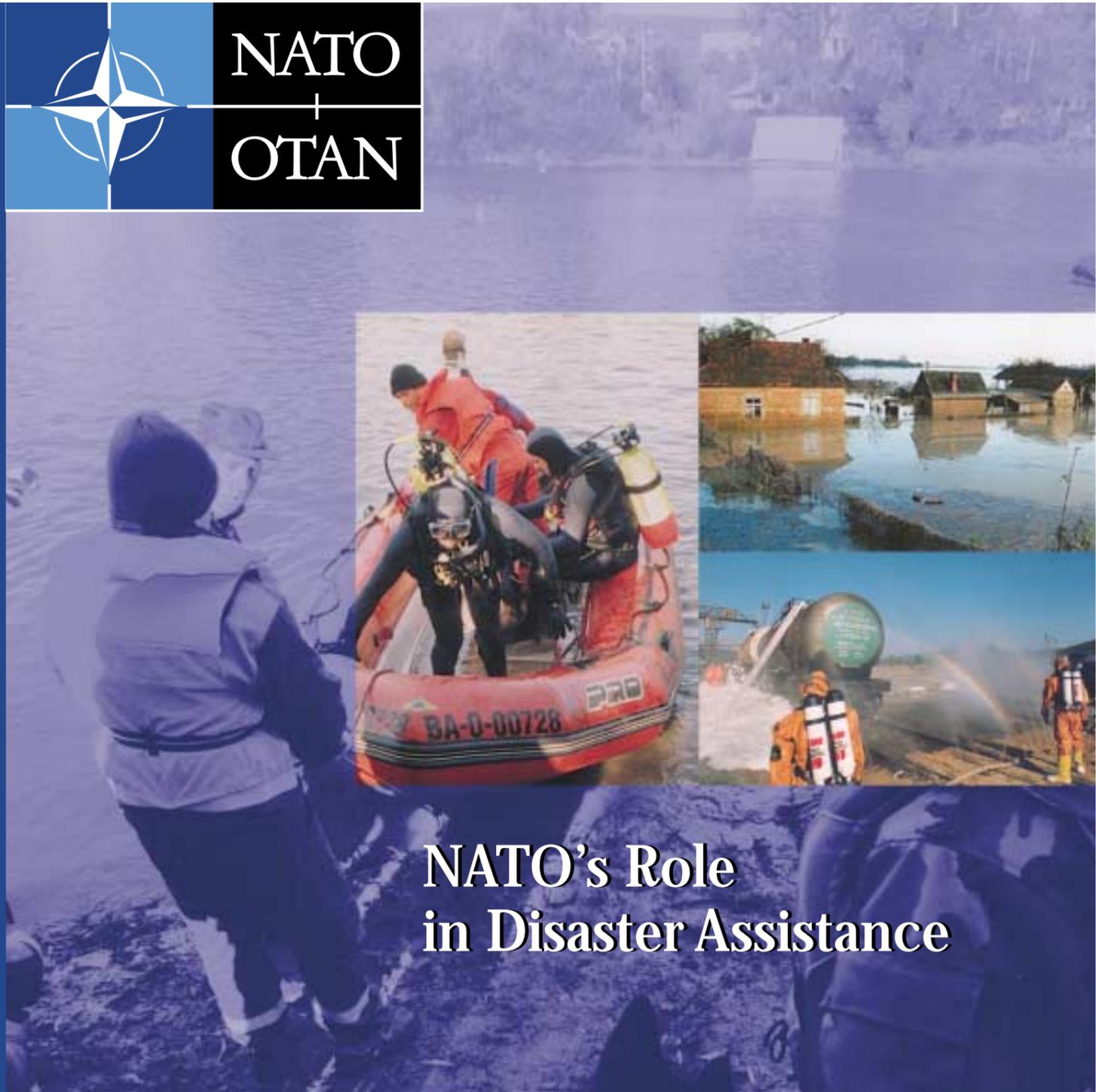




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1352/01 NATO GRAPHIC STUDIO



NATO's Role in Disaster Assistance

**NATO's Role
in Disaster
Assistance**

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- Second Edition -

First Edition Published May 2000

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1 Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

Introduction

NATO's involvement in international disaster assistance has a long history. Let's trace its evolution. Since the creation of the Alliance in 1949, NATO has always placed great emphasis on protection of the population. Faced with potential threat of war which might involve nuclear weapons, the Alliance began to develop various measures in the field of civil protection. Accordingly, in 1951, NATO established the Civil Defence Committee¹ to oversee efforts to provide for the protection of our populations.

It soon became apparent that the capabilities to protect our populations against the effects of war could also be used to protect them against the effects of disasters. As early as 1953, following disastrous North Sea floods, NATO had an agreed disaster assistance scheme. By 1958, the North Atlantic Council had established procedures for NATO coordination of assistance between member countries in case of disasters. Subsequently modified, these procedures remained in effect until May 1995, when they were replaced by revised procedures, which also became applicable to Partner countries.

1 In 1995, the Civil Defence Committee was renamed to Civil Protection Committee

Recognizing the importance of enhanced international cooperation in the field of disaster relief, on 17th December 1997, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in Ministerial Session endorsed a proposal to create, as a support and complement to the United Nations, a Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Capability, and tasked the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPC) with Cooperation Partners to prepare a more detailed report for the May 1998 EAPC Ministerial. The resultant EAPC Policy on “Enhanced Practical Cooperation in International Disaster Relief” was agreed by EAPC Foreign Ministers on 29th May 1998 .

NATO Disaster Assistance

In the 1950's, there were a number of cases where NATO was utilised to coordinate assistance in response to earthquakes, floods and other disasters. Fortunately, with improvements in Disaster Preparedness, by the 1960's there were relatively few major disasters in Alliance member countries which exceeded national capabilities and which required NATO coordination or assistance. For instance, the Arno floods which devastated Florence and Pisa in 1966 brought a response from several NATO countries. However, as much as the damage was to Italy's and the world artistic patrimony, the assistance needed was more of a technical and artistic nature than humanitarian. Nevertheless, a number of NATO countries responded by providing that humanitarian assistance which was needed (tents, helicopters, food and medicine), primarily on a bilateral basis.

