



NATO AFTER BUCHAREST

Aiding Afghanistan, consolidating Europe, deepening partnerships, meeting new challenges

The Bucharest Summit that took place from 2 to 4 April 2008 was NATO's largest ever summit meeting. Over 60 nations attended, as well as senior representatives from many other key institutions, including the UN Secretary General and the President of the EU Commission. The summit highlighted the Alliance's determination to work closely with the international community in meeting the security challenges of the 21st century, as well as its own unique contribution to promoting security and stability in a fast-changing strategic environment.

In Bucharest, NATO leaders underlined the Alliance's long-term commitment to Afghanistan and the importance of working closely with all the nations and international organizations supporting progress there. Reaffirming NATO's open door policy and its commitment to consolidating security and stability in Europe, they invited Albania and Croatia to begin membership-accession talks, and agreed that Ukraine and Georgia will one day become members of NATO. Alliance leaders also stressed NATO's commitment to its KFOR mission in Kosovo and its training mission in Iraq, as well as the Alliance's preparedness to continue to support the African Union in Sudan and Somalia. They gave further impetus to ongoing efforts to transform the Alliance to meet operational demands and emerging security threats, including by issuing a unified statement on missile defence. They also held a constructive discussion with the Russian President on how the Alliance and Russia can work together to address security challenges.



Aiding Afghanistan

Alliance leaders underlined at Bucharest that Euro-Atlantic and wider international security is closely tied to Afghanistan's future as a peaceful, democratic state, respectful of human rights and free from the threat of terrorism. For that reason, the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) remains NATO's top priority. It was noted that significant progress has been made since NATO took command of the ISAF mission in August 2003, but that many challenges remain – for the Afghan Government, NATO and the rest of the international community.

The Alliance has long advocated a “comprehensive approach” to Afghanistan and other security challenges that brings together civil and military efforts. At Bucharest this “comprehensive approach” was shown in action. At a meeting specifically devoted to Afghanistan, the Allies were joined by their ISAF partners, the Afghan President, the UN Secretary General, the EU Commission President, the EU High Representative, the Managing Director of the World Bank, and Japan's Deputy Foreign Minister. The meeting marked the beginning of a new phase in the international community's engagement, where a predominantly military effort to providing security and stability is shifting towards an approach with a stronger emphasis on civilian-led reconstruction efforts and on Afghan ownership.

The ISAF troop-contributing nations agreed a strategic vision for Afghanistan which is guided by four key principles:

- a firm and shared long-term commitment;
- support for enhanced Afghan leadership and responsibility;
- a comprehensive approach by the international community, bringing together civilian and military efforts; and
- increased cooperation and engagement with Afghanistan's neighbours, especially Pakistan.

In addition, ISAF contributors also endorsed a comprehensive political-military strategic plan for Afghanistan, which sets out clear and realistic benchmarks to enable a more focused effort and measure progress objectively. The plan also provides guidance on how to interact more effectively with the Afghan government and other international organizations. Finally, a number of Allies and partners also announced new force commitments for ISAF and other forms of support.



Consolidating Europe

The Bucharest Summit underlined NATO's continuing strong commitment to help create a Europe that is whole, free and at peace. Albania and Croatia were invited to begin accession talks. The aim is for Accession Protocols to be signed by the end of July 2008 and to complete the ratification process without delay. The summit reaffirmed that NATO's door remains open to other European democracies willing and able to assume the responsibilities of membership.

Like Albania and Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* has been participating in NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP) for a number of years to prepare for possible membership. Allied leaders agreed that the country would be invited to join NATO as soon as ongoing negotiations over its name have led to a mutually acceptable solution.

Georgia and Ukraine have been engaged in Intensified Dialogues with NATO on their membership aspirations and related reforms. Allied leaders agreed that the two countries will become members of NATO, and that the Alliance will engage intensively with both countries to address outstanding questions regarding their applications to join the MAP process. NATO foreign ministers will make a first assessment of the progress made by each of the two countries in December 2008.

In response to the Euro-Atlantic aspirations and reform efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, these two countries were invited to begin an Intensified Dialogue as well, without prejudice to any eventual Alliance decision. The Allies also reiterated their willingness to deepen cooperation with Serbia, in particular through the development of an Individual Partnership Action Plan, and to consider an Intensified Dialogue following a request by Serbia.

