



THE KEY TO THE PRAGUE SUMMIT



AN AGENDA FOR CHANGE

NATO's Commitment to the Balkans

Key Information

Key Definitions

- **Implementation Force (IFOR)** – NATO-led force deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of 1995 in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1031, with a one-year mandate to help ensure compliance with the military provisions of the Dayton Peace Accords of 14 December 1995.
- **Stabilisation Force (SFOR)** – successor to IFOR, deployed since December 1996.
- **Kosovo Force (KFOR)** – deployed in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 calling for an effective international civil and security presence in Kosovo. Resolution 1244 establishes Kosovo as an entity under interim international administration, requests the UN Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative to oversee the implementation of the international civil presence, and authorises member states and relevant international organisations to establish the international security presence. KFOR works alongside the UN Mission to Kosovo (UNMIK) and other international and non-governmental agencies to lay the basis for security, stability and reconstruction.

Key Facts

- The security provided by **IFOR** and **SFOR** since 1995 has resulted in the return of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons uprooted by the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. IFOR and SFOR have in addition provided support for implementation of civilian aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement and have contributed substantially to progress made since in fields such as defence reform; the restructuring and reduction of armed forces; weapons collection; arrest and detainment of persons indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY); assistance for minority returns; humanitarian assistance to people affected by flooding and mudslides; control of airspace, public security, de-mining; and supervision of the electoral process.
- Security provided by **KFOR** has enabled some 1.3 million people from inside Kosovo and abroad to return to their homes and villages. Work undertaken by KFOR and in cooperation with other organisations has contributed substantially to reconstruction and de-mining; security and public order; security of ethnic minorities; protection of patrimonial sites; border security; interdiction of cross-border smuggling; implementation of a weapons, ammunition and explosives amnesty; weapons destruction; the establishment of civil institutions; the maintenance of law and order; the reconstruction of the judicial and penal system; and supervision of the electoral process.

- Operation *Essential Harvest* was launched following the request of President Trajkovski in August 2001 for NATO assistance in demilitarising the National Liberation Army and disarming ethnic Albanian groups operating in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia(*). This operation resulted in the collection of some 3 875 weapons and 397 600 other items, including mines and explosives.
- Operation *Amber Fox* was launched in September 2001, in response to a further request by President Trajkovski for a follow-on force to provide protection for international monitors from the European Union and the OSCE overseeing the implementation of the peace plan. The mandate of the mission, which involves some 1 000 troops provided by NATO member countries, has been extended to 26 October 2002.

Key Dates

- **July 1992** – NATO ships begin monitoring operations in the Adriatic in support of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 713 and 757 imposing an arms embargo and sanctions in the former Yugoslavia.
- **October 1992** – Aircraft belonging to NATO's Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) begin monitoring operations in support of UNSCR 781 imposing a no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- **November 1992** – NATO and the WEU begin enforcement operations of the sanctions and embargo imposed under UNSCR 787.
- **April 1993** – NATO aircraft begin Operation *Deny Flight* in support of UNSCR 816, establishing a no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- **February 1994** – In response to a request by the UN Secretary-General, the North Atlantic Council authorises air strikes to end the strangulation of Sarajevo. Four warplanes violating the no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina are shot down by NATO aircraft in the first military engagement to be undertaken by the Alliance. Further air strikes against forces in infringement of UN Security Council Resolutions take place subsequently to protect UN forces.
- **May 1995** – 370 UN peacekeepers are taken hostage by Bosnian Serb forces and used as human shields at potential targets in a bid to prevent further air strikes.
- **July 1995** – The UN designated Safe Areas of Srebrenica and Zepa are overrun by Bosnian Serb Forces.
- **August 1995** – Following continued attacks by Bosnian Serb forces on Sarajevo, NATO commences air strikes against Serb military targets, supported by the UN Rapid Reaction Force.
- **September 1995** – Air strikes are discontinued.
- **October 1995** – Renewed attacks on UN forces and NATO aircraft result in further air strikes.