In 1971, NATO's procedures for the co-ordination of disaster assistance were revised, improving the institutional relationships between NATO and international humanitarian organizations. Those procedures were put to use in September 1975 in



connection with an earthquake in South East Turkey when NATO's procedures were used to determine the type of assistance required (i.e. ambulances, field kitchens, trucks, tents, electric generators, foodstuffs and specified types of medicine). This information was provided to the NATO member countries via NATO's communications system. However, regarding responses, it was

emphasised that assistance offered should be made via the Red Crescent Society.

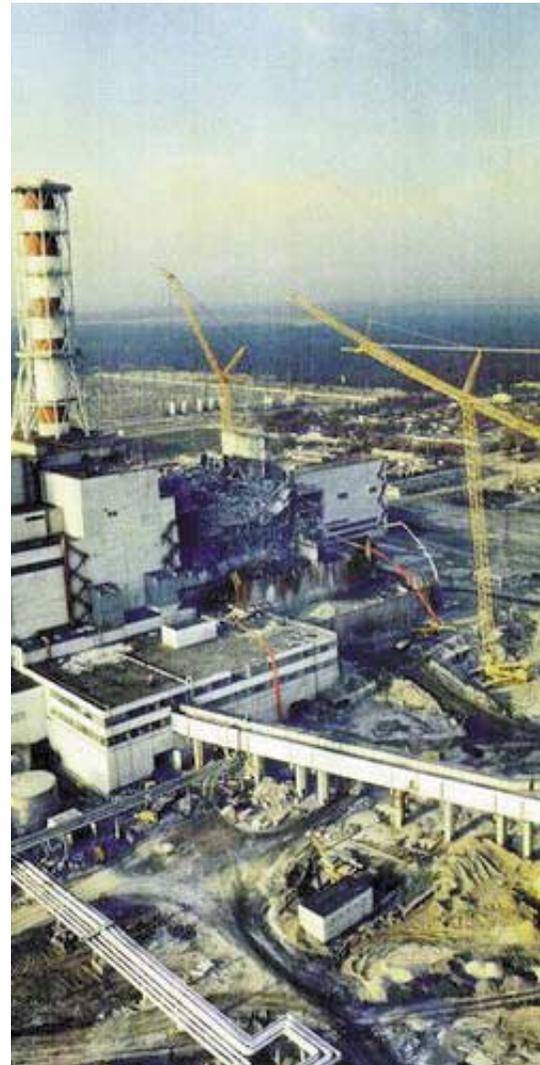
More coordinated NATO involvement took place in connection with an earthquake in Italy, May, 1976. On that occasion, the Italian authorities disseminated their list of requirement for external assistance via NATO, and NATO coordinated the very substantial assistance provided by Canada, France, the Netherlands and the USA, marrying up offers of supplies from one country with offers of transportation from another.



The Chernobyl Accident

For many years thereafter no use was made of NATO's coordinating ability. The main reason was the significant improvement in national disaster response capabilities which had diminished the need for external assistance by other NATO member countries. In fact, NATO was more conspicuous by its absence or lack of involvement in such major disasters as the Chernobyl nuclear accident in April 1986 and the Armenian earthquake in December 1988.

The Chernobyl disaster, by its nature and extent of its horrors, demonstrated that disasters know no international boundaries. Although much of Europe east and west was affected, the effects within the NATO countries were relatively limited. Within the former Soviet Union the impact was, of course, much greater.



Because of the magnitude of this disaster and its far-reaching effects, western nations including NATO member countries responded with medical assistance. However, involvement of NATO was completely out of the question. NATO was not even involved in the coordination of measures taken by NATO member countries. The Cold war had not yet ended. Moreover, within NATO there was some opinion that our mandate at that time was limited to natural disasters.

The Earthquakes in Armenia and Kyrgyz Republic

In December 1988, the massive Armenian earthquake occurred. Although the thaw in East West relations had started and there was no question about the nature of the disaster or the requirement for humanitarian assistance, there was the fear that an “aggressive” NATO offer of assistance could easily have been seen as propaganda. It is noteworthy, however, that most NATO members sent assistance to Armenia on a bilateral basis. Sadly, it is also noteworthy that the assistance could have been far more effective had it been properly coordinated.



In the autumn of 1992, there was a massive earthquake in the Kyrgyz Republic and the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization² contacted NATO to request assistance. However, NATO could not respond, as NATO could act only out-of-area if requested to do so by a NATO country. Eventually, Turkey contacted NATO on behalf of the Kyrgyz Republic and NATO used its procedures with Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States responding. Russia and Kazakhstan also provided assistance, but without any NATO coordination.

2 Later replaced by the UN - Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-DHA) which was renamed to UN-Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) on 1st January 1998

The United Nations Military and Civil Defence Assets Project

The involvement in the humanitarian aid activity also introduced NATO to a new society, that of the international humanitarian organizations. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) were among the first new partners for NATO. However, a much deeper, and more significant involvement started in 1992 at the initiative of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-DHA). On the basis of a General Assembly resolution (45/221 of 21st December 1990), DHA had initiated a project concerning the use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) in disaster relief and DHA wanted NATO's cooperation in the development of this MCDA project.

The basic philosophy in the MCDA project was that recent history had provided excellent examples of disaster relief being provided by military forces. It was felt that the end of the Cold War made it possible to plan for much wider use of such national assets as those resting with the military and the civil defence, not only on a bilateral or multilateral, but on a truly international basis.

