

NATO'S 2004 ISTANBUL SUMMIT: CHARTING THE ALLIANCE'S ONGOING ADAPTATION TO 21ST CENTURY RISKS AND CHALLENGES

Projecting stability has become the precondition for our security. Territorial defense remains a core function, but we simply can no longer protect our security without addressing the potential risks and threats that arise far from our homes. Terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and instability flowing from failed states are threats that know no borders. This new strategic environment forces us to look at security in a completely different light than we did in the past. The agenda of the Summit in Istanbul on 28-29 June will reflect the volatility of the new, 21st century security environment. And it will reflect the strong determination of Alliance governments to continue to transform NATO into an effective instrument for tackling the many risks and challenges that environment poses.

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When they meet in Istanbul on 28-29 June, NATO's 26 Heads of State and Government will have a busy agenda. The Summit agenda will reflect the volatility of the new, 21st century security environment. And it will reflect the strong determination of Alliance governments to continue to transform NATO into an effective instrument for tackling the many risks and challenges which that environment poses.

Our Istanbul Summit will cap a month of intensive, top-level diplomatic activity, including the commemoration of the Normandy landings, the G-8 and US-EU Summits. This means that Istanbul will be part of a wider picture. In today's fluid strategic environment, this is as it must be. Our transatlantic Alliance will of course continue to ensure collective defense for its member states. But it will also act with its partners and other international organizations to defend against new threats—by projecting stability through its missions, partnerships and transformation of military capabilities.

Projecting Stability: NATO's New Challenge

Projecting stability has become the precondition for our security. Territorial defense remains a core function, but we simply can no longer protect our security without addressing the potential risks and threats that arise far from our homes. Terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and instability flowing from failed states are threats that know no borders.

This new strategic environment forces us to look at security in a completely different light than we did in the past. We must look at threats functionally instead of geographically. We must contemplate peace support and stabilization missions far away from our traditional defense perimeter. And we must develop new approaches that bring together political, economic and military instruments.

NATO has risen to this task. First of all, by taking prompt and decisive military action, most recently in Afghanistan. But in addition, over the last few years, NATO has embarked on a complete adaptation of its structures, procedures and capabilities, the inclusion of new member countries, and a significant enhancement of its relationship with Partner countries and other international organizations. That transformation process continues today.

NATO's last Summit meeting (Prague, November 2002) laid the groundwork for a new, 21st century Alliance. At our Istanbul Summit, we will review the construction of this new NATO. But we will also take NATO's transformation further. We will build on established mechanisms for shaping security. We will agree on new policies and instruments – to make sure the Alliance is able to meet its members' fundamental security needs as effectively now as it did in the more static environment of the past.

The Istanbul Summit will demonstrate how the new NATO projects stability:

- Through military operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan, and through our anti-terrorist operations in the Mediterranean Sea.
- By strengthening our relationships with other international organizations like the EU, and with an ever-growing list of partners, from Russia, Ukraine to the Caucasus, Central Asia and with the Mediterranean countries and the wider region.
- And by modernizing the way we organize and deploy our forces for new operations, far away from home.

When you look at our Alliance's activities, you see that Turkey is at the epicenter of the new NATO, at the crossroads of strategically important regions towards which NATO is reaching out. So Istanbul is a most appropriate venue for our Summit which will demonstrate that NATO is an Alliance radically transformed and pursuing its common vision on the ground where it really matters.

Making Progress in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is the top priority for NATO. If we want to win the war on terrorism, we must first win the peace in Afghanistan. That is why, last summer, the Alliance took charge of the International Security Assistance Force. And it is why NATO is determined to see this mission through, and to make it a success. The security provided by ISAF has already helped progress in a number of areas. Legitimate political institutions are developing. Fighters are gradually being disarmed and weapons secured. Reconstruction projects and other initiatives are improving the daily lives of many citizens. At the same time, however, serious challenges remain.

The Istanbul Summit will demonstrate NATO's unflinching commitment to a better future for Afghanistan. The Alliance will expand the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) deployed outside Kabul. It will work with the Afghan authorities to spread security and stability. It will establish closer relations with Afghanistan's neighbors. And we will make it possible for other international organizations and NGOs to make their unique contributions to Afghanistan's future.

