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NATO: The Istanbul Summit

The NATO Heads of State and Government Summit took place in Istanbul on 28-29 June 2004.

As the first major meeting of NATO leaders since the Prague Summit in November 2002, the strategic focus of Istanbul was to build on the transformation agenda agreed in Prague and promote efforts to enhance security through the projection of regional stability.

This paper examines the extent of progress made in implementing the decisions of the Prague Summit, the subsequent objectives for Istanbul and the main conclusions of that Summit. It also outlines some of the initial reactions to the decisions reached at Istanbul and prospects for the future.

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Summary of main points

The Prague Summit in November 2002 was regarded as a defining moment for NATO. It represented an opportunity for the Alliance to modernise and carve out a new security role for itself or face the risk of becoming marginalised and ineffective. The Summit achieved several key objectives: enlargement of the Alliance to 26 members; an update of NATO's Strategic Concept to account for changes in the security environment post-11 September 2001; the development of the Prague Capabilities Commitment and the creation of a NATO Response Force; and a commitment to 'out of area' operations.

The strategic focus of the Istanbul Summit was to build upon the modernisation agenda set down in Prague and enhance security through the projection of stability, particularly in those regions on NATO's geographical periphery. Outreach to countries in the Greater Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia, a commitment to 'out of area' operations, and the continued development of Alliance capabilities were identified as the three priorities for the Summit.

On Afghanistan NATO leaders endorsed the decision to expand NATO's presence in the country by taking command of several Provincial Reconstruction Teams in northern Afghanistan previously under the command of the US-led Coalition, and to deploy a further 3,500 troops in support of the forthcoming Afghan elections. The Summit agreed to assist in the training of Iraqi security forces, following a request from the Government of Iraq, although it stopped short of deploying NATO troops on the ground. The Alliance also confirmed its intention to conclude its stabilisation operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR) ahead of the deployment of an EU-led force, under the auspices of the 'Berlin-plus' agreement, in December 2004.

Contrary to expectations, NATO leaders agreed to pursue a dual approach to promoting cooperation in the Greater Middle East by upgrading the status of the Mediterranean Dialogue to that of a formal partnership and by launching the 'Istanbul Cooperation Initiative', with the aim of engaging countries in the region on a bilateral and individualised level. Closer dialogue with countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia would be achieved through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Framework.

The commitment to improving capabilities was advocated at Istanbul. However, the focus shifted away from addressing key shortfalls to examining possible reform of the processes through which force generation and planning are conducted. Enhanced measures to defend against terrorism were also endorsed.

Reactions to the overall success of the Summit have been mixed. While the NATO Secretary General hailed the achievements of the Summit, several other commentators questioned whether NATO achieved enough at Istanbul, in particular with respect to Afghanistan and Iraq, to demonstrate its continuing credibility.

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I Background to the Summit

11 September 2001 marked a watershed in international relations that challenged the parameters of strategic thinking and led to a fundamental shift in threat assessment and the rise to predominance of asymmetric warfare.¹

For NATO, the immediate consequences were remarkably similar to those in 1990, when the end of the Cold War raised questions about the Alliance's continued credibility and legitimacy. Consequently, the NATO Prague Summit in November 2002 was regarded as a defining moment for NATO. It represented the opportunity for the Alliance to modernise and carve out a new security role for itself or face the risk of becoming marginalised and ineffective.

The Prague Summit achieved several key objectives.² Seven new members³ were invited to join NATO, with a view to formal membership in 2004. The Alliance's Strategic Concept was updated to take account of changes in the security environment post-11 September 2001, which included a commitment to the campaign against terrorism, 'out of area' operations and the creation of a NATO Response Force (NRF).

In order to underpin the New Strategic Concept, the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) was adopted in order to address the ongoing shortfalls in Alliance capability. Measures were also taken to streamline NATO's military command structure, improve its ability to respond to nuclear, biological or chemical threats and assess the need for strategic missile defence. Greater co-operation with partners was also highlighted as a key theme for the future.

However, many analysts questioned at the time whether NATO leaders had the political will to deliver on the commitments made at Prague, in particular with regard to future capabilities and 'out of area' operations.

An article in *The Independent* in November 2002 commented:

In the long term, NATO faces a classic squeeze if the US fights big campaigns alone or with selected allies only, and the EU realises its ambitions of taking over smaller-scale peacekeeping operations...They key will be whether the US truly engages the new NATO, giving allies a significant stake in campaigns and consulting them before decisions are taken. Anything less will consign the

¹ *The Strategic Defence Review: A New Chapter*, Cm 5566, p.7 defines asymmetric warfare as "attack by unconventional methods which would have a disproportionate effect".

² A copy of the Prague Summit Declaration is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>

³ Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

world's most powerful military alliance to a lingering and long-predicted demise.⁴

Robert Bell, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Defence Investment, suggested:

Success or failure in enhancing NATO's defence capabilities will...depend in great measure on the willingness of governments to invest more resources to acquire more defence capabilities, quickly and efficiently. It goes without saying that the defence procurement community, and in particular the defence industry, will need to be able to react speedily to these requirements...To ensure the success of the Prague Capabilities Initiative, we need to have an understanding of what defence expenditures are really going to be made available. Otherwise, they risk the danger of the PCC becoming largely a theoretical, paper, exercise.⁵

Details of the main conclusions and recommendations of the Prague Summit are available in Library Research Paper RP03/05 *NATO: the Prague summit and beyond*.

