

| Beyond Prague

The many reforms, initiatives and programmes agreed in Prague are the beginning of a transformation process essential to guaranteeing the security of the territory, populations and forces of NATO members against all threats and challenges. The agenda is extremely ambitious. But it is also realistic and achievable. The preservation of the transatlantic security link that has served both sides of the Atlantic so well for the past half century depends on translating it into effective action.

*Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

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NATO AFTER PRAGUE

New Members, New Capabilities, New Relations

The Prague Summit that took place on 21 and 22 November 2002 was a defining moment for NATO and for Europe. Decisions taken by Alliance leaders in Prague have put a permanent end to the divisions that scarred Europe in the 20th century and set in motion a modernisation process to ensure that NATO is able to deal as effectively with the security challenges of the 21st century as it was with the threats of the last. In the process, NATO's leaders have shown their commitment to maintain the Alliance as their central institution for collective defence, security consultation and multinational military actions.

In Prague, NATO leaders invited seven countries to begin membership-accession negotiations; adopted a series of measures to improve military capabilities; and endorsed a package of initiatives to forge new relationships with Partners. In this way, the Alliance has demonstrated -- once again -- its capacity to adapt to meet challenges that are very different from those faced in the first decades of its existence, but are no less formidable. These new challenges -- which are more diverse and not limited to a particular area of the world -- cannot be successfully overcome without cooperation between Europe and North America. And it is NATO alone that guarantees the transatlantic link in security.

I New Members

Seven countries -- Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia -- with a combined population of 45 million have been invited to begin membership-accession negotiations. This, the second post-Cold War round of NATO enlargement, includes invitations to three former Soviet republics, three former Warsaw Pact members and one former Yugoslav republic.

The seven invitees have all participated in the Membership Action Plan (MAP), NATO's preparatory programme for prospective members, since its inception in 1999, as well as the NATO-led peacekeeping missions in Southeastern Europe. As a result, they are better prepared for membership than the first three countries to join NATO after the Cold War -- the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland -- when they were invited to begin accession talks after the Madrid Summit in 1997. Accession Protocols are scheduled to be signed by the end of March 2003 and the ratification process should be complete before the next NATO summit in May 2004. To keep to this schedule and ensure that they are ready for membership, future members will have to work hard to fulfil their commitments under the MAP. This includes the continuation of the defence reform process and the reorganisation of their military forces.

Alliance enlargement will strengthen NATO in several ways making it more able to handle both its traditional and more recent security missions. Politically, the new members will see the extension of a zone of security over more of the Euro-Atlantic area. Militarily, they will be able to provide specific, niche capabilities as well as a general defence contribution appropriate to their means.

NATO's Open Door

NATO is maintaining its open-door policy for those MAP countries which were not invited to join the Alliance in Prague, all of whom have made great progress in recent years. NATO is increasing its assistance to both Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* in the field of defence and security sector reform to help these countries' preparations for future

Alliance membership. Croatia, which joined the MAP in 2002, will also in the future be considered for NATO membership. It will be judged on its reform efforts and compliance with international obligations, including cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. In accordance with the Washington Treaty, NATO's founding charter, and subject to unanimous agreement of NATO member countries, Alliance membership is also open to any other European country that may wish to join NATO in the future.

I New Capabilities

The Alliance adopted in Prague a series of measures aimed at ensuring that NATO is equipped for the full spectrum of modern military missions, recognising that the traditional, more static forces of the Cold War are no longer valid. This means NATO creating forces able to move faster and further afield, to apply military force more effectively, and to sustain themselves in combat. To this end, NATO leaders approved a three-pronged approach to improving Alliance defence capabilities: a new capabilities initiative, the Prague Capabilities Commitment; creating a NATO Response Force; and streamlining its military command structure.

Prague Capabilities Commitment

The new capabilities initiative, the Prague Capabilities Commitment, differs from its predecessor, the Defence Capabilities Initiative, in that individual Allies have now made firm political commitments to improve capabilities in more than 400 specific areas. This includes the following eight fields: chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence; intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition; air-to-ground surveillance; command, control and communications; combat effectiveness, including precision-guided munitions and suppression of enemy air defences; strategic air and sea lift; air-to-air refuelling; and deployable combat support and combat service support units.

Once implemented, the Prague Capabilities Commitment will at least quadruple the number of large transport aircraft in Europe, from 4 to 16 and possibly more. It will also significantly increase air-to-air refuelling capacity

among NATO's European members by, among other initiatives, establishing a pool of 10 to 15 refuelling aircraft. And it will increase NATO's stock of non-US, air-delivered, precision-guided munitions by 40 per cent by 2007. Moreover, the Prague Capabilities Commitment and the European Union's efforts to develop military capabilities are intended to be mutually reinforcing.

NATO Response Force

The NATO Response Force (NRF) is to consist of a technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force, including land, sea and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed. It will serve two distinct but mutually reinforcing purposes. First, it will provide a high-readiness force able to move quickly to wherever it may be required to carry out the full range of Alliance missions. Second, the NRF will be a catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance's military capabilities and, more generally, for their continuing transformation to meet evolving security challenges.