- **14 December 1995** – President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, President Alya Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia sign the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP - agreed in Dayton, Ohio on 14 December) in Paris.
- **16 December 1995** – Beginning of the deployment of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) in accordance with UNSCR 1031, transferring authority for military operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina from UNPROFOR to NATO and mandating IFOR to implement the military aspects of the peace agreement.
- **20 December 1996** – NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina is replaced by SFOR (Stabilisation Force).
- **28 May 1998** – NATO foreign ministers agree that the Alliance should seek to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the Kosovo crisis and promote stability and security in neighbouring countries.
- **13 October 1998** – Following a deterioration of the situation in Kosovo, the North Atlantic Council authorises activation orders for air strikes in support of diplomatic efforts to persuade the Milosevic regime to withdraw its forces, cooperate in bringing an end to the violence and facilitate the return of refugees. The OSCE establishes a Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) and NATO establishes an aerial surveillance mission in support of UNSCR 1199 imposing conditions for a cease-fire and leading to limitations on Serbian and Kosovar-Albanian forces and operations.
- **30 January 1999** – Following further violence and acts of provocation, in support of efforts by the 6 nation Contact Group to bring both sides to a negotiated settlement under international mediation, the North Atlantic Council authorise the use of air strikes if required and sends warnings to both sides of the conflict.
- **February 1999** – Negotiations in Rambouillet followed by further negotiations in Paris from 15-18 March fail to secure agreement from the representatives of the Milosevic regime to end the conflict.
- **20 March 1999** – The OSCE Verification Mission is obstructed by Serbian forces and forced to withdraw. U.S. diplomatic efforts fail to persuade President Milosevic to stop attacks on the Kosovar Albanians.
- **23 March-10 June 1999** – 78-day NATO air campaign against Serb forces engaged in ethnic cleansing in Kosovo (Operation *Allied Force*) culminates in the withdrawal of Serb forces and a Military Technical agreement between NATO and Yugoslav commanders.
- **12 June 1999** – First elements of KFOR enter Kosovo in accordance with UNSCR 1244 establishing an international civil and security presence.
- **20 June 1999** – Withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo.
- **22 August 2001** – In response to a request by President Trajkovski of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia(*) for assistance in demilitarising the National Liberation Army (NLA) and disarming ethnic Albanian groups operating on the territory of his country, NATO launches Operation *Essential Harvest* to collect and destroy all weapons voluntarily handed in by NLA personnel.

- **27 September 2001** - NATO launches Operation *Amber Fox* in response to the request by President Trajkovski for a follow-on force to provide additional protection for international monitors from the European Union and the OSCE overseeing the implementation of the peace plan.

Key Documents

- The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP), 14 December 1995.
www.nato.int/sfor/basic/gfap.htm
- United Nations Security Council Resolutions and other documents relating to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to Kosovo.
<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/home.shtml>

Key Issues

- The North Atlantic Council has directed NATO's Military Authorities periodically to restructure and reduce the size of the Stabilisation Force. By the beginning of 2001, it had been reduced from its original 31 000 troops to approximately 19 000, drawn from 17 NATO member countries and 15 non-NATO countries, including a Russian contingent. At their Spring 2002 meeting, Alliance defence ministers announced decisions reached after consultation with non-NATO contributing partners, on the furthering restructuring of SFOR and accompanying force reductions. Reaffirming NATO's commitment to security and stability in the Balkans, they pointed to improvements achieved in the security environment in the region, permitting the reduction of SFOR to a level of 12 000 troops by the end of 2002.
- KFOR initially comprised some 50 000 personnel provided by all 19 NATO members and 19 non-NATO countries under unified command and control. By the beginning of 2002, KFOR comprised about 39 000 troops. In Spring 2002, improvements achieved in the security environment in the region enabled Alliance defence ministers to announce the restructuring of KFOR and accompanying force reductions resulting in a future force level of 32 000 troops, with further reductions planned for 2003.

More Information

- The Alliance's Operational Role in Peacekeeping.
www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/index.htm#CH5
- IFOR Website.
www.nato.int/ifor/htm
- SFOR Website.
www.nato.int/sfor/index.htm
- KFOR Website.
www.nato.int/kosovo/kosovo.htm
- Operations *Essential Harvest* and *Amber Fox*.
www.nato.int/fyrom/home/htm

Key Quotations

“Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia agree to fully respect the sovereign equality of one another and to settle disputes by peaceful means.

The parties agree to cooperate fully with all entities, including those authorised by the United Nations Security Council, in implementing the peace settlement and investigating and prosecuting war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law.

