

'Shaping the Alliance for the future' from NATO Review (February 1994)

Caption: In February 1994, Manfred Wörner, Secretary-General of NATO and President of the North Atlantic Council, outlines in the NATO Review the new tasks of the Atlantic Alliance.

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Shaping the Alliance for the future

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The Brussels Summit is an historic turning point in the life of our Alliance. NATO's Heads of State and Government have taken major steps forward on several fronts. Their decisions provide the guidelines for shaping the Alliance to the end of the decade. This meeting of Summit leaders was the fourth in a little more than four years, and only the thirteenth in NATO's 45-year history. The frequency of recent summits reflects NATO's adaptation to momentous changes that have taken place in Europe since 1989 and the central role the Alliance continues to play in this transition.

As a result of this Summit, held at NATO headquarters on 10 and 11 January, the Alliance is well prepared for the future. We have shown that NATO is not a relic of a time gone by but rather an adaptable tool through which member states continue to express and protect their common interests. I could not but concur fully when President Clinton - during the first day of Summit discussions - quoted from the late Walter Lippman, an American political commentator, who wrote barely three days after the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949: "The pact will be remembered long after the conditions that have provoked it are no longer the main business of mankind. For the treaty recognizes and proclaims a community of interest which is much older than the conflict with the Soviet Union, and come what may, will survive it." Now, as in the past, NATO's greatest strength is the ability of the member states to consult and persuade, coming up with conclusions that reflect a combined wisdom that goes beyond the sum of its parts.

In particular, the Summit has renewed the transatlantic partnership based on a new, more mature relationship between North America and Europe; the transatlantic dimension is, and will remain, vital to security and stability in Europe. Secondly, we have agreed in principle to open up the Alliance to new members. At the same time, we have ushered in a new era of cooperation by inviting our Cooperation Partners and other CSCE states that are willing and able to contribute, to join us in a Partnership For Peace. We have also decided on major changes to our Alliance's structures: we will make them more flexible to allow NATO's assets to be used effectively in support of crisis management and peacekeeping operations. Finally, we have agreed that NATO will address the new security challenges stemming from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Renewing the transatlantic link

In essence, our Alliance embodies the recognition that the interests and the destiny of Europe and North America are inextricably linked. The development of European institutions to include more competence in the areas of foreign policy and security has therefore at times been viewed with mixed feelings by some of the most ardent NATO supporters. There has occasionally been a fear that the WEU or the post-Maastricht European Union would compete, duplicate or even harm the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Developments since the WEU Secretariat moved to Brussels in January 1993 have already proved these fears to be unfounded and have confirmed that nations are carefully steering each of these organisations on a course that ensures smooth cooperation.

The Summit, however, allowed us to go beyond the previously stated intentions to implement the principles of complementarity and transparency. There is now a clear recognition on both sides of the Atlantic that by enhancing coordination in the areas of security and defence, European Allies will be able to make a more substantial and coherent contribution to the Alliance as a whole. I was especially encouraged to hear the US President remove any doubt about the commitment of his administration to support the efforts of Europeans to advance their own security interests.

In order to further the capacity of Europeans to assume a more vigorous role in assuring the security of their continent, the Summit endorsed the principle of making NATO assets available to WEU for operations in which NATO itself chooses not to act. This should contribute to establishing a more mature balance of responsibilities within the Alliance.

Combined Joint Task Forces

One of the major decisions of the Rome Summit in November 1991 was the approval by Heads of State and Government of the Alliance's new Strategic Concept. This document spelled out a major reorientation in NATO's defence efforts. Instead of maintaining large forces in a high state of readiness to protect against massive aggression coming from a known enemy, the new strategy recognised that the end of the Cold War enabled us to adopt a new defence posture based on lower force and readiness levels. In essence, Allies acknowledged that new risks to our security could come from many different directions, and could in most cases be countered by the timely and rapid deployment of highly mobile forces rather than the massive response that would have been necessary in the event of an attack by the Warsaw Pact.

The Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept represents the next logical step in this adaptation of our force structures. It will provide the flexibility that would be required to allow NATO and non-NATO forces to act together in peacekeeping and other contingency operations. Using a "building block" approach, command elements could be detached from major NATO commands for operations under NATO or, where NATO decides not to become involved, under WEU auspices. The concept therefore provides a mechanism for cooperation with units from states that are not part of the Alliance's integrated military structure, or with units representing other organisations. In this manner, forces can also be created to permit Allies to act jointly with Cooperation Partners or other states.