From the very beginning, NATO willingly agreed to participate in the project. The reason was not, as some members of the media seemed to assume, that NATO was desperately looking for new tasks, nor that NATO wanted to clean up its image as a humanitarian organization. NATO is not an humanitarian organization, NATO is an organization for peace, security and stability. However, in the view of NATO, it was entirely in line with the purposes of peace, security and stability to use all possible resources to bring relief to victims of disaster, and to do so in cooperation with the World Community, including NATO's cooperation partners in Central and Eastern Europe.

As a first step, NATO agreed to host a workshop, organized and sponsored by DHA Geneva and the IFRC. The workshop took place in Brussels in December 1992, with participants from 33 different nations and 20 international organizations. Working groups were established and in early 1994 "Guidelines on the Use of MCDA in Disaster Relief" were noted at a conference in Oslo.

In the meantime, NATO and DHA Geneva shared the view that cooperation between them in case of a disaster need not to wait the finalisation of the work in the MCDA project. In December 1992, after the conclusion of the Workshop, NATO's Foreign Ministers issued new Ministerial Guidance for Civil Emergency Planning in which they directed that NATO should be prepared to apply its coordinating procedures also in case of disaster outside NATO's boundaries, if requested to do so by a relevant international organization (UN-DHA, IFRC, etc.)

Disaster Assistance outside NATO's boundaries

The original procedures for NATO Cooperation for Disaster Assistance in Peacetime established in 1953, had no provisions to respond to a request from a non-NATO country. As mentioned above, in December 1992, the North Atlantic Council agreed that, the standing operating procedures for NATO cooperation in peacetime disaster relief remain valid. However, if requested to do so by a relevant international organization, NATO should be ready to employ these procedures also in case of a disaster outside NATO's boundaries.

Consequently, the NATO Policy on Disaster Assistance in Peacetime was revised, and the following, modalities for assistance to NATO-member countries were agreed:

- If a country outside the Alliance requires assistance, arrangements normally would be a matter between the assisting member country and the stricken country. However, the assisting member country, having obtained information on the requirements of the stricken country, should communicate this information and information on the assistance given to the member countries and the Secretary General through the Alliance-wide communications systems; and

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- Similarly, an international organization acting with the consent of a stricken country outside the Alliance may contact the Secretary General requesting assistance. In such cases the Secretary General will activate the necessary elements of the International Staff to take steps to urgently promote the necessary assistance.

The UN is the prime focal point for the coordination of international disaster relief operations. In recent years, the UN has taken a number of actions to increase its leadership and primary coordinating rôle. The setting up of the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO), its subsequent replacement by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNHDA), and the establishment of the post of Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs were designed to strengthen and improve collective efforts of the international community in disaster assistance. The General Assembly's call for arrangements between the UN and interested governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to enable the UN to have greater access to their emergency relief capacities, including personnel and logistic support, was designed to further strengthen the lead rôle of the UN in this field.

In September of 1994, Moldova was struck by flooding following extensive rainfall. The government of Moldova asked NATO for assistance. But NATO could not act immediately, because the procedures at that moment did not allow for direct assistance to our new partner countries. NATO could only act after a member nation of the Alliance asked assistance on behalf of Moldova.

Cooperation with the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and the Partnership for Peace Countries

The flooding in Moldova was reason for a fundamental review of the NATO policy for disaster assistance now taking into account the modalities for cooperation with, and assistance to, North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and Partnership for Peace (PfP) countries. On the 12th May 1995, the North Atlantic Council approved this revised Policy for Disaster Assistance in Peacetime which was noted on the 29th May 1995 by the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in Ministerial Session.

Fundamental principles of this new NATO Policy on Disaster Assistance in Peacetime

- The overriding decision on whether or not to respond to a request to assist in disaster relief rests with the individual governments of NATO's member countries; this will normally be in response to an approach from the government of the stricken country, the UN or other relevant organization.
- NATO will not seek to create an independent humanitarian rôle for itself on its own account, nor will NATO insert itself as another layer in the organization of international disaster relief.

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- The Alliance should not duplicate or cut across the work of other international organizations set up specifically to alleviate disasters.
 - Civil assets remain at all times under national control. The standard practice for the relevant international organizations is to consult with nations and simultaneously to keep NATO informed of their approach to capitals.

In April 1997, at a meeting of the NATO Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPC), held in Moscow, the Russian Federation proposed to enhance Practical Cooperation in the Field of International Disaster Relief. Recognizing the importance of enhanced international cooperation in the field of disaster relief, on 17th December 1997, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in Ministerial Session endorsed a proposal to create a Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Capability, which called for the establishment of a Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) and Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit (EADRU).

So much for the history of this policy, it is now the time to explain the policy itself.



The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Policy on Practical Cooperation in the Field of International Disaster Relief

Based on the Russian proposal for “Enhanced Practical Cooperation in the Field of International Disaster Relief” and the “NATO Policy for Disaster Assistance in Peacetime”, the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee, in EAPC format, developed the policy for the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Capability, including the modalities of a Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) at NATO’s Headquarters and the non-standing Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit (EADRU). This EADRU comprises a mix of national elements volunteered by EAPC Members. The EADRU can be deployed where appropriate in the event of a major emergency in an EAPC member country. The establishment of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Capability was endorsed by EAPC Ministers on 29th May 1998. The EADRCC was inaugurated on 3rd June 1998.

The following basic principles apply to the EAPC Policy:

- the stricken country remains the responsible party for disaster management;
- the United Nations retains the primary rôle in the coordination of international

disaster relief operations, therefore the EADRCC will not duplicate the United Nations rôle within EAPC area but complement and provide additional support to UN; and

- the EADRCC rôle within the EAPC area be one of coordination rather than direction. In the case of a disaster requiring international assistance, it will remain for individual nations to decide whether to provide assistance and, if so, whether to do so through the EADRU or by providing assistance directly to the stricken country.

The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre

The establishment of the EADRCC was endorsed by EAPC Ministers on 29th May 1998, and it was inaugurated on 3rd June 1998, jointly by NATO's Secretary General, the Russian ambassador to NATO and a Representative from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The centre is located in the V building at the NATO Headquarters.