The parties agree to fully respect and promote fulfilment, of the commitments made in the various Annexes, and they obligate themselves to respect human rights and the rights of refugees and displaced persons.”

From the Dayton Peace Accords, 30 November 1995.

www.nato.int/sfor/basic/gfap.htm

“In pursuit of its policy of preserving peace, preventing war, and enhancing security and stability and as set out in the fundamental security tasks, NATO will seek, in cooperation with other organisations, to prevent conflict, or, should a crisis arise, to contribute to its effective management, consistent with international law, including through the possibility of conducting non-Article 5 crisis response operations. The Alliance’s preparedness to carry out such operations supports the broader objective of reinforcing and extending stability and often involves the participation of NATO’s Partners.

NATO recalls its offer, made in Brussels in 1994, to support on a case-by-case basis in accordance with its own procedures, peacekeeping and other operations under the authority of the UN Security Council or the responsibility of the OSCE, including by making available Alliance resources and expertise. In this context NATO recalls its subsequent decisions with respect to crisis response operations in the Balkans. Taking into account the necessity for Alliance solidarity and cohesion, participation in any such operation or mission will remain subject to decisions of member states in accordance with national constitutions.”

From The Alliance’s Strategic Concept, April 1999, Paragraph 31.

www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm

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“Political agreement is not enough: the Balkans are littered with agreements that are signed but not implemented. To make an agreement work, to bring stability to Kosovo, an international force is an indispensable element. Only NATO is equipped to lead it.”

UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, 10 March 1999.

www.number-10.gov.uk/output/page914.asp

“We will not, and we cannot accept a situation where people are brutalised behind national boundaries. For at the end of the twentieth century, one thing is clear. A United Nations that will not stand up for human rights is a United Nations that cannot stand up for itself.”

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, 7 April 1999.

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1999/19990407.sgsm6949.html>

“We are an Alliance. Have we got an enemy? I think yes. [...] Our enemy is extreme nationalism, religious fundamentalism, racism, xenophobia, ethnic cleansing. That is why we are active in Kosovo [...] That is why we must succeed in Kosovo, fully guaranteeing the rights of the Kosovar people.”

Antonio Guterres, Prime Minister of Portugal, 23 April 1999.

www.nato.int/docu/speech/1999/s990423s.htm

“What NATO began, and what KFOR continues, was not only the right thing to do; it was the only thing to do.”

NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, 4 April 2000.

www.nato.int/docu/speech/2000/s000404a.htm

“That is why this conflict did, and indeed still, matters to our interests. Kosovo is a small place, but it sits at a very strategic point – between Europe, Asia and the Middle East, at the meeting place of Islam and Christianity.”

NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, 6 April 2000.

www.nato.int/docu/speech/2000/s000406a.htm

“Democratisation in the Balkans could not have started without NATO.”

Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary, speaking in Budapest, Hungary, 29 May 2001.

www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s010529b.htm

“We chose engagement over indifference.”

NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, 5 July 2001, (speaking of NATO involvement in Bosnia and Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia(*)).

www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s010705a.htm

“They have reinforced the logic of keeping peace in the Balkans, because stable, multi-ethnic states are our best insurance against terrorism emerging in the first place.”

NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, 10 October 2001 (referring to the events of 11 September).

www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011010b.htm

Backgrounder

In a statement on the Balkans issued on 6 June 2002, NATO defence ministers affirmed that they remained committed to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all countries in the Balkans and, in cooperation with partners and other international organisations, to the pursuit of a peaceful, democratic and stable region. The continued presence of the NATO-led forces in the region demonstrates NATO's firm support for the rule of law, democratic institutions, basic human rights, return of refugees, tolerance, reconciliation and the peaceful resolution of disputes, and its determination to oppose all violence, whether ethnically, politically, or criminally motivated.

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The political basis for the Alliance's role in the Balkans was established at the North Atlantic Council meeting in Oslo, in June 1992. NATO foreign ministers announced their readiness to support, on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with their own procedures, peacekeeping activities under the responsibility of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (subsequently renamed the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe or OSCE). This included making available Alliance resources and expertise for peacekeeping operations.