In the past eighteen months the progress made in implementing the recommendations adopted at Prague has been notable. The Alliance adopted a new command structure in June 2003. The NATO Response Force was formally inaugurated and achieved a prototype operational capability in October 2003 and the Alliance formally welcomed seven new members on 29 March 2004. NATO Member States have also made significant inroads into improving capabilities, particularly in the area of theatre missile defence, counterterrorism and defence against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons.

NATO's role in supporting the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, and its subsequent assumption of command of the force in August 2003, was also considered to be a significant step toward endorsing the Alliance's new mission statement agreed at Prague and the first test of NATO's capabilities when acting outside its traditional operational sphere of influence.⁶ The provision of NATO support for the Polish-led contingent in Iraq in May 2003 was regarded as a further endorsement of NATO's commitment to 'out-of-area' operations, although divisions over the conflict in Iraq have subsequently hindered the deployment of NATO troops on the ground.

The Objectives of Istanbul

Building upon the conclusions of Prague and the progress achieved to date, the thematic focus of the Istanbul Summit was on promoting security through the projection of

⁴ "Can NATO reinvent itself as a powerful force in the modern world", *The Independent*, 21 November 2002

⁵ Robert Bell, "The Pursuit of Enhanced Defence Capabilities", *NATO's Nations*, Edition 4/2002

⁶ More information on NATO's role in ISAF is available in Library Standard Note SN/IA/2601 *International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan*, 6 July 2004

stability. Three strategic themes were identified through which NATO would achieve this goal:

- **Operations** – A review of NATO’s current operations would be undertaken with NATO’s role in Afghanistan and Iraq highlighted as the main priorities. NATO’s role in the Balkans and the Mediterranean would also be addressed.
- **Transformation** – NATO’s capacity to project stability depends upon Member States having the operational and military capabilities to address threats wherever and whenever necessary. Progress on the PCC, the NATO Response Force and counterterrorism measures were underlined as priorities. Reform of the force generation process and the operational cost sharing arrangements were also pinpointed as issues for discussion.
- **Partnerships** – Expanding NATO’s partnerships policy, so as to incorporate countries beyond its peripheries, was identified as a key element of projecting stability. Central Asia, the Caucasus, North Africa and the Middle East were identified as core regions to address.

On 17 May 2004 the NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, gave a speech in Brussels in which he outlined these three strategic priorities for Istanbul. He stated:

For the transatlantic community, projecting stability has become the precondition for our security. Territorial defence 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. Either we tackle these problems when and where they emerge, or they will end up on our doorstep.

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

- By strengthening our relationships with an ever-growing list of partners, from the Balkans, to the Caucasus, Central Asia and with the Mediterranean countries and the wider region.
- Through military operations in the Balkans, in Afghanistan and through Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean Sea.
- And by modernising the way we organise and deploy our forces for the new operations far away from home.⁷

⁷ Speech by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in Brussels, 17 May 2004

In a Written Answer on 17 May 2004 the Secretary of State for Defence, Geoff Hoon, also stated:

The summit at Istanbul will address NATO's current operations. It will also offer the opportunity to strengthen NATO's partnerships with other countries and continue the drive to transform the alliance and its capabilities. In addition to the Heads of State and Government meeting, Defence Ministers will meet to review progress and direct the further reform of NATO [...]

It is vital that we sustain and support its existing responsibilities, while recognising that NATO itself must reform to deal with the new types of threat that we face around the world. I am pleased that the UK has been leading the way in that process. Istanbul is a major way stage in that reform.⁸

⁸ HC Deb 17 May 2004, c677

II Conclusions of the Summit

In the *Istanbul Summit Communiqué* the NATO Heads of State and Government concluded:

At our last Summit, in Prague in 2002, we agreed to transform our Alliance with new members, new capabilities, and new relationships with our partners [...] at our Istanbul Summit he have given further shape and direction to this transformation in order to adapt NATO's structures, procedures and capabilities to 21st century challenges. We underscore that these efforts should not be perceived as a threat by any country or organisation. Our Alliance is taking on a full range of missions, promoting stability where it is needed to defend our security and our values.⁹

In line with the three main strategic themes outlined by Mr de Hoop Scheffer prior to the Summit, the main conclusions adopted by NATO leaders were in the areas of operations, modernisation and partnerships.

A. Operations

1. Afghanistan (ISAF)

Since the formation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in December 2001¹⁰ there have been repeated calls from various parties, including the Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, and UN officials, for an expansion of the force's mandate to cover the whole of Afghanistan and in doing so to help bolster the fragile position of the transitional administration.

Proposals for the expansion of ISAF were initially met with opposition, particularly from the US., who had expressed concerns over the “significant logistical and command burdens”¹¹ that expanding ISAF would create. The US government had also been wary of the idea because of concerns over possible overlap with its war-fighting operations against al-Qaeda in the south and west of the country.

However, resistance to a greater ISAF presence in the country began to wane as major US-led military operations against large al-Qaeda groupings were drawn to a close. The takeover of ISAF command by NATO in August 2003 was also regarded by many analysts as a potential catalyst for expanding ISAF. An article from *Agence France*

⁹ NATO Heads of State and Government Summit, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004. A copy is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm>

¹⁰ Background on the formation and role of ISAF is available in Library Standard Note SN/IA/2601.

¹¹ Afghan FM Admits ISAF Expansion Unlikely” *Agence France Presse*, 19 September 2002

Presse on 11 August 2003 reported the US Ambassador to NATO, Nicholas Burns, as commenting that “Washington was ready to seriously examine calls to expand ISAF to the provinces”, and that they would be “seriously considered once NATO has settled into its role in Kabul”.¹²

The expansion of ISAF via the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)¹³ already operating in the country in support of reconstruction efforts was highlighted as one possibility. This solution was supported by a number of NATO Member States.