The EADRCC is headed by the Director Civil Emergency Planning with additional staff seconded by NATO and Partner Countries. In case of a major disaster, the Centre can be augmented with personnel from other divisions of NATO's International Staff, or experts from EAPC capitals. The EADRCC also has a permanent liaison officer from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

The responsibilities of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre, are:

- In close consultation with UN-OCHA, to coordinate, the responses of EAPC countries, to disasters occurring in the EAPC area;
- To act as the focal point for information sharing among EAPC countries, on request for disaster; and
- To maintain close liaison with UN-OCHA and the European Union as well as other organizations involved in international disaster response.

Day to day functions include:

- In close coordination with the United Nations Military and Civil Defence Unit (MCDU), to maintain a list of national civil and military elements, for which EAPC members have indicated potential availability as well as conditions for their participation in the EADRU;
- To facilitate the speedy deployment of the EADRU in an actual disaster, taking into consideration existing and developing bilateral and/or multilateral arrangements (this could include issues such as visas, border crossing, transit agreements, custom clearance, status of personnel, etc.);
- To promote and contribute to interoperability through joint training and exercises, taking into account existing United Nations programmes; and

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- To coordinate with the EAPC members and other relevant international organizations the time and agenda of international exercises and to prepare for approval by the EAPC an international exercise programme for the EADRU.

Although the EAPC policy provided the basic procedural arrangements, more detailed procedures for the EADRCC and EADRU needed to be developed as a first priority. Therefore, “Standard Operating Procedures for the EADRCC” and “Procedures for the Use of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit in International Disaster Relief” were prepared. These procedures will be updated on a regular basis based on experience gained in actual operations and/or exercises.

Since the inauguration of the EADRCC, the centre has been involved in a number of major operations.

Ukrainian Floods 1998

On 6 November 1998, as a result of continuous heavy rain precipitation occurred over the first days of the month, the river Tisa and some of its tributaries in the west region of Ukraine overflowed. 400.000 people in 120 small towns, villages and communities were affected, 17 people died and 21.000 were evacuated, 2.200 houses were destroyed and 2.000 were seriously damaged and about 100.000 hectares of agricultural land were submerged. On 9 November 1998, the Government of Ukraine requested international assistance from the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC). In accordance with the established procedures, the EADRCC immediately consulted with the United



Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) on the action to be taken, and promulgated an Urgent Disaster Assistance Request to all EAPC capitals. Due to the fact that, during the period, UN-OCHA personnel resources were severely strained because of the simultaneous involvement of that organization in dealing with the consequences of hurricane “Mitch” in Central America, the EADRCC coordinated international relief efforts on behalf of Ukraine, acted as the focal point for information sharing on requirements for assistance and relief assistance provided by EAPC countries, and coordinated various actions.

The EADRCC monitored the Ukraine situation on a on-going basis keeping the UN-OCHA, EAPC capitals and EAPC Delegations at NATO Headquarters informed at all times of the evolution of events in the stricken country. In order to avoid any duplication of efforts, and as provided for in the Standing Operating Procedures, the EADRCC provided on a regular basis follow-up messages and updates of the situation in Ukraine, the remaining requirements for assistance, and the assistance provided so far.

In addition to the exchange of information on the situation in the stricken country, the EADRCC also promulgated a request for transportation of relief items stocked in Italy. After careful consideration of several options, it was concluded that the most feasible option was to use sea transportation and the relief items were delivered to the port of Odessa (Ukraine).

The following EAPC countries assisted Ukraine in this particular disaster:
Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, United States.

The Kosovo Refugee Crisis 1998-1999

Almost immediately after the inauguration of the EADRCC on 3rd June 1998, the centre was called upon to lend its support to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in coping with the emerging humanitarian crisis in and around Kosovo.

On 5th June 1998, the EADRCC received a request from UNHCR to assist it by moving urgently needed relief items to Albania in response to the initial influx of refugees from Kosovo. In response to this request the EADRCC arranged for 16 flights to airlift 165 tons of relief items from Sarajevo to Tirana, using Hercules C-130's offered by both Belgium and Norway.

When the immediate emergency situation was over, the EADRCC maintained continuous contacts with UNHCR regarding the evolving crisis in and around Kosovo. In addition, several trips were made to both Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia³ in order to develop a better understanding of the crisis.

3 Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

At the same time, the EADRCC also began to build a good working relationship with its counterparts in UNHCR - in Tirana, Skopje, Brussels and at UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva.

With the beginning of the NATO Air Campaign on 24th March 1999 and the Serbian programme of forced expulsions of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians, the EADRCC functions intensified and broadened along four major areas of activity:

- Humanitarian focal point for all EAPC nations;
- Assistance Requests and offers;
- Support for UNHCR; and
- Relationship with NATO bodies, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and other organizations.



Humanitarian Focal Point

One of the major EADRCC responsibilities is to serve as focal point for information sharing. In order to effectively monitor the evolution of the humanitarian situation in Kosovo and neighbouring countries, which was of political and humanitarian importance to EAPC nations, the EADRCC had to develop links to new sources of information, as well as to reconcile conflicting and inadequate information in order to be able to present timely and accurate overviews.

The EADRCC humanitarian focal point played a special rôle with Partner countries, particularly Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia³. Unlike NATO countries which had the opportunity to raise specific questions in the daily Council meetings, Partner countries could, and often did, take advantage of visiting the EADRCC to get a better understanding of the humanitarian situation or to obtain specific information. In addition, for the two front line states of Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia³, the EADRCC was able to address specific issues of concern to them and, as a humanitarian focal point, focus particular attention to such concerns. This included articulating their need for specific relief items, the importance of establishing a humanitarian safety valve through emigration to third countries, the opportunity to procure needed supplies from local vendors. In doing so, the EADRCC attempted to amplify the humanitarian concerns of the two nations most affected and to act on their behalf as interlocutor with other NATO and non-NATO bodies.