In December 1992, the Alliance stated that it was also ready to support peacekeeping operations under the authority of the United Nations Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for international peace and security. Reviewing peacekeeping and sanctions or embargo enforcement measures already being undertaken by NATO countries, individually and as an Alliance, to support the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions relating to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, NATO foreign ministers indicated that the Alliance was ready to respond positively to further initiatives that the UN Secretary-General might take in seeking Alliance assistance in this field.

Monitoring and enforcement operations

Between 1992 and 1995, the Alliance took several key decisions which led to operations to monitor, and subsequently enforce, a UN embargo and sanctions in the Adriatic and to monitor and then to enforce the UN no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Alliance also provided close air support to the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and authorised air strikes to relieve the strangulation of Sarajevo and other threatened areas denominated by the UN as Safe Areas.

Decisive action by the Alliance in support of the UN, together with a determined diplomatic effort, broke the siege of Sarajevo, led to a genuine cease-fire and made a negotiated solution to the conflict possible in autumn 1995.

The NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR)

Under the terms of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, commonly referred to as the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA), signed on 14 December 1995, a NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) was established for one year to fulfil the military aspects of the agreement. The Force was activated on 16 December and transfer of authority from the Commander of UN forces to the Commander of IFOR took place four days later, bringing all NATO and non-NATO forces participating in the operation under IFOR command.

By 19 January 1996, the parties to the Agreement had withdrawn their forces from the zone of separation on either side of the agreed cease-fire line and by 3 February, all forces had been withdrawn from the areas to be transferred under the terms of the Agreement. The transfer of territory between the entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina was completed by 19 March and a new zone of separation established. By the end of June, the cantonment of heavy weapons and demobilisation of forces required by the Agreement had also been completed. After more than four years of conflict and in the repeated failure of international initiatives to end it, a basis for the future peace and security of Bosnia and Herzegovina had been established within less than six months.

IFOR contributed substantially to the creation of a secure environment conducive to civil and political reconstruction. It also provided support for civilian tasks, working closely with the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the International Police Task Force (IPTF), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and many others, including more than 400 non-governmental organisations active in the area.

IFOR also assisted the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in preparing, supervising and monitoring the first free elections in September 1996 and, following these elections, supported the Office of the High Representative in assisting the entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in building new common institutions.

IFOR military engineers repaired and reopened roads and bridges and played a vital role in the de-mining and repair of railroads and the opening up of airports to civilian traffic, in restoring gas, water and electricity supplies, in rebuilding schools and hospitals, and in restoring key telecommunication installations.

From IFOR to SFOR

In November and December 1996, a two-year consolidation plan was established in Paris and elaborated in London under the auspices of the Peace Implementation Council established under the Dayton Peace Accords. On the basis of this plan and of the Alliance's own study of security options, NATO foreign and defence ministers concluded that a reduced military presence was needed to provide the stability necessary for consolidating peace in the area. They agreed that NATO should organise a Stabilisation Force (SFOR), which was subsequently activated on 20 December 1996 – the day on which IFOR's mandate expired.

The NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR)

In accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1088 of 12 December 1996, the Stabilisation Force became the legal successor to IFOR, its primary task being to contribute to the development of the secure environment necessary for the consolidation of peace.

In December 1997, NATO foreign and defence ministers took a number of additional decisions in relation to the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords. Recognising the fragility of the peace, despite positive achievements in several fields, they reiterated NATO's commitment to the establishment of a single, democratic and multi-ethnic state. Acting on the consensus emerging in the Peace Implementation Council and elsewhere on the need for a military presence to continue beyond the expiry of SFOR's mandate, they requested NATO's military authorities to outline available options.

On 20 February 1998, the North Atlantic Council issued a statement announcing that, subject to the necessary UN mandate, NATO would be prepared to organise and lead a multinational force in Bosnia and Herzegovina following the end of SFOR's mandate in June 1998.

The new force would retain the name "SFOR" and would operate on a similar basis, in order to deter renewed hostilities and to help to create the conditions needed for the implementation of the civil aspects of the Dayton Peace Accords. At the same time the Council projected a transitional strategy, involving progressive reductions of force levels as the transfer of responsibilities to the competent common institutions, civil authorities and international bodies became feasible.