In October 2003 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1510 which agreed the extension of ISAF’s mandate to cover the whole of Afghanistan and consequently laid the groundwork for NATO to expand its operations beyond Kabul. In December 2003 NATO subsequently assumed command of the German-led PRT in Kunduz as a ‘pilot project’ ahead of any further expansion of ISAF.

However, concerns had been raised over the ability of NATO to achieve its expansion objectives ahead of the Afghan elections scheduled for 9 October 2004, because of the inability of Member States to generate promised additional resources and capabilities.

An article in *Strategic Comments* suggested:

The real threat to NATO is probably not so much the failure to agree on the Iraq intervention as it is the failure to deliver on commitments that have been agreed to elsewhere [...] The Afghan mission is not controversial; there are military personnel from most NATO members, including all the leading powers, present in the country. But they have repeatedly failed to deliver on equipment and capabilities already promised. One notorious example was the months-long struggle to acquire just a few helicopters (eventually they were provided by Turkey).¹⁴

Immediately prior to the Istanbul Summit the NATO Secretary General reiterated these concerns during a speech at RUSI. He stated:

[in Afghanistan] we have been confronted with challenges we have never had to deal with before. Let me be blunt. Missions such as Afghanistan present wholly new challenges in terms of generating forces. We have never done anything quite like this before and it should not be a surprise that there are challenges.

¹² “NATO takes command of Afghan peacekeeping force”, *Agence France Presse*, 11 August 2003

¹³ PRTs are teams of international civilian and military personnel working in Afghanistan’s provinces to extend the authority of the Afghan central government and to facilitate development and reconstruction. More information on PRTs is available online at:
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/53c0ef16bdf3ff56c1256df70049ddb3?OpenDocument>

¹⁴ “NATO’s Istanbul summit”, *Strategic Comments*, June 2004

We have already made a real difference on the ground. And I am confident that by Istanbul we will have generated the forces we need to expand NATO's ISAF mission beyond Kabul. But our force generation system is far from optimal. We must improve this system so that we can meet future challenges more efficiently [...]

Given the vast quantities of personnel and equipment available to the Alliance overall, we have to ask ourselves why we still cannot fill them. What is wrong with our system that we cannot generate small amounts of badly needed resources for missions that we have committed to politically? [...] this is pretty much what happened in NATO regarding Afghanistan. And you also know what followed: my predecessor and I have had to go around and around to ask nations for contributions.

This must change. I don't mind taking out my begging bowl once in a while. But as a standard operating procedure, this is simply intolerable.¹⁵

At Istanbul Alliance leaders agreed to expand ISAF beyond Kabul and the PRT in Kunduz, and to deploy an additional 3,500 troops in support of the forthcoming elections.¹⁶

The Istanbul Communiqué stated:

In consultation with the Afghan authorities, we will continue to expand ISAF in stages throughout Afghanistan, through the establishment by lead nations of additional Provincial Reconstruction Teams, We will continue to coordinate and cooperate with Operation Enduring Freedom, as appropriate. The successful conduct of nation-wide elections will be a crucial milestone in the democratic development and peaceful evolution of Afghanistan. In response to President Karzai's request, ISAF is currently supporting the voter registration process and will provide enhanced support to the Afghan authorities in providing security during the election period, within means and capabilities [...]

We call on the Afghan authorities to energetically pursue the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process, and particularly the withdrawal of military units from Kabul and other urban centres. We will provide appropriate support, within ISAF's mandate, to the Afghan authorities in taking resolute action against the production and trafficking of narcotics. We are prepared to help the Afghan government to build a better future for Afghanistan, together with Operation Enduring Freedom, the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, the European Union, and other international organisations on the ground. We also call on Afghanistan's neighbours to contribute to this effort consistent with the

¹⁵ Speech by the NATO Secretary General to the Royal United Services Institute, 18 June 2004

¹⁶ There are currently 6,500 troops in ISAF. A breakdown of troop contributions is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/040628-factsheet.htm>

wishes of the Afghan authorities. We commend the role of Canada in ISAF and look forward to the future role of the Eurocorps.¹⁷

Under the agreement reached at the Summit NATO would take command of four PRTs in northern Afghanistan: at Mazar-e-Sharif, Meymana, Feyzabad and Baghlan (a map of Afghanistan is available in Appendix One). Each PRT would be temporarily reinforced by an additional 100 troops during the election period.

NATO would also deploy a rapid-reaction force of approximately 1,000 troops to the country for the elections. A further “over the horizon” reserve rapid-reaction force of up to two battalions would be placed on high readiness, able to deploy to the country if necessary. Despite widespread support, the proposal to use the NATO Response Force (NRF) to fulfil these objectives was vetoed by the French during discussions.¹⁸

Once the elections are concluded it is expected that the reinforcement battalion will withdraw, although the “over the horizon” force would remain at high readiness to deploy if necessary. A similar arrangement currently exists in the Balkans.

At present it is unclear where the additional troops and resources will come from.

NATO is also undertaking an assessment of the necessary capabilities required to expand ISAF into the west of the country, with a view to both establishing new PRTs and incorporating existing PRTs currently operating under the US-led Operation *Enduring Freedom*. A new support base is expected to be established in Herat in order to support this process.