Alliance leaders reaffirmed their commitment to stability throughout the Balkans and reiterated that the robust NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR), which first deployed in June 1999, will remain in Kosovo on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 1244. NATO and KFOR will continue to work with the authorities and with the United Nations, the European Union and other international actors to support the development of a stable, democratic, multi-ethnic and peaceful Kosovo.

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



Deepening partnerships

NATO's partners are crucial to the way in which the Alliance operates today. The Alliance's partnership arrangements include the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC); special relationships with Russia and Ukraine; the Mediterranean Dialogue with seven countries in North Africa and the Middle East; the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative aimed at countries from the Gulf region; and less formal bilateral relationships with partner countries across the globe. At Bucharest, Allies underlined their continued interest in engaging partners in missions and operations, and tailoring dialogue and cooperation to their specific interests and concerns.

At an informal working lunch, EAPC Heads of State and Government welcomed the decision of Malta to return to the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and join the EAPC. (Malta joined the PfP programme in April 1995 but suspended its participation in October 1996.)

At a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), the Ukrainian President thanked the Allies for the "clear signal" they had given on the future of Ukraine's relations with NATO by agreeing that the country will become a member of NATO. Allied leaders welcomed Ukraine's progress in defence and security-sector reform and praised its substantial contribution to NATO-led operations and missions.

Alliance leaders met the Russian President in the first summit-level meeting of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) since it was established in May 2002. NRC leaders agreed on the strategic importance of the NATO-Russia partnership and on the value of the NRC as a forum for frank political dialogue, including on issues where Allies and Russia may disagree. Prior to the NRC meeting, NATO and Russia signed an agreement to facilitate the land transit across Russian territory of non-military equipment destined for ISAF.

The Allies called for further cooperation between NATO and the United Nations to maintain international peace and security, and underlined the value of effective and efficient coordination between the two organisations. They also emphasised their determination to improve the NATO-EU strategic partnership, which covers a wide range of issues of common interest and is of increasing importance in Afghanistan and Kosovo. Allied leaders reiterated that “a stronger EU will further contribute to our common security”.



Meeting new challenges

At Bucharest, Alliance leaders underlined the need for NATO to remain able to meet its operational commitments and perform the full range of its missions, and gave further impetus and guidance for the ongoing transformation of the Alliance’s forces and defence capabilities. They also stressed the need to adapt structures and processes at NATO Headquarters, and charged NATO’s Secretary General with developing proposals to this end in time for the 2009 Summit.

There was broad consensus at the Bucharest Summit that, in addition to meeting current requirements, especially in relation to NATO’s missions and operations, the Alliance must also prepare for new, non-traditional challenges, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber attacks, or a disruption in energy supply.

Allied leaders recognized that the planned deployment of European-based US missile defence assets will help protect many Allies, and agreed that this capability should be an integral part of any future NATO-wide missile defence architecture. Options for a comprehensive missile defence architecture to extend coverage to all Allied territory not otherwise covered by the US system will be reviewed at NATO’s

next Summit in 2009. Encouraging Russia to take advantage of US proposals for cooperation on missile defence, they stated their readiness to explore the potential for linking US, NATO and Russian missile defence systems at an appropriate time.


Allies endorsed a policy on cyber defence emphasising the need for NATO and nations to protect key information systems; share best practices; and provide a capability to assist Allied nations, upon request, to counter a cyber attack. They looked forward to continuing the development of NATO's cyber defence capabilities and strengthening the linkages between NATO and national authorities in this area.

Alliance leaders also noted a report on NATO's role in energy security, which identifies guiding principles and outlines options and recommendations for further activities notably in five key areas where NATO can provide added value: information and intelligence fusion and sharing; projecting stability; advancing international and regional cooperation; supporting consequence management; and supporting the protection of critical infrastructure. Progress will be reviewed at the 2009 Summit.



Beyond Bucharest

Allied leaders agreed to meet again in Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany, next year to celebrate NATO's 60th anniversary. The summit will provide an opportunity to take stock of NATO's transformation and to further articulate and strengthen the Alliance's vision of its role in meeting the evolving challenges of the 21st century. It was agreed that a Declaration on Alliance Security will be prepared for adoption at the 2009 Summit to further set the scene for this important task.



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