As the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has become more stable, NATO military authorities have been directed by the North Atlantic Council periodically to restructure and reduce the size of the Stabilisation Force. By the beginning of 2002, it had been reduced from its original 31 000 troops to approximately 19 000, drawn from 17 NATO member countries and 15 non-NATO countries, including a Russian contingent.

At their Spring 2002 meeting, Alliance defence ministers announced decisions reached after consultation with non-NATO contributing partners, on the restructuring of SFOR and on accompanying force reductions. Reaffirming NATO's commitment to security and stability in the Balkans, they pointed to improvements achieved in the security environment in the region, permitting the further reduction of SFOR to a level of 12 000 troops by the end of 2002.

All non-NATO countries which participated in IFOR have also participated in SFOR, namely Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic¹, Estonia, Finland, Hungary¹, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland¹, Romania, Russia, Sweden and Ukraine - all of which are Partnership for Peace countries – as well as Egypt, Jordan, Malaysia and Morocco – which participate in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue. Argentina, Ireland, Slovakia and Slovenia also subsequently participated in SFOR.

¹ The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland became members of NATO, 12 March 1999.

By mid-May 2002, the following non-NATO countries were participating in SFOR: Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden – all of which are Partnership for Peace countries – as well as Argentina, Australia, New Zealand and Morocco.

Examples of SFOR tasks and achievements

Civilian aspects of the Dayton Peace Accords

Support for implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Peace Accords is provided by local forces and by SFOR's Civil-Military Task Force (CMTF), consisting of approximately 350 military personnel able to call on civilian skills in some twenty functional areas including law, economics and finance, agriculture, industry, commerce and business, structural engineering, transportation, utilities, housing, social services such as education and public health, cultural affairs, government, management and political science.

SFOR continues to provide day-to-day assistance for minority returns and support for the UNHCR in providing humanitarian aid. In cooperation with the local authorities and armed forces, SFOR has also assisted people affected by the floods and mudslides in the northern and south-eastern parts of the country in June and July 2001, through the provision of tents, food, water, flood relief, bridge and road repair and engineering assistance to local authorities; provided transport for food parcels from Croatia, during the autumn of 2001; and undertaken reconstruction projects financed by participating countries. In January 2002, SFOR conducted humanitarian re-supply missions in the vicinity of Srebrenica, delivering food to villages isolated by adverse winter weather conditions.

Security cooperation activities

In July 1996, the North Atlantic Council tasked the NATO military authorities with developing and conducting confidence building courses for selected military personnel from Bosnia and Herzegovina at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany, with the aim of fostering dialogue, reconciliation and mutual understanding between the entities. In December 1997, a series of further actions in this context, labelled Security Cooperation Activities, was also initiated.

Throughout 2002, the Security Cooperation Programme has focused increasingly on defence related matters such as the restructuring of armed forces and the development of common defence and security policies and preparing the country for integration into Euro-Atlantic security structures.

One of the common institutions set up by the Dayton Peace Accords, and supported by NATO, is the Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM), responsible for coordinating the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Composed of representatives of the three constituent ethnic groups within the country, the SCMM is a key factor in creating a national defence identity at the state level.

Reductions of the Entity Armed Forces (EAF)

Trust and cooperation between the armed forces of the different entities within the country have improved. Their numbers were reduced from an estimated 430 000 troops in 1995 to 34 000 by 2001. The level nevertheless remains too high both in relation to any external threat and in relation to the national budget and is not sustainable. SFOR is working with national

military commanders in order to restructure the armed forces in a manner that is affordable and meets the country's security requirements.

The Joint Military Commission (JMC), at its meeting in January 2002, introduced plans for force reductions to be achieved by 2005. The reductions are now expected to be completed by mid-2003. A Common Defence Policy (CDP) was approved on 11 May 2001, with the emphasis on commonality, cooperation and coordination, while building on a commitment to satisfy the requirements for participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace programme.

Weapon collection (Operation *Essential Harvest*)

A nation-wide programme, initiated in 1998, Operation *Essential Harvest* was successful in helping the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina rid itself of many firearms, munitions and explosive devices. It offered a complete amnesty to anyone who handed in munitions or weapons at centralised collection points, or provided information regarding their whereabouts. By the end of 2001, large numbers of arms, mines, hand grenades and rounds of ammunition had been collected, significantly reducing the threat to the local population.