Seeing through our Commitment to the Balkans

The Istanbul Summit will also represent a major opportunity to emphasize NATO's continued stabilizing role in the Balkans. Patience and persistence are paying off. The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has improved to the point where we can gradually reduce our troop presence there, and hand over important responsibilities to the European Union. At Istanbul, we can therefore legitimately point to the success of our engagement in the Balkans.

However, our job in the Balkans is not yet over. In Kosovo, serious problems persist, and NATO's continued presence remains essential. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, NATO will also remain engaged after SFOR comes to an end, to assist with defense reform, the search for war criminals, and the fight against terrorism. We want Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Serbia and Montenegro, to continue their reform efforts and to fully cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, so that they can join our Partnership for Peace programme.

At Istanbul, we also want to reassure the three Balkan countries that are taking part in our Membership Action Plan –Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹– that the door to NATO membership remains open for them. These three countries should be encouraged to follow through the necessary reforms in order to achieve their objective of membership in our Alliance.

Combating Terrorism

¹ Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

The Prague Summit already took a number of concrete decisions to enhance NATO's contribution to the fight against terrorism. The Allies agreed to beef up intelligence sharing. They agreed to develop specific capabilities to deter terrorist activities and potential attacks, and to counter them if they should still occur. They agreed on a Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism in order to involve NATO's Partner countries more closely in this struggle. They also agreed to a new military concept for the defense against terrorism, which states that Alliance forces must be able to "deter, disrupt and defend" against terrorists, and to do so wherever the interests of the Allies demand it.

At Istanbul, we will carry this work another major step forward. An enhanced package of measures against terrorism will improve NATO's potential for addressing new, unconventional threats even further. Our Summit will give fresh impetus to the Alliance's work with Russia and other Partner countries in this area, as well as our cooperation with other international organizations.

Protecting against Weapons of Mass Destruction

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has been a grave and gathering threat, and a key area of Alliance attention, for many years. Against this background, at Prague, the Allies took a number of steps to increase their defense posture against a possible attack with nuclear, biological, chemical or radiological weapons. These measures include enhanced detection capabilities, better protective gear for NATO forces, and support for civilian authorities in case of an emergency. The Allies also agreed to begin a new NATO Missile Defense feasibility study to examine options for protecting Alliance territory, forces and population centers against the full range of missile threats. At Istanbul, we will complete various Prague initiatives, including a missile threat assessment, and mark the full operational capability of our new Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Battalion. These initiatives will significantly enhance NATO's ability to respond to the threat of proliferation of WMDs.

Starting a New Era of Partnership

Istanbul will also be the place where we will raise relations with our Partner countries to a new level. The success of NATO's Partnership policy has been remarkable. It has created military and human interoperability across Europe and well into Central Asia. However, last March seven Partners turned into Allies –a step that changed the configuration of the remaining group of Partner countries. Simply put, our Partner countries are now more diverse, both geographically and in terms of their security interests and cooperation needs.

This means that our Partnership policy will have to enter a new phase – a phase characterized by more individualized cooperation with Partners, a much stronger focus on cooperation with the Caucasus and Central Asia, and a greater emphasis on defense reform to meet the new threats, such as terrorism. Such a new Partnership will ensure that the unique strategic value of these mechanisms remains high –for Allies and Partners alike. Today's global challenges require global answers. NATO and its Partners are an important part of the response.

Strengthening NATO-Russia Relations

NATO-Russia relations are a permanent fixture of European security. Sound NATO-Russia relations mean a boost in our ability to cope with the new challenges of today and tomorrow – as already evidenced by the now regular Ambassadorial and Ministerial exchanges. The creation of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) in May 2002 has taken our cooperation to a qualitatively new level.

By focusing on the most critical issues facing both NATO and Russia –terrorism, proliferation, crisis management, civil emergencies, and defense reform– the NRC has established itself as a serious forum. We also discuss matters of disagreement, such as CFE-related issues. At Istanbul, we will note progress on various projects on preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, including missile defense and a global proliferation assessment that will help our further work in this area.

