assets and forces that can be deployed on missions. NATO leaders also endorsed changes to NATO's defence-planning and force-generation processes, designed to link the political agreement to launch an operation to the provision of the forces needed to carry it

out. The Alliance's long-term defence-planning process will be made more flexible, with the aim of helping member countries generate forces that can reach further, react faster and thus take on the full range of missions.

Combating terrorism

NATO leaders increased the Alliance's anti-terrorism efforts with an agreement to improve intelligence sharing and develop new, high-tech defences against terrorist attacks. Allies committed themselves to improve intelligence sharing through a review of current intelligence structures at NATO and through the Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit at NATO Headquarters in Brussels. This Unit, which was created after the terrorist attacks against the United States of 11 September 2001, has now become permanent and will analyse general terrorist threats, as well as those more specifically aimed at NATO.

The Alliance stands ready to assist any member country in dealing with terrorist threats or the consequences of terrorist attacks. NATO's AWACS early warning radar aircraft and Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Defence Battalion can be made available to any member country requesting such assistance. NATO leaders also agreed to develop a package of high-tech capabilities to protect both civilians and military forces from terrorist attacks. These include defences against weapons of mass destruction; protection of wide-body aircraft against shoulder-launched missiles; protection of helicopters from ground threats; protection of harbours and vessels; defences against improvised explosive devices; and improved detection of mines.

Enhancing Cooperation

NATO's Partnership policies have been one of the Alliance's great post-Cold War successes. During the past 14 years, these policies have been steadily extended with a view to building ever closer and more effective relationships with a wide variety of countries and international institutions. This includes Partners in the Euro-Atlantic area, countries in the wider Mediterranean region, Russia and Ukraine, as well as the

European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations. These policies have paved the way for NATO membership for countries seeking to join the Alliance, for Partner participation in NATO-led operations and for fruitful practical cooperation between NATO and specific countries and organisations. In Istanbul, NATO leaders took the Alliance's Partnership policies up another level with a series of far-reaching and innovative initiatives.

Deepening Partner relations

The balance between Partners and Allies in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council changed when seven Partners formally became Allies in March of this year. For the first time, NATO now has more members (26) than Partners (20) and the remaining Partners are a more diverse group of countries. In order to deepen relations with Partners, Allied leaders agreed to provide increased opportunities for them to contribute to NATO-led operations, including giving them an early say in the decision-shaping process and providing additional help to reform their militaries in line with NATO's own evolving operational roles and capabilities. The Allies also launched a Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building to assist Partners build democratically responsible defence institutions. And they increased the Alliance focus on the Caucasus and Central Asia by agreeing to appoint a special representative for the two regions as well as assigning two liaison officers.

Extending relations with Southeastern Europe

Allied leaders looked forward to welcoming both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro into the Partnership for Peace (PfP). However, they also made it clear that both countries had yet to fulfil NATO's conditions for PfP membership. These include full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and, in the case of Serbia and Montenegro, dropping the case against several NATO members at the International Court of Justice. To help both countries achieve PfP membership, the Alliance will include them in selected PfP activities. NATO will also appoint a Contact Point Embassy from among the existing Allied embassies in Sarajevo to help increase understanding of NATO in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Istanbul Summit was the first attended by leaders of the seven new Alliance members – Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia – since their accession in March 2004. Allied leaders made clear that NATO's door remains open to new members and welcomed progress towards membership made by Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* in the framework of the Membership Action Plan. They also asked NATO foreign ministers to review aspirants' progress and report on it in advance of the next Summit at which time potential new memberships will be reviewed.

Developing the Mediterranean Dialogue


NATO leaders invited the seven countries – Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia – participating in the Alliance's Mediterranean Dialogue to establish a more ambitious and expanded partnership. This offer is based on the principle of joint ownership. The Mediterranean Dialogue has contributed to confidence-building and cooperation between NATO and the seven participating countries since its creation in 1994. The focus of the new partnership is on making an enhanced contribution to regional security and stability through stronger practical cooperation, while continuing to complement other international efforts. This includes enhancing the Dialogue's political dimension, achieving interoperability, cooperating in the field of border security, developing defence reform and contributing to the fight against terrorism.

Launching the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

Alliance leaders also reached out to the broader region of the Middle East by launching the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. This initiative, which seeks to promote practical cooperation with interested countries, starting with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, aims at enhancing security and stability through a new transatlantic engagement with the region. It offers tailored advice on defence reform, defence budgeting, defence planning and civil-military relations, promoting military-to-military cooperation to contribute to interoperability, fighting terrorism through information sharing and maritime cooperation, addressing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means; and fighting illegal trafficking.



Beyond Istanbul



In the 19 months between the Prague and Istanbul Summits, NATO made substantial progress in transforming itself to meet the security threats of the 21st century. The Alliance also became increasingly involved in operations beyond its traditional area of responsibility. The package of measures and initiatives agreed in Istanbul amount to an ambitious and concerted Allied response to today's security challenges and provide Europe and North America with a platform for cooperation in addressing them. As such, they are critical to future security in both the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond.

* Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.



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