Operation *Essential Harvest* has been extended indefinitely. In view of the risks involved in this operation and accidents that have occurred, SFOR is providing training to local forces in the handling of unexploded ordnance.

War crimes

SFOR has continued to support the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), providing security and logistic support for ICTY investigative teams and surveillance and ground patrolling of alleged mass gravesites. The North Atlantic Council has authorised SFOR to detain and transfer to the ICTY persons indicted for war crimes when SFOR personnel come into contact with them while carrying out their duties. Since 1996, NATO forces have detained and transferred to the jurisdiction of the ICTY in The Hague some 40 people indicted for war crimes.

Upper airspace control

Under the Dayton Peace Agreement, SFOR is responsible for regulating the airspace over Bosnia and Herzegovina by fostering a stable, safe and secure airspace environment that can eventually be returned to civilian control. Progressive steps have been taken towards normalisation and the gradual transfer of control to the Department of Civil Aviation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Refugees and displaced persons

From November 1995 to the end of 2001, security provided by SFOR resulted in the return of 820 000 refugees and displaced persons uprooted by the conflict. The continuation of this trend reflects the improved security conditions and implementation of property laws.

Public security

SFOR Multinational Specialised Units (MSU) contribute to the fight against crime and corruption, which remain major threats to security. SFOR also continues to work closely with the UN International Police Task Force (IPTF), providing assistance with surveillance, communica-

tions, transportation and security, and with the United Nations Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMBIH) on training local police anti-riot units.

In February 2002, the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) accepted a European Union offer to provide an EU police mission from 1 January 2003, when the IPTF mandate expires. Non-EU European NATO members states that are candidates for accession to the EU and other non-EU OSCE members have been invited to make contributions to the force.

De-mining

The conflict left behind up to one million mines throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina and many unmarked minefields. Between 1996 and early 2002, there were approximately 1 350 mine victims, approximately 300 of which were children. Since November 1995, 120 000 mines have been removed and 26 million square metres have been cleared. It has been estimated that the total mine threat cannot be eliminated until 2010.

SFOR participated in the de-mining of roads and has set up training initiatives. Its main responsibility now involves the supervision of de-mining activities. On 12 February 2002, state-level legislation paved the way for the administration, management and control of de-mining activities by the national Ministry of Civil Affairs.

NATO's role in relation to the conflict in Kosovo

The origins of the recent conflict in Kosovo date back to 1989 when President Milosevic removed the autonomy of the province within the former Yugoslavia bringing it under the direct control of Belgrade. Tensions simmered for several years and in 1998, open conflict between Serbian military and police forces and Kosovar Albanians broke out, resulting in the deaths of over 1 500 Kosovar Albanians and the expulsion of 400 000 people from their homes.

The international community became gravely concerned about the escalating conflict, its humanitarian consequences, the risk of it spreading to other countries, President Milosevic's disregard for diplomatic efforts aimed at peacefully resolving the crisis and the destabilising role of Kosovar Albanian militants.

On 13 October 1998, following a deterioration of the situation, the NATO Council authorised Activation Orders for NATO air strikes, in support of diplomatic efforts to make the Milosevic regime withdraw forces from Kosovo, cooperate in bringing an end to the violence and facilitate the return of refugees to their homes. Following further diplomatic initiatives, President Milosevic agreed to comply and the air strikes were called off.

Further measures were taken in support of UN Security Council Resolutions calling for an end to the conflict, including the establishment of a Kosovo Verification Mission by the OSCE and an aerial surveillance mission by NATO, as well as a NATO military task force to assist in the evacuation of members of the Verification Mission in the event of further conflict.

The situation in Kosovo flared up again at the beginning of 1999, following a number of acts of provocation on both sides and the use of excessive force by the Serbian Army and Special Police. Renewed international efforts to give new political impetus

to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict resulted in the convening of negotiations between the parties to the conflict in London and Paris under international mediation.

The negotiations failed and in March 1999, Serbian military and police forces stepped up the intensity of their operations against the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, moving extra troops and tanks into the region, in a clear breach of agreements reached. Tens of thousands of people began to flee their homes in the face of this systematic offensive.

On 20 March, the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission was withdrawn from the region when obstruction from Serbian forces prevented it from fulfilling its task. Further diplomatic efforts were made to persuade President Milosevic to stop attacks on the Kosovar Albanians or face imminent NATO air strikes. Milosevic refused to comply and, on 23 March, NATO air strikes against Serb forces began.