The Heads of State and Government at the Brussels Summit endorsed the CJTF concept and have directed the North Atlantic Council in Permanent Session to develop modalities for its implementation. In coordination with the WEU, this work will also include establishing practical arrangements to implement the principle of "separable but not separate" military capabilities that could be employed by NATO or the WEU. The Council will report on the implementation of these decisions to the Spring 1994 Ministerial meeting, that will be held in Istanbul on 9 and 10 June.

Partnership For Peace

Of all proposals that have come out of the Brussels Summit, Partnership For Peace has attracted the most attention. Since our Alliance first offered the hand of friendship to Central and East European states at its London Summit in July 1990, one of our main goals has been to project stability to these young democracies. The creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in late 1991 has affected NATO more than any other decision reached during my tenure as Secretary General. A substantial portion of the time, energy and resources of all major elements of the NATO structure - civilian or military - is now spent on activities generated under the annual NACC Work Plan and other forms of cooperation with Central and East European states and with the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Partnership For Peace adds several important new dimensions to our interaction with the Cooperation Partners. It will allow Partner states to work towards the development of cooperative military relations with NATO, for the purpose of joint planning, training, and exercises, in order to strengthen their ability to undertake missions in the fields of peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. The Partnership will facilitate transparency in national defence planning and budgeting processes, and democratic control of defence forces. We believe that achievement of these Partnership objectives will make an important contribution to the enhancement of security and stability in Europe. Active Partner countries will also have the opportunity to consult with NATO if they perceive a direct threat to their territorial integrity, political independence, or security.

Of course, Partnership For Peace is linked to the issue of NATO enlargement. While we understand the desire by some Central and Eastern European governments for NATO membership, the Allies reached a consensus last autumn that there should be no immediate enlargement. Such a move would risk creating new divisions in Europe, which ultimately would harm rather than aid the security of the Central and Eastern European states and of Europe as a whole. Instead, Partnership For Peace offers to our partners a programme that will facilitate interoperability, thereby helping future candidates to prepare for membership. By not

excluding any of the Cooperation Partners, we make it clear that this Partnership is not designed against anyone. Rather, it is the Central and Eastern European countries themselves that will, through a process of self-selection - according to their level of participation in the programme - signify their desire to draw closer to NATO.

Partnership For Peace constitutes a further contribution by the Alliance towards stability in Europe. PFP complements other initiatives aimed at underpinning the security of the new Europe - especially the NACC itself. By contributing to the further building of confidence among all European states, the Alliance hopes that PFP and the efforts that continue to be undertaken through the NACC will aid in bringing about the conditions under which the CSCE can become the core of an effective pan-European security system.

Other major issues

The Summit also reviewed other major issues affecting the Alliance. Heads of State and Government reconfirmed the significance they attach to further progress in the areas of arms control and disarmament. They decided to intensify and expand NATO's political and defence efforts against proliferation and directed that work begin immediately in appropriate fora of the Alliance to develop an overall policy framework aimed at reinforcing ongoing prevention efforts and at reducing the proliferation threat.

Heads of State and Government also reaffirmed their support for the further development of durable democratic institutions and for continued economic reform in Russia and Ukraine. They viewed such an evolution as important for the security and stability of Europe as a whole and offered to develop further cooperation with them, as with other countries in Central and Eastern Europe. With respect to the continuing tragic conflict in Bosnia, Heads of State and Government have reaffirmed their determination to contribute to the implementation of a viable settlement. The no-fly-zone and the naval embargo remain in force. We have also reaffirmed our readiness to use airpower to protect safe areas and to prevent the strangulation of Sarajevo. In addition, Heads of State and Government have called for an examination of how the airport at Tuzla can be re-opened for humanitarian relief purposes, and for plans to ensure that the blocked rotation of the UNPROFOR contingent in Srebrenica can finally proceed.

It is not always easy to gauge the significance of a decision when it has just been made. Yet I am convinced that, with a few years of hindsight, the agreements reached by Heads of State and Government in Brussels will be viewed as seminal. Our Alliance has already gone a long way in its transformation. The decisions reached at the Summit guarantee NATO's effectiveness in meeting the challenges of European security as we draw nearer to the 21st century.