



NATO and Russia: Partners in Peacekeeping



Partners in peacekeeping: Russian and NATO soldiers have worked together in the Balkans for more than five years.

Working together for peace in the Balkans

For more than five years, Russian and NATO soldiers have worked together in NATO-led peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, initially in Bosnia and Herzegovina and later in Kosovo as well. Over the years, this on-going partnership has gone from strength to strength as Russian and NATO peacekeepers have together risen to the challenge of restoring stability and bringing peace to this troubled part of the world, forging increasingly durable relationships in the process. Relations and mutual understanding between Russian and NATO troops on the ground — many of whom patrol, live and serve together in complex and difficult circumstances — have continued to improve.

Russia contributes by far the largest non-NATO contingent to the NATO-led peacekeeping forces. Russian troops make up some 1,200 of the 20,000

peacekeepers in the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and some 3,150 of the more than 40,000 deployed in the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Kosovo and neighbouring countries. Moreover, as a result of linguistic, cultural and religious affinities, Russian peacekeepers have brought an additional dimension to both SFOR and KFOR and have been able to play an especially important role.

Russian peacekeepers have accomplished their missions with military professionalism, discipline and even-handedness, and are working closely with the other NATO and non-NATO militaries deployed in the Balkans. In addition to bringing peace and stability to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, the Balkan peacekeeping missions have enabled Russian and NATO militaries to build a greater understanding of one another and make significant advances in interoperability. Over the months and years in both SFOR and KFOR, Russian and NATO peacekeepers

have developed techniques and procedures that should enable their forces to work effectively together in complex and difficult situations in the future.

Russian peacekeepers serving in the Balkans have had the opportunity to get to know how NATO works and acts. In this way, they have seen for themselves that NATO is a transparent alliance, dealing with a wide range of complex issues and happy to work with and consult partner countries to build durable solutions. As changes in regime in both Croatia and Yugoslavia improve the prospects for peace throughout the Balkans, Russia and NATO have a special responsibility to seize these new opportunities. Moreover, the experience of working together in SFOR and KFOR provides an excellent basis from which Russia and NATO can develop further military-to-military cooperation.

Special status of Russian peacekeepers

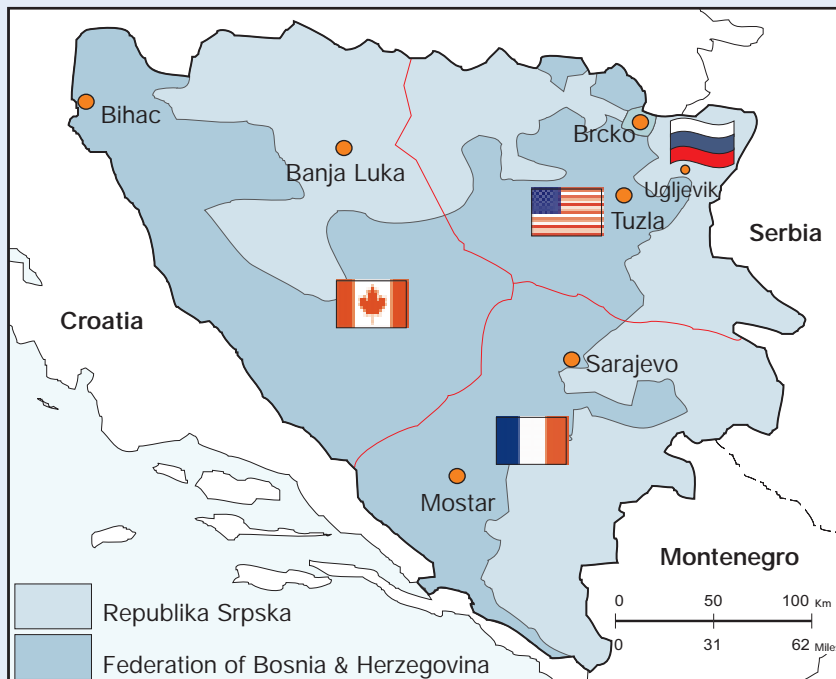
Russian diplomacy helped end the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo and create the conditions for the establishment of SFOR and KFOR.

The terms of Russia's participation in both peacekeeping missions recognise the importance of the country's contribution to the peace settlements. They are different to those of every other partner nation and are regulated by special agreements.

An agreement governing the command and control relationship between the Russian brigade and NATO in SFOR, jointly developed by senior US and Russian officials, was approved by the North Atlantic Council, NATO's supreme decision-making body, in November 1995. Under the terms of this historic agreement, a Russian general, based at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium, serves as a Special Deputy to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), responsible for advising SACEUR on all matters concerning Russia's participation in SFOR. Russian peacekeepers in SFOR's Multinational Division North (MND North) receive their orders and instructions from SACEUR through the Russian Deputy, and are under the tactical control of the US general in charge of MND North for day-to-day operations. The Russian general works out strategic

Russia's participation in SFOR

A brigade of Russian peacekeepers has been based in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the US sector, Multinational Division North, since January 1996. Currently numbering some 1,200 airborne troops, the brigade has an area of responsibility covering 1,750 kilometres and including 75 kilometres of the inter-entity boundary line, running between the predominantly Croat and Muslim Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the predominantly Serb Republika Srpska. About 30 US soldiers are permanently stationed at the Russian brigade's headquarters in Ugljevik, living, eating and sleeping in identical conditions to their Russian colleagues, and a dozen or so Russian soldiers are permanently stationed at the Multinational Division North headquarters near Tuzla. Russian and American soldiers patrol together and both sides say that their cooperation in SFOR has been a unique and positive learning experience. The achievement of NATO-Russian cooperation in SFOR was recognised in The NATO-Russia Founding Act, the 1997 agreement between Russia and the Atlantic Alliance.