NATO's objectives, set out in a statement issued by Heads of State and Government on 23 April 1999, were to bring about a verifiable stop to all military action and the immediate ending of violence and repression; the withdrawal from Kosovo of military, police and paramilitary forces; the stationing in Kosovo of an international military presence; the unconditional and safe return of all refugees and displaced persons and unhindered access to them by humanitarian aid organisations; and the establishment of a political agreement for Kosovo in conformity with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Following diplomatic efforts by Russia and the European Union on 3 June, a Military Technical Agreement was concluded between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 9 June. On the following day, after confirmation that the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo had begun, NATO announced the suspension of the air campaign.

On 10 June, UN Security Council Resolution 1244 welcomed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's acceptance of the principles for a political solution, including an immediate end to violence and a rapid withdrawal of its military, police and paramilitary forces and the deployment of an effective international civil and security presence, with substantial NATO participation.

The NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR)

The first elements of KFOR entered Kosovo on 12 June 1999. By 20 June, the withdrawal of Serbian forces was complete. Throughout the crisis, NATO forces were at the forefront of humanitarian efforts to relieve the suffering of the refugees forced to flee Kosovo by the Serbian campaign of ethnic cleansing. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia(*) NATO troops built refugee camps, refugee reception centres and emergency feeding stations and moved hundreds of tons of humanitarian aid to those in need.

In Albania, NATO deployed substantial forces to provide similar forms of assistance and helped the UNHCR with the coordination of humanitarian aid flights to enable the evacuation of refugees to safety in other countries, including many NATO countries. These flights were supplemented by aircraft supplied by member countries. The Euro-

Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) established at NATO in June 1998 also played an important role in the coordination of support to UNHCR relief operations.

KFOR initially comprised some 50 000 personnel from all 19 NATO member countries and from 19 non-NATO countries (among them 16 Partner countries, including a Russian contingent) under unified command and control. By the beginning of 2002, KFOR comprised about 39 000 troops. In Spring 2002, improvements achieved in the security environment in the region enabled Alliance defence ministers to announce the restructuring of SFOR and KFOR and accompanying force reductions resulting in a future force level of 32 000 troops, with further reductions planned for 2003.

Support for neighbouring countries

As a result of the conflict in Kosovo, the countries of the region faced major humanitarian, political, and economic problems. In parallel with the deployment of KFOR, Alliance efforts therefore focused on providing immediate practical assistance in dealing with the refugee crisis by reassigning NATO forces in the region to humanitarian tasks.

Assistance included the provision of emergency accommodation and building of refugee camps and assisting humanitarian aid organisations by providing transport and other forms of help including the distribution of food and aid. NATO countries provided financial and other support to Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia(*) and gave reassurances that they would respond to any challenges to their security by the government in Belgrade.

KFOR tasks have included assistance in connection with the return or relocation of displaced persons and refugees; reconstruction and de-mining; medical assistance; security and public order; security of ethnic minorities; protection of patrimonial sites; border security; interdiction of cross-border weapons smuggling; implementation of a Kosovo-wide weapons, ammunition and explosives amnesty programme; weapons destruction; and support for the establishment of civilian institutions, law and order, the judicial and penal system, the electoral process and other aspects of the political, economic and social life of the province. Examples are given below.

Nineteen non-NATO countries currently participate in KFOR operations, contributing to the accomplishment of KFOR's mission and gaining practical experience of operating with NATO forces. They are: Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Morocco, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates and Ukraine.

Examples of KFOR tasks and achievements

Refugees

Positive progress has been made with regard to returns of refugees and displaced persons. Approximately 1 300 000 people from inside Kosovo and abroad, have been able to return to their homes and villages.

In May 2000, a Joint Committee on Returns (JCR) was established to explore ways and means for the safe and sustainable return of Kosovar Serbs. KFOR, the United Nations Mission to Kosovo (UNMIK), and other international organisations have helped to coordinate and support resettlement activities and to limit the potential for ethnic violence. KFOR forces have increased their presence in minority enclaves to provide more security in the wake of localised violence against Kosovo Serbs and other minorities.