3 Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

Assistance Request and Offers

The second major function of the EADRCC in an emergency is to respond to requests for assistance from the stricken nations and/or from relevant international organizations. This is closely related to and a logical follow-on to serving as the humanitarian focal point. In the course of describing the humanitarian situation and particular problems, EADRCC reports often identified the assistance being sought. In addition, the EADRCC issued specific requests for assistance which were then followed up with capitals or delegations at NATO. To avoid duplication, all requests and subsequent offers of assistance were handled in exactly the same manner as if they had resulted from a natural or technological disaster. The only difference is that instead of OCHA, they were always coordinated with UNHCR which had the responsibility for coordinating the overall international refugee effort.

Regretfully, it is not possible to fully and accurately measure EADRCC performance in response to requests for assistance. The EADRCC contacted the appropriate points of contact in EAPC countries in what constituted a follow-up effort to obtain assistance. The assistance might have been provided in response to the earlier UNHCR request, in response to the EADRCC, or possibly in response to requests from embassies. As EADRCC requests for assistance provided the point of contact in UNHCR, it is possible that nations responding to an EADRCC request would have taken direct contact with UNHCR which had the overall international coordination responsibility and which would at some stage need to be contacted anyhow. Only when the EADRCC was specifically informed by nations that the assistance was being sent in response to an EADRCC request was it possible to determine the effectiveness of the request.

Nevertheless, even by this more stringent criterion, the EADRCC had considerable success. Among the specific examples of assistance obtained through the EADRCC were:

- Airlift (three C130s and one A310 from three nations for multiple flights);
- Two helicopters for aid distribution;
- Cargo handling teams and equipment to support aid flights into Tirana;
- X-ray equipment for airport safety use;
- Medical supplies and equipment;
- Shoes and clothing;
- Telecommunications for refugees; and
- Tents for more than 20.000 people at a time when world supplies were thought to be exhausted.



In addition, the EADRCC, which was contacted by various non-EAPC countries offering assistance, successfully arranged to channel such assistance to other organizations whose mandates were not registered to EAPC nations. One such example was when the Government of Israel got in touch with the EADRCC offering to provide a fully staffed and equipped field hospital. After arrangements were made with appropriate officers in UNHCR, this facility was established in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Another example was when the United Arab Emirates approached the EADRCC, to seek advice on how they could help. Following discussions with the Albanian Government, it was agreed that the United Arab Emirates would repair the Kukes airfield. The added value of the EADRCC regarding assistance requests and offers is that additional relief items reached refugees in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia³.

Support for UNHCR

In addition to responding to requests for assistance from UNHCR, the EADRCC served as their point of entry into NATO. As explained by UN High Commissioner Ogata in her 3rd April 1999 letter to Secretary General Solana, for UNHCR it was important to retain the civil and humanitarian nature of the refugee relief cooperation.

In this respect, the EADRCC took the following initiatives:

- Brought together the major air clearance players (Eurocontrol, RAMCC, SHAPE, Refugee Support Coordination Centre-RSCC, Defence Support and the EADRCC)

which developed the set of procedures which were successfully used by UNHCR to coordinate priority humanitarian flights;

- Provided direct support to the UN Air Coordination Cell established at UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva by arranging to provide the majority of the civil air experts assigned to the UNACC;
- As requested by UNHCR, arranged for the airlift of humanitarian assistance as well as cargo handling teams and equipment ;
- Providing logistical advice on a range of transportation issues through the EADRCC transportation experts ; and
- Assisted UNHCR by articulating to Council and EAPC Permanent Representatives specific issues like:
 - Accelerating the acceptance of the refugees by NATO and Partner countries;
 - Establishment of refugee centres;
 - Reducing to a manageable level the large number of political or VIP flights into the region.

EADRCC Relationships

By developing and maintaining deconflicted and relatively comprehensive information on the humanitarian situation in and around Kosovo, international relief efforts and special problems, EADRCC assessments and inputs were utilised extensively throughout NATO Headquarters.

In the first days of the Kosovo crisis SHAPE established the Refugee Support Coordination Centre (RSCC). The RSCC's function was to assist the NATO chain of

command in providing timely military support to refugee relief efforts. However, to do so effectively the RSCC needed to be linked to the overall civil efforts. As a result, a close working relationship was established with the EADRCC with its rôle in the coordination of EAPC national efforts to provide humanitarian assistance.

A close pattern of civil-military cooperation was established covering activities such as air traffic management where both EADRCC and SHAPE provided civilian and military air traffic experts to the United Nations Air Coordination Cell (UNACC).

Other areas of civil-military cooperation including sharing information on Internally Displaced Persons in Kosovo, and most importantly in arranging the provision of a continuation of civil and military assistance to humanitarian aid efforts in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia³.

Finally, as set out in the Policy, the EADRCC also maintained liaison with external organizations such as the UNHCR, UN-OCHA, European Union, International Organization for Migration (IOM), World Food Programme (WFP), the UN (the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs and Special Balkans Envoys Bildt and Kukan), and other organizations (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank) involved in the international humanitarian effort.

Augmentation of the EADRCC

To cope with the increased activities necessitated a major adaptation of the EADRCC, its staffing and its internal working procedures. The EADRCC was augmented, initially by staff from NATO's Civil Emergency Planning Directorate. However, in order to cope with the increasing workload, additional augmentation was provided by nations (both transportation experts and civil protection experts with refugee experience), from CEP transportation experts and, eventually, from other NATO bodies. Most significantly, the EADRCC was reconfigured by establishing four functional desks (situation, assistance, transportation and general policy).

Turkey Earthquakes 1999

On 17th August 1999, the most devastating earthquake since the creation of the Alliance in 1949, hit the north-western part of Turkey. More than fifteen thousand people were killed and forty thousand injured in this disaster. In addition, more than 57.000 houses were severely damaged and Turkey suffered enormous economic losses.