During a meeting of the Heads of State of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in Istanbul, President Karzai urged NATO Member States to honour their commitment to deploy more troops. He stated:

I welcome very much your decision yesterday to send us security forces to help us with the elections but elections are coming in September and we need security forces today in Afghanistan to provide a secure environment for elections for the Afghan people and beyond. Our request today is to please fulfil the commitment that you have made yesterday for Afghanistan before elections so that we, in Afghanistan, can provide our people with an environment in which they can go and vote freely and fairly.

The reason we need this is because we have three challenges still facing our country. First is the challenge of terrorism as you are all aware. Second is the challenge of private militia forces as you are all aware. Third is the challenge of narcotics [...]

¹⁷ NATO Heads of State and Government Summit, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004

¹⁸ *American Forces Press Service* interview with US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, 1 July 2004

I would like you to please hurry, as NATO in Afghanistan, come sooner than September and provide the Afghan men and women with a chance to vote freely, without fear, without coercion and to choose with their hand their leadership and to choose with their hand their members of Parliament and by that, take this country to a higher stage of legitimacy and peace and stability and that, the Afghan people recognize your participation and contribution and are grateful for it and appreciate it very, very much.¹⁹

However, a number of press reports suggested that the Afghan government was disappointed with the extent of NATO's commitment to supporting the Afghan elections.

An article in *The Times* suggested:

The decision to send more NATO troops to safeguard Afghan elections failed to meet the expectations of President Hamid Karzai, Afghanistan's leader [...]

Mr Karzai had hoped for at least 5,000 more troops but NATO has been struggling to find even the extra 3,500 announced at the summit.²⁰

BBC News Online reported:

Mr Karzai pronounced himself "happy" with the NATO arrangement, but said the Afghan people were looking for more help [...]

The response back in Kabul was more blunt. Defence ministry spokesmen General Zahir Azimy told the Reuters news agency: "it's up to NATO, but this is not sufficient; we expect more".²¹

In a Statement to the House on the outcome of the NATO summit on 30 June 2004 the Prime Minister commented:

NATO [has] agreed to expand the role of the international security assistance force outside Kabul, with provincial reconstruction teams to help build Afghan force capability. Some of those teams are already set up in the north. The UK is providing two. The next stage will be to establish similar teams in the rest of the country too. In addition, we agreed a package of support for the upcoming elections in Afghanistan, including a role for the NATO response force. Finally, on Afghanistan we now have an agreed process of stability in the command of the international security assistance force for the years ahead. We have offered to provide the UK-led Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, one of NATO's high-readiness headquarters, to lead ISAF in 2006.²²

¹⁹ A copy of his speech is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040629n.htm>

²⁰ "Extra 3,500 NATO troops for Afghanistan", *The Times*, 28 June 2004

²¹ "Karzai's plea to NATO on troops", *BBC News Online*, 29 June 2004

²² HC Deb 30 June 2004, c286

On 1 July 2004 NATO formally took command of the PRTs in Mazar-e-Sharif and Meymana.

2. Iraq

In May 2003 the North Atlantic Council (NAC) agreed to provide logistics, communication, force generation and intelligence support to the Polish-led contingent when they took command of the Multinational Division (Centre South) in Iraq on 1 September 2003.

Since then several NATO Member States, including the US, have called for a greater role for the Alliance in Iraq, an argument that took on new prominence following the withdrawal of Spanish troops from MND (CS) in April-May 2004.²³

Following a meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in April 2004 the US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, stated:

The US believes the Alliance should consider a new collective role after the return of sovereignty to an Iraqi government [...] I always have to point out that some 18 of the 26 nations, including the United States, of the Alliance are already engaged in Iraq. And I think as we get closer to the date of the transfer of sovereignty we will have to see at that point what coordination, what consultation, would be appropriate with the interim government as it emerges [...] certainly NATO should be in consultation with that government. But I would think it unlikely that NATO would undertake a formal, collective alliance role before full sovereignty of the kind we have described has returned and there are consultations with that government. I am also relatively confident that that government would welcome this kind of assistance from the international community [...]

The ideas that are out there now include perhaps NATO taking over one of the sectors, NATO playing a role in helping the Iraqi forces get themselves more capable to provide their own security [...] the general view [is] that NATO should be looking at what we can do in Iraq.²⁴

Speaking at the G8 summit in June 2004 the US President, George W Bush, reiterated this position. He stated:

We believe NATO ought to be involved. We will work with our NATO friends to at least continue the role that now exists, and hopefully expand it somewhat.

²³ Background on changes to the composition of the Multinational Force in Iraq is available in Library Research Paper RP04/58 *Iraq: political and security issues at the handover*

²⁴ US Department of State, Transcript of press briefing by Secretary of State Colin Powell, 2 April 2004

There is going to be some constraints, obviously. A lot of NATO countries are not in a position to commit any more troops -- we fully understand that. But I do think NATO ought to stay involved, and I think we have a good chance of getting that done.²⁵

However, a number of NATO Member States, notably France and Germany, have thus far continued to oppose the commitment of troops under the NATO banner. At the G8 summit the French President, Jacques Chirac, is reported to have commented:

I do not think it is NATO's job to intervene in Iraq. Moreover I do not have the feeling that it would be either timely or necessarily well-understood. I see myself with strong reservations on this initiative.²⁶

An article in *The Economist* also reported the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, to have stated that "he would oppose any use of NATO troops in Iraq".²⁷

Peter Rudolph, writing in *NATO Review*, commented:

If the United States is successful in fighting the insurgency in Iraq and the political situation there begins to improve and evolve in a positive direction, involving NATO would be politically attractive but of comparatively modest military value. If, however, the situation does not improve, the guerrilla campaign gathers momentum and Iraq disintegrates into civil war, any NATO forces deployed there would have to expect to face combat missions. This is not an attractive scenario, given public sentiment in most member states and it would surely be a recipe for transatlantic strife.²⁸

The inability of NATO to raise enough forces to expand the Alliance's role in Afghanistan had also led many analysts to question the willingness and ability of NATO Member States to provide forces for a broader Iraq operation.