Russia's participation in KFOR



* Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

Currently numbering some 3,150, the Russian contingent is composed of airborne forces. According to the terms of a June 1999 agreement, they are deployed in three sectors in the US-led Multinational Brigade East, in the French-led Multinational Brigade North, and in the German-led Multinational Brigade South. Russia also has significant responsibilities at Slatina airport, near Pristina, working together with NATO forces, and Russian representatives are located at KFOR headquarters. American, French and German soldiers are attached to Russian units and vice versa to ensure smooth communication and cooperation.

and operational issues with SACEUR and the SHAPE staff. Meanwhile, the commander of the Russian brigade on the ground in Bosnia coordinates day-to-day operations with the US general commanding MND North.

The terms of Russia's participation in KFOR are governed by an agreement worked out in Helsinki in June 1999. Under this agreement, Russian peacekeepers are deployed in three sectors, in the US-led Multinational Brigade East, the French-led Multinational Brigade North and the German-led Multinational Brigade South. The Russian general at SHAPE is therefore, at the same time, the deputy to SACEUR responsible for Russian participation in SFOR and the representative of the Russian Ministry of Defence for Russian KFOR matters.

Mission histories

Both SFOR and KFOR are seeking to build a security environment in which all citizens, irrespective of their ethnic origins, can live in peace and, with international aid, democracy can begin to grow. Both peacekeeping missions include contingents from both NATO and partner countries.

SFOR is the legal successor to IFOR, the Implementation Force, which deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina in December 1995 in the wake of the Dayton Agreement, the peace accord ending the Bosnian War. IFOR had a one-year mandate to oversee implementation of the military aspects of the peace agreement — bringing about and maintaining an end to hostilities; separating the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina's two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska; overseeing the transfer of territory between the two entities, according to the peace agreement; and moving the parties' forces and heavy weapons into approved storage sites.

Preserving a secure environment remains SFOR's core mission, but as conditions within Bosnia and Herzegovina have improved, SFOR has been able to assist civilian implementation of the peace agreement. Today, SFOR figures actively in efforts to help refugees and displaced persons return to their homes and is working on ways of reforming the Bosnian military — currently divided into three ethnically based, rival armies (Bosnian Muslim, Croat and Serb) — in such a way as to avert any prospect of renewed conflict. UN Security Council Resolution

US decorations for Russian soldiers

General Wesley Clark, then Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, presented US medals to five Russian peacekeepers in December 1999. The soldiers, all from the Russian 13th Tactical Group which was then based in KFOR's Multinational Brigade East, put their lives at risk to rescue an American colleague who had stepped on a mine. In spite of great personal danger, the Russian soldiers entered an area known to be mined, administered emergency first aid and helped evacuate the severely wounded sergeant to a US field hospital.



1088 of December 1996 gives SFOR a UN mandate not just to maintain peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also, where necessary, to enforce it. As the security situation has improved, the number of troops has been reduced. The current level of about 20,000 is significantly lower than the 32,000 deployed between December 1996 and November 1999, and only a third of the 60,000 deployed in IFOR. All 19 NATO and 13 partner countries contribute personnel to SFOR.

KFOR deployed in June 1999 in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and a Military-Technical Agreement with the Yugoslav Army. Its responsibilities include deterring renewed hostility and threats against Kosovo by Yugoslav and Serb forces; establishing a secure environment and

ensuring public safety and order; demilitarising the Kosovo Liberation Army, the Kosovar Albanian military; supporting the international humanitarian effort; and coordinating with, and supporting, the international civil presence, the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

KFOR's 40,000 plus troops come from all 19 NATO member states as well as 18 partner countries. They conduct between 500 and 750 patrols every day, guard more than 550 key sites, and man more than 200 vehicle checkpoints. KFOR is helping build the Kosovo Protection Corps, a local civil-emergency force, which will in time be accountable to the province's democratically elected leadership. KFOR troops also patrol Kosovo's borders and internal boundary with Serbia and man eight crossing points.

This text is not a formally agreed NATO document and, therefore, does not necessarily represent the official views of individual member governments on all policy issues discussed.

OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND PRESS
NATO
B-1110 Brussels
Belgium

Fax : 32-(0)2-707 1252
E-Mail : natodoc@hq.nato.int
HTTP : [//WWW.NATO.INT/](http://WWW.NATO.INT/)