On the 18th August 1999, Turkey appealed for assistance from EAPC countries through the EADRCC. Fourteen EADRCC Assistance Requests were circulated to EAPC nations. All NATO countries and 17 Partner countries responded to this urgent request for assistance. Throughout the emergency situation the EADRCC was in constant contact with the Turkish Crisis Centre, the United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, EAPC Capitals and Delegations in NATO Headquarters.

In particular, the contact with UN-OCHA was almost immediate and the EADRCC-UN-OCHA cooperation avoided duplication of efforts. Because of the excellent

cooperation with the UN and Turkish authorities, the EADRCC could keep EAPC Capitals informed of the situation, by distributing situation reports on a regular basis.



These reports also offered the opportunity to emphasise outstanding requirement for assistance and offers received from EAPC countries.

Almost three months later, a new earthquake struck Turkey on 12 November 1999. This earthquake measured 7.2 on the Richter Scale and its epicentre affected the town of Duzce,

approximately 170 km east of Istanbul, in the province of Bolu. This province had also been affected by the 17 August earthquake.

This earthquake affected more than 80.000 people. The disaster accounted for 750 fatal casualties and more than 5,000 injured people. The number of collapsed buildings or damaged beyond repair buildings was over 970 units.

Immediately after the EADRCC learned about the earthquake, the staff contacted UN-OCHA and the Turkish government. The EADRCC staff stayed in regular contact with the Prime Minister's Earthquake Crisis Centre in Ankara; the Turkish Delegation to NATO; UN-OCHA; the United Nations On-Site Operations

Coordination Centre (OSOCC), which was established in the affected area; and, the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination (UNDAC) Team.

The EADRCC responded by disseminating to the designated Points of Contacts in all EAPC countries requests for assistance from the Government of Turkey and OCHA. The most important assistance requirements were primarily accommodation of the thousands of people who lost their homes during the earthquake.

In total, 33 NATO and Partner countries reacted with generosity to the EADRCC's appeals by providing among other things Search and Rescue teams, winterised tents, sleeping bags, blankets, field hospitals, field kitchens, wood heater stoves, medical aid, winter clothing, water-sanitation equipment and post-traumatic stress assistance.

Romania and Hungary Floods 2000

Romania

In April 2000, unusual high temperatures caused quick melting of snow and the additional heavy rains resulted in the flooding of the hydrological basins of rivers in the north-western part of Romania. Sixteen of its 42 counties were affected.

A total of 1.150 persons were left homeless, 1.390 people were evacuated, 9 people died and 497 towns and villages were affected with 28 of them isolated. The total number of damaged houses was 4.185 and about 93.000 hectares of agricultural land were flooded. In addition, 735 bridges were left damaged and 14.6 km of dams needed repair.

The Romanian Government through its Civil protection Command appealed for international assistance through the EADRCC on 14 April 2000. The EADRCC immediately followed the normal procedures by contacting UN-OCHA and appealed

to all EAPC nations. In close cooperation with the Romanian authorities and with the countries providing aid, the Centre remained the focal point for information sharing issuing in total 6 situation reports.

The relief items requested by Romania included water purification equipment, engineering equipment for dam reconstruction, electrical power generators, vaccination, tents, sleeping kits, 1.000.000 sandbags and diesel fuel.

Response came from Denmark, France, Moldova, Poland, Slovenia by providing among others tents, blankets, field kitchens, mobile water purification equipment, bottled water, water tanks, food items, trucks, mattresses, sleeping bags and beds.

Hungary

During the same timeframe Hungary suffered heavy rain in the country's eastern and north-eastern areas along with a rise in temperature and consequent snow melting. A serious flood situation developed at the Tisza and Bodrog rivers with critical water levels affecting four of the 19 counties in the country. The soaking dikes had difficulty to hold the pressure of the increased water levels.

Consequently problematic drainage of water endangered houses in lower land and resulted in evacuation of beings and inaccessible farms.

On the 18 April, the government of Hungary through its Ministry of Interior, requested the EADRCC to inform EAPC nations about the situation and urgently

requested 2.000.000 sandbags. That same day the Centre circulated an urgent international appeal to the pre-identified Points of Contact for international disaster response in NATO and Partner countries. As the focal point for information sharing, the EADRCC circulated three situation reports and again liased closely with UN-OCHA, the Hungarian authorities and with the countries providing aid.

Within 24 hours several countries provided assistance; on this occasion, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United States. The response to the Hungarian request received an overwhelming response with 5.851.000 sandbags provided, more than 60% of the sandbags were delivered due to the EADRCC's efforts. On 20 April, Hungary informs the EADRCC that the requirement for sandbags had been met.



Forest Fires in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁴ 2000

On 15 August 2000, the EADRCC, through its Duty Officer, was contacted by the NATO Civilian Liaison Officer in Skopje on behalf of the government in Skopje to request EADRCC coordinated assistance to obtain helicopters and aircraft to assist in the fire-fighting in the eastern part of the country in the Delcevo area. Other basic equipment to fight forest fires was also requested.

There were 327 fires on a surface of 15.821 hectares, 286 of these were forest fires. The most affected areas were Skopje, Veles, Makedonski Brod, Strumica, Prilep, Gevgelija, Gostivar, Tetovo, Stip, Bitola, Delcevo, Pehcevo, Kocani, Kumanovo, Valandovo.

The Government utilised all its resources to cope with these forest fires. All regional centres for civil protection and regional fire fighting units were included in the process of fire fighting: one helicopter was provided by the army, 760 firemen, 47 inspectors for fire protection, 300 policemen, 200 people from Civil Protection, 672 soldiers, 200 from "Macedonian Forest".

The EADRCC circulated an urgent request for assistance and transmitted situation reports to EAPC capitals including further requirements for assistance and communication with capitals.