Following a request from the Iraqi Interim Government on 23 June 2004, NATO leaders agreed at the Istanbul Summit to provide assistance to Iraq for the training of its security forces.

A statement issued by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) outlined:

We continue to support Poland in its leadership of the multinational division in south central Iraq [...] In response to the request of the Iraqi Interim Government, and in accordance with resolution 1546 which requests international and regional

²⁵ Remarks by US President George W Bush at the G8 Summit, 9 June 2004

²⁶ "Tensions over Iraq resurface at G8 summit", *The Financial Times*, 10 June 2004

²⁷ "A creaking partnership – the transatlantic alliance", *The Economist*, 5 June 2004

²⁸ "Should the Middle East be NATO's new central front", *NATO Review: Istanbul Summit Special*, May 2004

organisation to contribute assistance to the Multinational Force, we have decided today to offer NATO's assistance to the government of Iraq with the training of its security forces. We therefore also encourage nations to contribute to the training of the Iraqi armed forces.

We have asked the North Atlantic Council to develop on an urgent basis the modalities to implement this decision with the Iraqi Interim Government.

We have also asked the North Atlantic Council to consider, as a matter of urgency, and on the basis of a report by the Secretary General, further proposals to support the nascent Iraqi security institutions in response to the request of the Iraqi Interim Government and in accordance with UNSCR 1546.²⁹

The means of providing training for the Iraqi security forces currently remains under discussion. France and Germany have called for any training to take place outside Iraq, a move that has met with opposition from other NATO Member States. In a Statement to the House on 30 June 2004 the Prime Minister commented that "it is possible for some [training] to be done outside, but I think that the reality is that we would want it done in Iraq".³⁰ A proposal is expected to be presented to the North Atlantic Council in August 2004. The proposal is also expected to address the additional Iraqi requests for military equipment, help in protecting its borders and security for the future UN mission.³¹

The Istanbul Summit agreement also fell far short of the US hope that the Alliance would commit troops on the ground.

An article in *Strategic Comments* stated:

NATO leaders agreed to provide training for Iraqi forces, but, in accordance with the 'red lines' set by Germany and France, this will take place outside Iraq, setting practical limits on numbers. The US has virtually abandoned hope of getting more countries to contribute significant troop reinforcements for Iraq. But the administration had nonetheless hoped to come out of the summit with NATO assuming a formal role in the country [...] At Sea Island [2004 G8 summit], however, French President Jacques Chirac made clear that Paris would block the necessary consensus for a NATO role in the country. The French position is that NATO's formal entry into Iraq would associate the Alliance with an unpopular occupation, which would be bad for NATO and would in any case not really help the forces in Iraq. German officials, while insisting that they would not formally block the rest of NATO from going forward, were also opposed in principle.³²

²⁹ NATO Heads of State and Government Statement on Iraq, Istanbul, 28 June 2004

³⁰ HC Deb 30 June 2004, c290

³¹ "Iraq plea for NATO military help", *BBC News Online*, 13 July 2004

³² "NATO's Istanbul Summit", *Strategic Comments*, June 2004

The British American Security Information Council (BASIC) commented:

Because of current NATO mission requirements, the danger of the Iraq situation, and continuing transatlantic tensions over US-led policies toward Iraq, NATO will not play a major role in Iraq in the short-term. From the US perspective, it may appear that because NATO is not becoming more involved in Iraq, that it is shirking its responsibility and in turn is undermining the alliance's credibility. On the other hand, NATO could undermine its credibility by becoming heavily engaged in Iraq while it continues to have a difficult time fulfilling its other commitments. The alliance could stretch itself far beyond its capacities. Therefore, NATO does not appear to have great options as it faces the Iraq issue.³³

3. Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR)

The possibility of the EU taking over command of stabilisation operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina was first suggested at the European Heads of State Summit in Copenhagen in December 2002, following the conclusion of negotiations on the 'Berlin-plus' agreement.³⁴ Initial reactions to the proposal were mixed. The UK and France have strongly advocated the move, while the US in particular has expressed concern over the EU's ability to successfully take over the Bosnia operation.

An article in *The Independent* reported:

NATO'S military commander has cast doubt over plans to launch the European Union's biggest military mission - a peace-keeping operation in Bosnia - in a sign of new transatlantic tensions.

General James Jones, a United States Marine and Nato's supreme allied commander in Europe, said the proposed date of 2004 might be "too early" for the EU to step in. He also questioned whether a European military mission in Bosnia would be needed [...]

