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Ukraine News

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- The first staff-level talks on the Intensified Dialogue take place at NATO Headquarters
- Ukraine hosts a major emergency response exercise

→ North Atlantic Council visits Ukraine

The North Atlantic Council – NATO’s highest decision-making body – visited Ukraine from 18 to 20 October for meetings on NATO-Ukraine cooperation, Ukraine’s reform process and NATO’s support for these reforms.

A special meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission took place with Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk and Defence Minister Anatolii Grytsenko. It was the first high-level NUC meeting to be held in the framework of the Intensified Dialogue on Ukraine’s membership aspirations and related reforms. Drawing on the comprehensive Discussion Paper provided to Allies by Ukraine this summer, the Commission discussed Ukrainian efforts to implement reforms required of European democracies interested in pursuing Alliance membership and noted with satisfaction the fruitful first round of expert consultations under the Intensified Dialogue, which had been conducted in September (*see next item*).



Belgian Ambassador to NATO, Dominique Struye de Swielande shares an informal moment with Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Defence Minister Anatolii Grytsenko (left to right)

Minister Tarasyuk briefed Allies on internal political developments in Ukraine and on priority issues in the country’s foreign policy, reaffirming Ukraine’s interest in NATO membership. Minister Grytsenko informed the Commission about progress to date and future plans in the area of defence reform. He also indicated that he looked forward to further discussions of Ukraine’s defence and security sector reform plans at the NATO-Ukraine high-level consultations in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 23 and 24 October (*these consultations will be covered in the next issue of NATO-Ukraine News*).

Allied Ambassadors reaffirmed NATO’s open-door policy, while underscoring that NATO remains a performance-based organisation founded on shared values, and that progress in key reform and policy areas would be the prerequisite and ultimate measure against which Ukraine’s aspirations to membership would be considered. Speaking to the press after the meeting, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stressed that ensuring the free and fair conduct of the parliamentary elections in March 2006 would be very important for the NATO-Ukraine relationship. He also pointed to the importance of defence and security sector reform, judicial reform and the rule of law, as well as the fight against corruption.

For the first time ever, the North Atlantic Council held a meeting with Ukraine’s National Security and Defence Council, which was chaired by President Viktor Yushchenko. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer hailed the meeting as “a remarkable symbol of the new depth of the NATO-Ukraine relationship” and said that, in fact, it was more than symbolic because they had a very honest discussion about the challenges Ukraine is facing and addressing. He added that he and NATO ambassadors were impressed by the strong commitment to implement fundamental reforms evident during their various meetings in Kyiv. He emphasised that “Ukraine chooses its own priorities and its own path,” while underlining that NATO can and will help, where necessary and possible, making full use of existing mechanisms such as the Intensified Dialogue process and the Annual Target Plans. He also stressed the need for consistency and coordination in Ukraine’s reform efforts.



Students at the National University of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy put questions to NATO's Secretary General

Beyond these meetings, the Secretary General and NATO ambassadors took part in a number of activities aimed at reaching out to different sectors of Ukrainian society. They had a constructive roundtable discussion with the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, Volodymyr Lytvyn, and key parliamentarians representing leading committees and various factions. The Secretary General also addressed students of the Diplomatic Academy, the Institute of International Relations and the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

In addition, groups of NATO ambassadors travelled out from the capital Kyiv to different regions. Some went to Donetsk, where they met students at Donetsk National University, visited the NATO-sponsored Regional Information Centre on Security Issues, and had informal discussions with regional officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations and other opinion formers. Another group visited Kharkiv for a roundtable discussion on "Ukraine-NATO-Russia: Positive vectors for Euro-Atlantic security", followed by a visit to the Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology, where NATO is co-funding a promising project (see page 5). A third group of ambassadors went to Odessa, where they met retired military personnel who are taking part in language-training courses funded by NATO, military

students at the Military Land Forces Institute, and students at the National State University of Odessa, which also hosts a Regional Information Centre.

These outreach activities were an important part of the visit – an effort to engage in dialogue with the Ukrainian people to explain what NATO is today and what it is not.

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The joint NUC statement, the Secretary General's speeches, audio files from various press conferences and photos from the visit are available online at: www.nato.int/docu/update/2005/10-october/e1018a.htm

→ Intensified Dialogue underway

NATO and Ukrainian officials held the first in a series of staff-level talks under the Intensified Dialogue on membership issues and related reforms at NATO Headquarters on 26 September.

The talks were chaired by Ambassador Martin Erdmann, NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Issues. Anton Buteiko, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine, headed a 14-member Ukrainian delegation, which included senior and working-level officials from the ministries of defence, economy, finance, justice, the State Radio and Television Broadcasting Committee, and the National Security and Defence Council.

An initial discussion paper, which was presented by the Ukrainian government to NATO's Secretary General during his visit to Kyiv last June, provided the basis for the launch of the talks. Discussions covered all issues of interest to the Alliance in the context of Ukraine's NATO membership aspirations. As outlined in the 1995 NATO Enlargement Study and NATO's Membership Action Plan, these include foreign and domestic policy, defence and security sector reform, as well as legal and



Prime Minister Yuriy Yekhanurov (left) listens to NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer's opening statement at the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission

resource issues. The goal was to identify key areas where Ukraine will need to focus its reform efforts in support of its membership aspirations, and to help target NATO-Ukraine cooperation to facilitate progress.

The main issues highlighted in this first round of staff talks were also raised with the newly-appointed Prime Minister of Ukraine, Yuriy Yekhanurov, at a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission at NATO Headquarters on 7 October. He outlined his government's reform plans and reaffirmed his country's determination to pursue its course towards Euro-Atlantic integration. In turn, NATO ambassadors underlined that NATO remains committed to its open-door policy. They also stressed that the spotlight is now on Ukraine to make visible and verifiable progress on reforms, since any eventual decisions on membership will be performance-driven. However, they reiterated the willingness of NATO and individual Allies to assist wherever possible.