Helicopters were provided by Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Greece, Turkey and, through Kosovo Force (KFOR), by Germany; fire-fighting equipment from Denmark, Hungary, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway and Turkey. Additionally, Italy offered two CL 414 Canadair aircraft which were not utilised as by that time the situation in the country improved dramatically. In addition, Sweden provided a three-man team of fire-fighting specialists to train 100 forest fighters on how to use the equipment provided by them and also provided longer-term assistance by training fire-fighters.

Once more, the prompt reaction from all EAPC countries proved that the relationship between Allies and Partners is not just declarative, but on the contrary, it has been shown to be effective when it is most needed.



Extreme Weather Conditions in Ukraine and Moldova 2000

Ukraine

Severe weather conditions (icing and snowing) occurred in the last days of November and beginning of December 2000 in north-western Ukraine. The power supply of 4.977 settlements in 12 Oblasts (provinces) with a total population of 3.8 million inhabitants was disrupted. In addition, 20.931 power lines, 307 power transmission towers and poles, 3.420 tons of non-insulated cables and more than 10.000 insulators were damaged or destroyed. Six people died and 750 persons were injured. On 8 December 2000, the Ministry of Emergencies of Ukraine requested assistance from the EADRCC.

The most urgent needs were power transmission towers and poles, non-insulated cable and devices for assembling power lines. The EADRCC worked towards the facilitation of speedy assistance and, in this regard, it issued an urgent Disaster Assistance Request to all designated points of contact in the 46 EAPC capitals on 10 December 2000. This assistance request was followed up by a total of 8 Situation

reports. The response was that assistance was provided by the Russian Federation, Romania, the Czech Republic, Turkey, Germany, Belarus, Italy, Hungary.

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Moldova

Also, the northern parts of Moldova were, from 26 to 28 November 2000, severely hit by storms with heavy rains, snow and frost. In the worst affected areas, a layer of ice of about 1.5 cm covered tree branches, telephone and electricity cables. An estimated 2.6 million persons live in the affected areas.

The power supply of 465 settlements in 6 counties, representing 54% of the territory of the country in the north and central side of the Republic of Moldova with a total population of 2.6 million inhabitants was disrupted. These extreme weather conditions affected 3.402 km of power lines, 42.174 power transmission towers and poles, 6.995 communications lines, 2.715 communication poles. Due to the lack of electricity, hospitals, sewage pumping stations and boiler houses were severely hampered in their functioning. Also, 57.130 hectares of agricultural area and 56.720 ha of forest were affected. All available national resources were deployed to the affected area (approximately 1.515 experts and 280 units of equipment).

On the 11 December 2000, the EADRCC received a request for assistance from the Moldovan Department of Civil Protection and Emergencies. Immediately, the EADRCC issued an urgent request for assistance. The government of Moldova identified the following items as priority requirements for international assistance: medicines; electric generators, kitchen equipment, lanterns and heaters; diesel or kerosene; tools to cut metal cables; and, financial support to purchase relief items.

Assistance was provided by the Russian Federation, Romania, the Czech Republic, Turkey, Germany, Belarus, Italy and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.



Ukrainian Floods 2001

In March 2001, heavy rainfalls and annual melting of snow caused severe floods that affected mostly the western part of Ukraine along all major rivers of the Transcarpathian region). Historical heights of water levels were exceeded.

The number of fatalities reached nine persons as direct consequences of the flood situation, 245 settlements were flooded, communications were out in 59 settlements, and 13.768 persons had to be temporarily resettled. In addition, 1.548 buildings were destroyed, 32.286



buildings flooded and partially destroyed. A total of 22 settlements were without power supply, 5 settlements without gas supply, and approximately 561 km of roads and 9 km of railroad submerged.

Ukraine mobilised about 24.000 relief personnel with 1.910 units of equipment engaged in the efforts to support the affected population. Helicopters supported the evacuation of patients, transport of medical and food supplies and survey of the power grid.

Due to this situation, the government of Ukraine sought humanitarian and technical assistance to deal with the consequences of these flooding. The EADRCC was requested by Ukraine to deal with this request for assistance according to the existing procedures.

The Centre promulgated the request in order to facilitate a speedy delivery of assistance to Ukraine. The highest priority was for high capacity water pumps, mobile power generators, medical supplies, blankets, winter clothing, food items, sleeping bags, ambulances and medical equipment.

Assistance was provided by Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit

The second component of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Capability, the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit (EADRU) is a non-standing, multi-national mix of national civil and military elements (qualified personnel of rescue, medical and other units; equipment and materials; assets and transport) which have been volunteered by EAPC countries. The EADRU can be deployed in case of a major natural or technological disaster in an EAPC country upon request from the stricken country or in support of a relevant international organization. The composition and size of this multinational EADRU will be determined by the requirements based on an international assessment of each particular disaster.

To ensure the effective functioning of both the EADRCC and the EADRU and in order to maximize interoperability among national elements, appropriate training and exercises will be conducted on a regular basis. National action in this area will be supplemented by measures of international activity in order to exercise the various elements of the EADRU in working together. To enhance cooperation and synergy, UN

developed programmes and projects covering procedures on mission guidelines, regulations, training and exercises shall be taken into account.

Trans-Carpathia 2000

The first Partnership Work Programme (PWP) EADRCC/EADRU exercise “Trans-Carpathia 2000” was conducted from 20 to 28 September 2000. The exercise was divided into two phases, a Command Post Exercise and a Field Exercise which was held in Uzhgorod in the Trans-Carpathian region of Western Ukraine.

The scenario for the exercise was developed on the experience from the floods in this region in 1998. In the exercise heavy rainfall increased the water levels dramatically. Dams and rivers broke their banks and swept away more than 300 towns and villages. Some 2000 kilometres of roads were submerged and power lines disrupted. Individuals and communities across the country were stranded and tens of thousands of people left homeless.