While the US initially seemed anxious to scale down its force in the Balkans, it has been having second thoughts. Washington sees the region as increasingly important for counter-terrorism operations, and has been less enthusiastic about the EU's military ambitions since the transatlantic rift over Iraq.³⁵

Following extensive negotiations NATO Foreign Ministers announced in December 2003 that an assessment of the options for the future size and structure of SFOR, including the

³³ "The problems preventing NATO from taking on a larger role in Iraq", *BASIC Notes*, 28 June 2004

³⁴ 'Berlin-plus' is a NATO-EU Accord that allows access to NATO assets in EU-led operations where the Alliance as a whole is not militarily engaged. More information on Berlin-plus is available in Library Research Paper RP03/05 *NATO: The Prague Summit and Beyond*, 16 January 2003

³⁵ "EU troops not ready to take on Bosnian role, says NATO chief", *The Independent*, 5 August 2003

possible termination of the operation by the end of 2004 and the transition to a new EU-led mission within the framework of 'Berlin-plus', would be undertaken. The European Council summit in Brussels on 12-13 December 2003 endorsed this framework of consultation.³⁶

In a Written Answer on 17 May 2004 Mr Hoon, stated:

Work continues on the precise delineation of tasks between the EU and NATO in Bosnia and Herzegovina in anticipation of the withdrawal of the stabilisation force, SFOR. We would expect the EU force in Bosnia to provide the security framework to enable political and economic development to continue. NATO's continuing role will be to focus on defence reform, including advising the Bosnians on NATO accession and some operational tasks, including counter-terrorism and support of the International Criminal Tribunal of the Former Yugoslavia [...]

It is right and proper that, if it is decided to end SFOR, the EU should take over.³⁷

The decision to formally conclude NATO's SFOR operation, with a view to the EU launching its own UN-mandated mission by the end of 2004, was taken at the Istanbul Summit.

The Istanbul Communiqué stated:

As the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has evolved positively, we have decided to conclude the Alliance's successful SFOR operation by the end of this year. We welcome the readiness of the European Union to deploy a new and distinct UN-mandated robust Chapter VII mission in the country, based on the Berlin+ arrangements agreed between our two organisations, and look forward to continued close cooperation.³⁸

The Communiqué also acknowledged the intention of the Alliance to retain a residual military presence in the country in support of defence reforms, preparation for future Partnership for Peace (PfP) membership, and ongoing operations to apprehend persons indicted for war crimes. It stated:

NATO's long-term political commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina remains unchanged and the establishment of a NATO headquarters will constitute NATO's residual military presence in the country. NATO HQ Sarajevo, which has the principal task of providing advice on defence reform, will also undertake certain operational supporting tasks, such as counter-terrorism whilst ensuring

³⁶ Brussels European Council, Presidency Conclusions, 12-13 December 2003, paragraph 89

³⁷ HC Deb 17 May 2004, c660

³⁸ NATO Heads of State and Government, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004.

force protection; supporting the ICTY³⁹, within means and capabilities, with regard to the detention of persons indicted for war crimes; and intelligence sharing with the EU. The Dayton/Paris Accords remain in force as the basis for peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁰

UN Security Council Resolution 1551 (2004)

Following on from the decision to conclude SFOR, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1551 on 9 July 2004 authorising the continuation of the SFOR mandate⁴¹ for a period of six months. The Resolution also outlined the intention of the Security Council to consider the terms of further authorisation beyond December 2004 as and when necessary. Under the Resolution the current Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), as set out in the *General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, would provisionally apply to the proposed EU mission and its forces. The Resolution stated:

The Security Council [...] Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations [...]

Welcomes the decision of NATO to conclude its current SFOR operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the end of 2004. *Further welcomes* the EU's intention to launch an EU mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, including a military component from December 2004;

Authorizes the Member States acting through or in cooperation with the organization referred to in Annex 1-A of the Peace Agreement to continue for a further planned period of 6 months the multinational stabilization force (SFOR) as established in accordance with its resolution 1088 (1996) under unified command and control in order to fulfil the role specified in Annex 1-A and Annex 2 of the Peace Agreement⁴²;

Expresses its intention to consider the terms of further authorization as necessary in the light of developments in the implementation of the Peace Agreement and the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina [...]

Decides that the status of forces agreements currently contained in Appendix B to Annex 1-A of the Peace Agreement shall apply provisionally in respect to the proposed EU mission and its forces, including from the point of their build-up in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in anticipation of the concurrence of the parties to those agreements to that effect...⁴³

³⁹ International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

⁴⁰ NATO Heads of State and Government, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004

⁴¹ The original mandate of SFOR was set out in UN Security Council Resolution 1088 (1996).

⁴² The General Peace Agreement is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/sfor/basic/gfap.htm>

⁴³ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1551 (2004), 9 July 2004

EU Joint Action

At a meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 12 July 2004 the EU's Foreign Ministers adopted a Joint Action⁴⁴ formally launching an EU military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (codenamed *Althea*). In summary, the Joint Action made the following provisions:⁴⁵

- The operation would be conducted under the 'Berlin-plus' Agreement, allowing recourse by the EU to NATO assets and capabilities;
- The EU's Political and Security Committee would exercise political control over the strategic direction of the operation, under the responsibility of the Council of Ministers. Decision making with respect to the objectives and termination of the operation would remain, however, vested in the Council and assisted by the EU's High Representative for CFSP.
- NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander for Europe (DSACEUR) would be the EU Operation Commander and the EU operational headquarters would be located at SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters of Allied Powers in Europe).
- The UK would lead the EU force in Bosnia for the first six months. Major General A. David Leakey would be appointed as the EU Force Commander on the ground. Italy has offered to lead the force after the UK.
- Under 'Berlin-plus' non-EU NATO allies have the right to participate in the mission if they so wish. Under the Joint Action third parties may also be invited to participate in the operation.
- The common costs of the EU operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina are estimated at €71.7 million (approximately £47.88 million).⁴⁶ The UK's share of the common costs is set according to the agreed EU ESDP financing mechanism, divided between Member States on a GNP-related basis. In 2004 the UK's share of common costs is approximately 15%. The UK's contribution to the current NATO-led SFOR operation is approximately £60 million per year.⁴⁷

The Joint Action also makes provision for the EU's Special Representative (EUSR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina to promote overall EU political co-ordination in the country.