The Alliance's military authorities are now turning this concept into a detailed plan with the aim of making the NRF operational as soon as possible. The NRF will have an initial operational capability by October 2004 at the latest and be fully operational by October 2006. The NRF and the European Union's Headline Goal of creating a deployable, corps-sized force should also be mutually reinforcing.

New Military Command Structure

The new military command structure, whose outline was endorsed in Prague, will be leaner, more efficient, effective and deployable. It will consist of two strategic commands, one of which is to be operational, the other functional. The strategic command for operations will be headquartered in Europe in Belgium and will be supported by two joint force commands able to generate a land-based Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) headquarters and a robust but more limited standing joint headquarters from which a sea-based CJTF headquarters capability can be drawn.

The strategic command for transformation will be based in the United States but will also have a presence in Europe. It will be responsible for the continuing transformation of military capabilities and promotion of interoperability of Alliance forces, where appropriate, in co-operation with the strategic command for operations.

Measures Combating New Threats

NATO leaders also agreed a new military concept for defence against terrorism as part of a package of measures to strengthen the Alliance's capabilities in this area, including improved intelligence sharing and crisis-response arrangements. NATO is also working with Partners to implement a Civil Emergency Planning Action Plan to improve civil preparedness against possible chemical, biological or radiological attacks against civilian populations and help national authorities deal with the consequences of such attacks.

Alliance leaders also endorsed implementation of five nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons defence initiatives, which will enhance the Alliance's capabilities against weapons of mass destruction: a Prototype Deployable NBC Analytical Laboratory; a Prototype NBC Event Response team; a virtual Centre of Excellence for NBC Weapons Defence; a NATO Biological and Chemical Defence Stockpile; and a Disease Surveillance System. NATO is also strengthening its capabilities to defend against cyber attack and has initiated a new NATO Missile Defence feasibility study to examine options for protecting Alliance territory, forces and population against the full range of missile threats.

Wider Role in Peace-Support Missions

NATO will assist Germany and the Netherlands in selected areas as these countries jointly take over the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. This is the Alliance's first direct involvement in peace-support missions beyond Europe, although individual NATO member countries -- originally the United Kingdom and now Turkey -- have provided the backbone of ISAF since it was established.

I New Relationships

The security challenges of today are too multi-faceted to be handled by one single institution, no matter how capable. NATO works together with a variety of institutions, organisations and countries to build a web of mutually reinforcing, interlocking security arrangements. In this way, the Alliance is strengthening its institutional relationships with organisations such as the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations and deepening and broadening existing relations with Partner countries throughout the Euro-Atlantic area, Russia, and the wider Mediterranean region.

Relations with the European Union

NATO and the European Union are forming a strategic partnership so that they can bring their combined assets to bear in enhancing peace and stability. During 2001 and 2002, this partnership has already been successfully demonstrated in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* where, together with other international organisations, NATO and the European Union combined to prevent civil war, and in Southern Serbia, where their intervention helped defuse conflict.

Solutions satisfactory to all Allies still have to be found on the issue of participation of non-EU European Allies in EU defence matters and effective co-operative arrangements have to be worked out to avoid duplication. In due course, such arrangements should permit the European Union to take over NATO's Task Force Fox mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.* They should also allow the European Union and NATO to work closely together to manage crises in Europe and beyond.

Relations with Russia

NATO and Russia are moving from talking together to acting together -- from discussing cooperation to making cooperation a daily reality. In the NATO-Russia Council, NATO member states and Russia are working together as equal partners and are already making progress in areas such as peace-

keeping, defence reform, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, search and rescue at sea, civil-emergency planning, theatre missile defence and the struggle against terrorism. Prospects for broadening and intensifying this cooperation have never been greater.

Partnership

Partnerships remain central to Alliance policies. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace have greatly enhanced security and stability throughout the Euro-Atlantic area. Both are now being upgraded to give Partner countries more focused assistance and bring them closer to NATO. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council's Action Plan on Terrorism is an example of how these relationships are being reinforced to deal with new threats affecting Partners as much as Allies. The Alliance is also developing its Mediterranean Dialogue in recognition of the need for closer cooperation with the wider Mediterranean region.

Relations with Southeastern Europe

The lesson of the Alliance's involvement in Southeastern Europe is that crisis management and diplomacy have succeeded in curtailing or resolving conflict when backed by the credible threat of the use of force. The Allies are determined to continue NATO's peace-support missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo until a self-sustaining peace has been achieved based on solid democratic institutions and the protection of human rights. The fact that three Southeastern European countries -- Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia -- have been invited to join NATO underlines NATO's commitment to the region and enhances the prospect of bringing lasting peace and stability to it.

The possibility of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia joining the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and participating in the Partnership for Peace depends on the actions of those countries. It becomes realistic if they live up to their international commitments, cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague and make progress in defence sector reform.