Furthering the NATO-Ukraine Relationship

NATO's relationship with Ukraine is no less important, and we want to give that relationship new momentum in Istanbul as well. One look at the map makes it clear that the entire Euro-Atlantic community has a powerful interest in assisting Ukraine's reform process. That is why, since 1997, NATO and Ukraine have engaged in a Distinctive Partnership which addresses key areas in which the Alliance and Ukraine can work together. In the NATO-Ukraine Commission, Allies and Ukraine hold regular discussions on topical security issues, and discuss how NATO can assist Ukraine's reforms, with a particular focus on the military and democratic reform processes. This includes supporting Ukraine's implementation of its Annual Target Plan, in which the country sets standards it will strive to meet.

Enhancing the Mediterranean Dialogue and Reaching Out to the Wider Region

Istanbul could also be the opportunity to launch a broader and more ambitious framework for NATO's outreach to countries from the Mediterranean and the wider region of the Middle East. No one today can doubt that these regions matter. Demographics, economics, and energy needs create an ever closer interdependence between us. And these regions matter, because the new 21st century threats affect all of us and, hence, require a common response.

Through a stronger focus on military interoperability, defense reform and the fight against terrorism, we would elevate the existing Mediterranean Dialogue to the level of genuine partnership. Istanbul could go even further, by launching a cooperative initiative for the wider region. Clearly, advancing security and political and economic progress will require strong engagement by the countries in the region since ownership is of the essence. It will also require a sound understanding on our part of their ambitions and concerns. It will also require a new degree of cooperation between our international institutions. At Istanbul, a city that bridges two continents, we should be able to underline NATO's contribution in building new bridges of cooperation.

Deepening the NATO-EU Strategic Partnership

The establishment of a strategic partnership between NATO and the European Union is one of the most recent, yet most fundamental institutional developments. It holds the promise of giving us a far greater range of complementary instruments to meet current and future security challenges. At the same time, it is a major element in crafting a more mature, more equitable transatlantic relationship. NATO and the EU share common strategic objectives, and we should develop our cooperation in complementarity and without duplication. When NATO decides in Istanbul to handover to the EU important military responsibilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this will underline our strategic partnership. We should also broaden NATO-EU cooperation to other areas, including the fight against terrorism and proliferation of WMDs, and the development of military capabilities in a mutually reinforcing way. Turkey will benefit from such a closer, more pragmatic NATO-EU relationship. And it can be instrumental in bringing it about.

Enhancing Capabilities

Military capability is the crucial underpinning of our safety and security. It directly translates into political credibility. But in order to meet the full spectrum of modern-day security challenges, especially those arising outside of Europe, we need capabilities that are different from those we needed in the past. We need forces that we can deploy more quickly, that can reach further, and stay in the field longer. At the 2002 Prague Summit, NATO leaders agreed on a number of far-reaching moves to equip NATO with these capabilities. Since then, we have created a new command structure and a NATO Response Force, and made significant progress in acquiring key capabilities for modern operations, such as strategic air- and sea-lift, air-to-air refuelling and precision-guided munitions.

But to meet the challenges ahead still more needs to be done to enable NATO forces to carry out the tasks Allies agreed to. That is why the Istanbul Summit will move beyond taking stock of the progress made so far, and introduce significant improvements in NATO's defense planning and force generation processes. These changes will further strengthen our ability to deploy the right forces at the right time.

Conclusion: Projecting Stability through Transatlantic Unity

Due to its geographical location, Turkey is more directly exposed to the new security risks and challenges I have described than any other Alliance member country –old or new. But Turkey is also well placed to play a leading role in NATO's continuing transformation to deal with the new security environment. Not only because of its place on the map and its strong historical, cultural and economic ties with the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East, but also the great respect which it commands among its Allies, throughout Europe, and across the Atlantic.

Our Istanbul Summit will demonstrate that, when it comes to providing for our safety and security, there is simply no alternative to transatlantic solidarity. By making progress in all these different areas, the Istanbul Summit will reaffirm NATO as the principal forum where North America and Europe address the key military and political issues of the day. Europe and North America have a unique strategic responsibility to uphold and project stability. And the Summit will make clear that NATO remains the key instrument for translating this common responsibility into effective common action.