⁴⁴ Joint Action 11226/1/04

⁴⁵ EU General Affairs and External Relations Council Conclusions, 11105/04, 12 July 2004. A copy of these conclusions are available online at:
http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/81416.pdf

⁴⁶ Based on an exchange rate of 0.66 on 20 July 2004

⁴⁷ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Explanatory Memorandum on the Council Joint Action on the European Union Military Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 28 June 2004

The EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was established on 1 January 2003, is expected to continue alongside the EU-led military operation.

An FCO *Explanatory Memorandum* dated 28 June 2004 set out the British Government's view on an EU-led military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It stated:

The Government strongly supports the EU's intention to send a military mission to Bosnia under the Berlin Plus arrangements [...] it will be the biggest ESDP mission to date. This is reflected in our decision to offer to take first lead of this mission. It is critical that the international community maintains its commitment to Bosnia, to build on the progress made thus far and help Bosnia further down the road to Euro-Atlantic integration.⁴⁸

An article in the *Financial Times* commented:

The EU hopes that through the mission [...] it will be able to bring military as well as civil resources to bear on a country that remains poor and unstable but which the EU believes should eventually join the union.

The new EU force should bolster the authority of Lord Ashdown, who serves as the high representative of both the EU and the international community generally.⁴⁹

In a speech to the Manfred-Wörner-Circle on 12 July 2004 the NATO Secretary General also highlighted the fresh impetus an EU-led operation under 'Berlin-plus' would give to the EU-NATO relationship as a whole. He stated:

We decided at our Istanbul Summit to terminate NATO's SFOR operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and welcomed the intention of the EU to establish a new mission in that country. That step will give further substance to the strategic partnership between our organisations. And it should promote greater transparency and closer cooperation between NATO and the EU in other functional and geographical areas where our interests converge, and where we can complement each other.⁵⁰

The decision to conclude NATO's mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been largely welcomed by the US. Giving evidence to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 14 July 2004, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Kathleen Stephens, stated:

⁴⁸ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Explanatory Memorandum on the Council Joint Action on the European Union Military Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 28 June 2004

⁴⁹ "EU agrees force to replace NATO-led troops in Bosnia", *Financial Times*, 13 July 2004

⁵⁰ Speech by the NATO Secretary General to the Manfred-Wörner-Circle, 12 July 2004

Progress in Bosnia has set the stage for the successful conclusion of SFOR's mission in Bosnia, consistent with our efforts to "hasten the day" and our "in together, out together" commitment to our NATO allies [...]

Bosnia and Herzegovina is approaching a watershed moment in its post-conflict transition. At Istanbul, NATO Heads of State and Government agreed to conclude the SFOR mission at year's end. This decision is recognition of NATO's success in ending a war, and Bosnia's progress on the path to recovery.⁵¹

However, a number of analysts have suggested that, although welcome, the decision to conclude SFOR had been made with some reticence. The International Institute for Strategic Studies suggested that "even though the US military, severely overstretched, was eager to palm-off one of its many commitments, the Istanbul agreement on actually doing so was more than a minor achievement".⁵²

B. Transformation/ Modernisation

The capacity for rapid and flexible deployment has long been acknowledged as the key enabler in achieving NATO's transformation goals and allowing the Alliance to effectively address future threats and challenges.

The Prague Summit identified six strategic priorities for improving the capabilities of the Alliance:

- A NATO Response Force (NRF) capable of rapid deployment to any theatre of operation;
- Streamlining NATO's military command arrangements;
- Developing the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC);
- Endorsing a military concept for defence against terrorism;
- Endorsing the implementation of five nuclear, biological and chemical weapons defence initiatives;
- Examining the options for a missile defence capability.

In June 2003 NATO Defence Ministers approved a new command structure and basing arrangements for the Alliance.⁵³

In September 2003 NATO's Consultation, Command and Control Agency (NC3A) awarded an eighteen-month Missile Defence Feasibility Study contract to Science

⁵¹ Testimony of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Kathleen Stephens to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 14 July 2004

⁵² "NATO's Istanbul Summit", *Strategic Comments*, June 2004

⁵³ Further information on the new command structure is available online at:
http://www.nato.int/issues/military_structure/command/index-e.htm

Applications International Corporation (SAIC). The Study is expected to look at the technical feasibility, costs and timescales of a missile defence system based on NATO requirements. The relationship between any NATO system and the US missile defence system is expected to inform a major part of the Study. A decision to proceed with the development of a missile defence capability is due to be taken by NATO Member States in May 2005.⁵⁴

In December 2003 the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence (CBRN) Battalion was officially established as part of the CBRN initiatives announced at Prague. The new battalion will maintain a high level of readiness and remain on operational standby to deploy either on its own or as part of the NRF. In May 2003 NATO announced that the battalion would be deployed at the Olympic Games in Athens in August 2004. This would be the first operational deployment of the unit since it achieved initial operational capability on 1 December 2003.

An assessment of the progress achieved with respect to the Prague Capabilities Commitment, the NATO Response Force and the measures to defend against terrorism were all earmarked as priorities for discussion at Istanbul. Reform of the force generation planning process and the way in which NATO operations are funded were also put forward by the NATO Secretary General at a speech to RUSI on 18 June 2004 as areas for urgent discussion. He stated:

Our force generation system is far from optimal. We must improve this system so that we can meet future challenges more efficiently.