In August 2001, the JCR implemented the first organised return of Kosovo Serbs to the Osajane Valley. Accompanied by significant KFOR support, the return was incident free, and UNHCR plans to build on this success for its 2002 return programme.

Reconstruction and de-mining

By April 2002, about 34 060 houses had been reconstructed. Some 1 430 more are under reconstruction. Activity has also focused on repair and renovation of the electrical power system, restoration of roads and railroads and the reparation of bridges. There has been a significant reduction in accidents involving unexploded ordinance, including mines and cluster bombs, due to the work being undertaken by civilian de-mining companies working under contract to the United Nations Mine Action Centre (UNMAC) and KFOR. As of December 2001, 4.7 million square metres of land had been cleared. Experts have also inspected and cleared 1 200 schools and 16 000 houses and public buildings. Some 2 300 landmines as well as some 1 200 unexploded devices have been removed.

Medical assistance

Medical assistance has been another major sphere of activity for KFOR, with over 50 000 civilian patients receiving treatment annually.

Currency

In January 2002, the security provided by KFOR, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Police Service facilitated the conversion of Kosovo's currency from the Deutschmark to the Euro.

Security and public order

One of the highest priorities for KFOR is improving security for ethnic minorities. Each Multinational Brigade allocates on average 400 of its personnel to tasks related to the protection of minority (mainly Serb) populations in Kosovo. This includes guarding individual homes and villages, transporting people to schools and shops and patrolling and monitoring checkpoints.

Significant KFOR forces are also assigned to the protection of some 145 patrimonial sites throughout Kosovo, on a 24-hour-a-day basis. Some sites have been handed over to UNMIK police in a pilot project aimed at eventually handing over responsibility for the protection of all such sites.

KFOR is constantly engaged in border security tasks, using a combination of foot, vehicle and helicopter patrols as well as providing aerial surveillance. Elements from 15 KFOR battalions, totalling about 1 000 soldiers, are involved in this task. Border monitoring activities were significantly enhanced in response to the crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia(*), with a particular focus on interdicting the flow of fighters, weapons and other supplies.

In June 2001 KFOR began an operation (*Operation Eagle*) along Kosovo's border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia(*) and Albania, designed to interdict weapons smuggling. By the end of April 2002, many thousands of weapons, mines, grenades and rounds of ammunition had been seized for subsequent destruction within Kosovo.

From mid-March to mid-April 2002, a Kosovo-wide weapons, ammunition and explosives amnesty programme was conducted, allowing individuals to turn in weapons to KFOR without fear of repercussions. Significant numbers of weapons, mines and rounds of ammunitions were handed over and destroyed.

Civil implementation

In October 2000, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) played an important role in the planning of municipal elections, including voter registration, under security arrangements provided by KFOR, in coordination with UNMIK, to protect freedom of movement in the area.

The elections were conducted without major incident. In November 2001, KFOR troops contributed to the successful conduct of the elections for a new Assembly by continuing to provide a secure environment for the local population as well as logistical support, in close coordination with the OSCE and the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Law and order

An important part of KFOR resources continues to be engaged in patrolling and manning checkpoints and protecting patrimonial sites, as part of the process of restoring law and order.

KFOR, acting in support of UNMIK, remains a crucial asset in the fight against organised crime and smuggling and supports UNMIK-led operations to deny extremist armed groups or criminal elements the use of operational and logistic bases in Kosovo.

NATO's Role in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia(*)

In August 2001, the North Atlantic Council responded to the request of President Trajkovski of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia(*), for NATO assistance in demilitarising the National Liberation Army (NLA) and disarming the ethnic Albanian groups operating on the territory of his country. The Council authorised a 30-day mission code-named *Operation Essential Harvest* to collect and destroy all weapons voluntarily handed in by NLA personnel. The operation involved some 3 500 NATO troops and their logistical support, and successfully collected some 3 875 weapons and 397 600 other items, including mines and explosives.

In September, President Trajkovski requested a follow-on force in order to provide protection for international monitors from the European Union and the OSCE overseeing the implementation of the peace plan in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia(*). Known as *Operation Fox*, this mission involves some 700 troops provided by NATO member countries, reinforcing some 300 troops already based in the country. It started on 27 September 2001 with a three-month mandate and has subsequently been extended.



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