With its national disaster relief resources overwhelmed by the scale of the catastrophe, Ukraine appealed for help to the



Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) and to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA).

During this exercise, the procedure for the “Use of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit in International Disaster Relief” was tested. A total of 10 nations deployed more than 400 civil and military elements as part of an EADRU to assist in disaster relief operations in cooperation with neighbouring EAPC countries, interoperability among participating EADRU elements and cooperation with the United Nations On Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) were also exercised.

Participants in the exercise practised reconnaissance, search and rescue and medical care. Also, experts from several countries took part in another operation to control toxic chemicals emitted from an overturned tanker.



Review of the Oslo Guidelines

Five years after the “Guidelines on the Use of MCDA in Disaster Relief” were noted at a conference in Oslo, UN-OCHA felt the need to review these guidelines, and to conduct a Seminar on lessons learned since 1994 regarding the application of these Guidelines.

On the 18 and 19 May 2000, UN-OCHA, with the collaboration of the Civil Emergency Planning Directorate of NATO and especially the EADRCC, organized at NATO Headquarters a Seminar on “Lessons learned in regard to the Oslo Guidelines”. Some 114 participants from 40 countries and 6 international organizations participated in this meeting. Inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations were also present, including both the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The overall aim of the Seminar was to improve cooperation between military and civil defense personnel and workers of humanitarian agencies and NGO’s operating towards common objectives in sudden-onset disasters or complex emergencies.

The Seminar concluded that the guidelines on the use of Military and Civil Defense assets (MCDA) in disaster relief were a valuable tool; nevertheless, there was a need to update and refine these Guidelines. There was agreement that, while the guidelines remained directly applicable to natural and technological disasters and should remain unchanged whenever possible, there were difficulties surrounding their applicability to complex emergencies which should be addressed and resolved.

Pre-disaster Planning

Pre-disaster planning is essential for effective disaster response. Therefore, NATO countries and Partner countries are encouraged to exchange data through the Director Civil Emergency Planning, to the greatest degree possible, to help in forecasting or notifying the potential effects of disasters that have occurred or which might occur. Exchange of information of this type takes place among the technical agencies of countries and within the framework of international organizations such as the UN, recognising the leading rôle of the UN in international disaster assistance.

NATO maintains appropriate contacts with relevant international organizations to ensure a regular exchange of information.

Within NATO, the Civil Protection Committee (CPC), under the aegis of the SCEPC, is the focal point for all NATO and Partner countries regarding pre-disaster planning and post-disaster analysis in NATO and Partner countries. Further, to the extent it does not duplicate the work of other International Organizations or NATO Committees, the CPC conducts seminars, conferences, or studies, the aim of which is to discuss the development of national plans, as well as exchanging information on lessons learned from operational disaster experiences.

The effectiveness of disaster assistance is highly dependent:

- a) as regards the stricken countries:
 - on the degree of pre-planning and preparedness achieved by them;
 - on their ability to address clearly their needs for outside assistance and relative priorities for resources or services requested;

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- on the provision of information on the assistance required; and
 - on their ability to coordinate relief operations and emergency assistance from all sources.
- b) as regards the assisting countries:
- on the exchange of information on assistance sent, or ready to be sent; and
 - on their ability to act rapidly in supplying resources and/or the services of disaster experts for emergency assistance.

It is, therefore, highly desirable that each NATO and Partner country should consider development of a national risk assessment and/or disaster plan, providing directives and /or coordination of emergency and recovery operations.

Countries and organizations may consider it desirable to conclude agreements among themselves in order to eliminate or reduce administrative impediments to timely and effective emergency assistance. These could cover such subjects as financial matters, the crossing of frontiers, customs clearance, transportation of relief supplies, status of relief personnel, etc. Also, the United Nations' Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) in Disaster relief underline the need for bilateral and multilateral agreements.

The free and rapid exchange of information on the disaster assistance given or planned is essential to ensure effective international cooperation. The harmonisation of efforts envisaged will result from the knowledge gained through the rapid exchange of information on national actions.

EADRCC Involvement in the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative of the Stability Pact

In accordance with the EAPC Policy on Enhanced Practical Cooperation in the Field of International Disaster Relief, one of the functions of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) is to develop appropriate plans and procedures for the use of the EADRU taking into account national risk assessments.

Early 2000, Bulgaria, Croatia and Italy launched a Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (DPPI) under the Stability Pact auspices. Given the active role of NATO in Civil Emergency Planning and the establishment of the EADRCC, it appeared that NATO's expertise and experience could contribute to the project by adding value and enhancing regional cooperation.

The Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South-Eastern Europe of the Stability Pact was designed to promote stronger regional cooperation in disaster relief and management. The initiative aims to help develop a cohesive regional strategy for disaster preparedness and prevention by bridging the gap between international and

local efforts with full participation of all regional countries. Twelve countries are involved namely Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁶, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Turkey.

An Operational Team was formed including Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Sweden, the United States, the Euro Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC). This Team was established to evaluate data on risk assessment for South East European countries and to assess national capabilities as well as to develop an inventory of capabilities in the region.

Conclusion

For fifty years, NATO's interest in and capabilities to protect the populations have served to protect civilian populations. Partnership for Peace has allowed NATO to co-operate with its Partners in disaster preparedness as well as in disaster response in Partner Countries as well as in NATO countries. While a highly successful programme of cooperation in the area of Civil Emergency Planning is the continued enhancement of Civil Preparedness in the Partner Countries, the creation of the EADRCC and development of the EADRU represent a major step forward in the collective efforts of EAPC countries to provide assistance to populations struck by major disasters. Moreover, it attests the willingness of EAPC countries to engage in practical cooperation in an area of vital concern to all nations and to provide the EAPC countries with an operational capability.

This brochure has been published to inform the general public of NATO's rôle of in the overall international disaster response. This publication is also available in French. Further information can be found on the EADRCC web site: www.eadrcc.org.