PREFACE

NATO was created through the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1949. The treaty, a model of brevity and clarity, paved the way for the Alliance's adaptation to the constantly changing dynamic of international security. It provides built-in flexibility and scope for tackling new problems and applying solutions to them that reflect the changing environment. In Article 9, the drafters provided a flexible organisational structure for the Alliance based on a single, authoritative institutional body in the form of a Council responsible for the implementation of the treaty and for the creation of such subsidiary bodies as might be necessary. This foresight has enabled the Alliance to evolve and to adapt itself to new circumstances throughout its history.

NATO underwent a series of reforms and reorganisations during the first forty years of its existence, designed to adapt it to the occasional opportunities that presented themselves to move beyond Cold War constraints in order to place the security of member countries on a more positive and stable foundation. In the relatively short period since the end of the Cold War, the Alliance has undergone a process of much more fundamental transformation, adapting to changes in the security environment of a scope and intensity that few could have foreseen in earlier years.

It was in the 1990s that NATO first responded to the end of the familiar East-West division and its accompanying ideological, political and military adversarial relationships, and to the disappearance of conventional military threats to security in the Euro-Atlantic area. The Alliance defined a new strategic concept, embarked on intensive partnerships with other countries, including former adversaries, and embraced new member countries. In addition, and for the first time, NATO undertook peacekeeping tasks in areas of conflict outside the Alliance, opening the way for a lead role in multinational crisis-management operations and extensive cooperative arrangements with other organisations.

The 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States placed the fight against terrorism at the top of the international agenda, including that of NATO. As a result, the transformation process that characterised the first ten years after the end of the Cold War era took on a more coherent dimension and greater urgency.

Today, the Alliance's response to the new, post–September 11 security environment is based on a clear set of principles agreed upon by member governments. The Allies agree that they must be ready to help to deter, defend, disrupt and protect themselves collectively against terrorist attacks from abroad and that this may include taking action against terrorists and against those who harbour or protect them. They also agree that the Alliance

should not be constrained by predetermined geographical limits: it must have the capacity to act as and where required. Similarly, it may need to provide its assets and capabilities, on a case-by-case basis, to assist with operations conducted by other international organisations or coalitions of countries involving NATO members.

These decisions make wide-reaching demands on the Alliance, not only in terms of acquiring the necessary capabilities, but also in terms of the sustained political will of the member countries to draw the consequences of the policies they have adopted and to provide the means to implement them. The need for reviewing and updating policies and structures will not end with the fulfilment of present commitments. Modernisation and rationalisation will remain factors to contend with on a permanent basis, if only because threats to security and stability themselves are not static.

How the Alliance has met the challenges of the past and how it has set about preparing itself to be able to fulfil equally challenging roles in the future is the subject of this new edition of the NATO Handbook. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the Alliance up to autumn 2005, and can be consulted alongside the NATO website (www.nato.int), which offers access to information about subsequent developments affecting the Alliance as well as the texts of official statements and communiqués, and articles and speeches by qualified commentators offering independent evaluation and analysis.

In brief, **Part I** of the Handbook offers an introduction to the Alliance and provides a basic explanation of its origins and fundamental tasks as well as the main spheres of its development since its foundation. It includes a summary account of the policy directions taken by NATO member countries with regard to multinational security, focusing on the more recent post–Cold War era, and examines the principal topics on the Alliance's agenda in the early years of the 21st century. The main decision-making bodies and the key principles and policies that guide the Alliance are described in **Part II**. This is complemented by **Part III** of the Handbook, where the civilian and military structures and agencies established by NATO to ensure that its tasks can be carried out are explained.

The Alliance's operational roles in relation to peacekeeping and peace-support are the subject of **Part IV**, which examines the implementation of Alliance decisions with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,* Afghanistan, the NATO Training Mission in Iraq, and the mission in Darfur, Sudan. **Part V** addresses measures taken by the Alliance to combat the threat from terrorism and from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and describes the new capabilities that are under development.

A fundamental aspect of NATO strategy since the early 1990s has been the opening up of the Alliance to new members **(Part VI)** and the broadening of contacts and cooperation with non-member countries through a range of bilateral and multilateral relationships and partnerships. An overview of the development and role of these partnerships and practical forms of cooperation is given in **Part VII**, which discusses the evolution of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership based on the complementary pillars of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace programme, as well as the relationships and varying forms of cooperation developed by NATO with Russia, Ukraine, the countries of the Mediterranean Dialogue, southeastern Europe and, more recently, countries from the Middle East, through the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

Institutional cooperation has also played a large part in the evolution of regional security, in particular the strategic partnership between NATO and the European Union that is the subject of **Part VIII**, as well as the wider institutional framework for security and cooperation between NATO and the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and other international organisations. These relationships are described in **Part IX**.

Part X addresses the programmes and activities that are the mainstay of the Alliance's effectiveness in the many different fields of planning and cooperation which together constitute the security agenda of today. Information is provided on the logistics, standardisation, communications, armaments, airspace and air traffic management and air defence activities which make it possible for the forces of NATO member countries and Partner countries to operate together. Information is also given on activities in the field of civil emergency planning and disaster relief, on public diplomacy and communications and information programmes, and on scientific cooperation and cooperation in the environmental and societal spheres which have been refocused in order to address new security challenges directly.

Further information relating to abbreviations in common use are listed in **Appendix 1**.