The Intensified Dialogue on Ukraine's aspirations to NATO membership was launched at a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission at the level of foreign ministers in Vilnius, Lithuania, in April this year, in parallel with a package of short-term actions designed to enhance NATO-Ukraine cooperation in key reform areas (see *NATO-Ukraine News 2/05*).

→ Emergency response exercise

Ukraine hosted a major exercise from 9 to 13 October to test the ability of Ukrainian and international teams to coordinate appropriate responses in the event of a terrorist attack using chemical agents. Exercise "Joint Assistance 2005" took place at the Yavoriv Partnership for Peace Training Centre near the city of Lviv in western Ukraine.

The scenario revolved around simulated terrorist action at a chemical plant. While personnel from the Anti-terrorist Centre of the Ukrainian Security Service were able to disarm most of the terrorists and free hostages, a hidden terrorist managed to detonate several explosive devices, which seriously damaged a storage tank and led to the release of significant amounts of chlorine agent. Many factory staff and first responders were exposed to the chemicals, and several nearby communities were affected by the chemical cloud which was carried by the wind. The Ukrainian authorities asked for international assistance via the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) to help respond to the



Consequence-management teams provide life support and medical care to those affected by chemical agents in Exercise Joint Assistance 2005



Over 1000 personnel took part in Exercise Joint Assistance 2005, including experts and consequence-management teams from 12 countries

emergency and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was also called in to investigate the incident.

The exercise allowed Ukrainian experts and consequence-management teams from 11 NATO and Partner countries to perform chemical reconnaissance and decontamination measures as well as to organise the temporary evacuation of the local population and the provision of life support and medical care to those affected. Over 1000 personnel were involved in the exercise.

The EADRCC planned the exercise together with Ukraine and, for first time, with another international organisation, the OPCW. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs also participated.

“Exercise Joint Assistance 2005 is not only an example of NATO-Ukraine practical cooperation but also an important contribution to Euro-Atlantic cooperation and the fight against terrorism,” said Carsten Fausbøll, the Head of Civil Emergency Planning at NATO Headquarters, opening the exercise. “It will increase our capabilities to protect civilian populations against such attacks. ... We all hope that such attacks won’t take place but experience from the last four years, and most recently in London in July of this year, shows us that we have to be prepared.”

→ Cyclotron x-ray project

On 20 October, a group of NATO ambassadors visited a project in Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine, which is supported as a Science for Peace project under the NATO Programme for Security through Science. The x-ray generator that will be developed within the framework of this project is a cyclotron that will produce high-energy x-rays needed for high-resolution image detection in the field of medicine, illicit trafficking, explosion detection, forensic detection and environmental security. The prototype will not only serve as a first design for later commercialisation, but will also be used by scientists from outside Ukraine on a fee-for-use basis.

Science for Peace projects are applied research and development projects aimed at helping Partner countries in their transition towards a knowledge-based and market-oriented society. This particular project benefits Kharkiv by providing educational opportunities for students and young scientists, by promoting its science centre and, hopefully, the future production of such devices.

The device being developed will be much smaller than the very few machines of this power which currently exist globally. While existing machines range are massive (with a circumference of 776 to 1436 meters), the new cyclotron will be based on advanced technologies permitting it to have a circumference of only 15 meters! That means such a machine can be placed in the basement of a normal hospital building or research centre. An additional advantage will be that it will produce a large radiation range (20-225 MeV) permitting a wider range of applications. The total price for this new machine (below one million EUR) and its running costs will be significantly lower compared to those currently manufactured worldwide. While another US project is developing a similarly compact device, the Ukrainian version is expected to be less expensive and thus more accessible to health researchers and providers in Europe, Central Asia, and other developing markets.



A basement is built to house the cyclotron x-ray device

Beyond the obvious medical uses, the cyclotron could have a number of security applications, such as:

- helping combat illegal trafficking by enabling the detection of specific substances present in bombs;
- assisting criminal investigations by allowing the high-resolution detection of materials or structures, such as remains or fingerprints; or
- contributing to environmental security by facilitating the detection of water pollution.

The project was launched in 2003. To date, the theoretical aspects – analysis and design – have been completed. The aim is for a high-quality system to be ready by the end of 2006. In addition to a NATO grant, Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science is also providing financial support.

The project is being carried out jointly by the Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology and the Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Laboratory in California, the United States. The Technical University in Darmstadt, Germany, is providing training for Ukrainian students and has assigned an independent consultant to the project. The Cyclotron Laboratory of the Eindhoven University in the Netherlands is involved in providing training and advice on laser technology. The Lebedev Physical Institute, Moscow, Russia, is also advising on other technical aspects of the project.

→ Air operations exercise

The Ukrainian armed forces took part in a joint air operations exercise, organised in Bulgaria from 24 August to 5 September under the Partnership for Peace programme. The aim of Exercise "Cooperative Key 2005" was to enhance the ability of the forces of NATO and Partner countries to work together in crisis-response and peace-support operations.

The air forces of 14 NATO countries and seven Partner countries played an active part in the exercise, and a number of other countries participated as observers. Ukraine sent a military transport plane, officers of the joint exercise command headquarters, and an airborne platoon of the 25th detached airborne brigade of the Southern Operational Command based at Dnipropetrovsk.

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

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Further information on NATO-Ukraine relations is available at:

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

(in Ukrainian) www.nato.int/ukraine

In Ukraine, further information and publications are available from:

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