These challenges can be big – a new headquarters, an operational reserve. But they can also be small – a medical facility, a handful of C-130's and medium lift helicopters, a couple of infantry companies, and certain surveillance and intelligence assets. Given the vast quantities of personnel and equipment available to the Alliance overall, we have to ask ourselves why we still cannot fill them. What is wrong with our system that we cannot generate small amounts of badly needed resources for missions that we have committed to politically?

In my view, the answer lies in taking a hard look at three critical areas. We have to look at:

- the way we take political decisions
- the way we plan and generate forces, and
- the way we are funding our operations and equipment.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ More information on Missile Defence and NATO's involvement is available in Library Standard Note SN/IA/2972 *Ballistic Missile Defence – Latest Developments*, 23 March 2004

⁵⁵ Speech by the NATO Secretary General at RUSI, 18 June 2004. The full text of his speech is available online at: <http://www.rusi.org/events/ref:E40B3979C4B97C/info:E40D2DD511D34D/>

1. Capabilities

At a meeting of National Armaments Directors in May 2004 progress on the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) was assessed, ahead of the Istanbul summit, and fifteen projects that would address the key remaining shortfalls were endorsed.

In his 17 May 2004 speech in Brussels, Mr de Hoop Scheffer indicated, however, that ensuring national commitments under the PCC are met would not be the priority for Istanbul. Motivated by NATO's current experience in Afghanistan the focus of discussion would instead be on the reform of the procedures that govern the deployability and usability of those assets. He stated:

Transformation means more than new military hardware. It also means deployability and usability. I intend to ensure that when nations agree to a mission, we also have the forces we need to carry it out. Our credibility depends on delivering on our promises. And better force generation and force planning procedures are critical in this regard.⁵⁶

In an interview in the *Financial Times* in May 2004 Mr de Hoop Scheffer set out his suggested reforms for the force generation and planning process. Among his proposals were suggestions for the collective NATO ownership and operation of certain key assets, as is currently the case for the Alliance's Airborne Early Warning (AWACS) aircraft; and new funding arrangements for operations, including the possibility of Member States establishing separate funds within their national defence budgets for NATO designated tasks.

According to the report:

The reforms would create a small but essential pool of military assets that NATO could call on without having to assemble a force from scratch for each mission. They would also spread the cost of missions across the alliance's 26 members [...]

Proposed reforms would seek to close the gap between the huge military inventory of NATO's members and the meagre commitments the alliance can muster for a single mission [...]

In future, Mr de Hoop Scheffer wants member states to say exactly what resources are available when they make a political commitment to become involved in any mission. He wants member states to be more involved in common funding, in which several countries would finance equipment that is always needed for missions [...] He also wants to review the way missions are

⁵⁶ Speech by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in Brussels, 17 May 2004

funded. In most cases the nations are responsible for any troops or equipment they deploy abroad.⁵⁷

An article in *RUSI Newsbrief* commented:

Many of the capability problems that NATO is currently facing could be alleviated relatively easily if Allies were to eliminate or at least reduce the restrictions that they frequently place on the ways in which their contributions to operations may be used. These include limiting the availability of a particular asset to troops from a contributing nation and preventing troops from being involved in certain activities such as crowd control [...]

If the Allies want NATO to be able to ‘go where the threats are’, the Alliance’s political and operational decision making processes need to be brought more in line with each other. To ensure that NATO has the appropriate mix of forces and assets available and ready to be deployed when it makes a political decision to take on a particular mission, it will be necessary to apply the same transformational logic to the setting of force goals and to the defence-planning and force-generation processes as has been applied to military structures.⁵⁸

In a speech at RUSI on 4 May 2004 the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Baroness Symons, stated:

I also hope that progress can be made towards a revised Defence Planning Process, suitable for a transformed Alliance. The new planning process will be more capability based, more rigorous and should achieve greater political visibility. As well as this we are working towards agreement on targets for deployable forces and improved mechanisms for generating forces.⁵⁹

NATO Defence Ministers, meeting in advance of the Istanbul Summit, raised the issue of possible reforms in force generation and planning. A press statement issued by the NATO Defence Planning Committee on 27 June 2004 confirmed that:

Defence Ministers adopted new NATO Force Goals for individual Allies to guide the development of their forces up to 2010 and beyond. They also approved proposals for a revised force planning process.⁶⁰

As part of those proposals defence ministers were reported to have agreed new readiness targets for Allied forces, including a target of 40% of forces being capable of deployment at any one time, and 8% of forces deployed in theatre at any given moment.⁶¹

⁵⁷ “NATO chief says huge shake-up is needed”, *The Financial Times*, 27 May 2004

⁵⁸ “Anticipating Istanbul”, *RUSI Newsbrief*, Vol.24, No.6, June 2004

⁵⁹ Speech by the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Baroness Symons, to RUSI, 4 May 2004

⁶⁰ NATO Defence Planning Committee Press Statement, 27 June 2004

⁶¹ “Istanbul summit marks milestone for NATO”, *American Forces Press Service*, 28 June 2004

An article from the International Security Information Service (ISIS) Europe also suggested that:

Changes include extending the defence planning cycle from 6 to 10 years to provide a longer-term approach, as requested by the nations.⁶²

The formal decision to re-examine force generation and planning procedures was adopted by the Summit. The Communiqué stated:

[we] welcomed the report from our Defence Ministers on further steps to increase the usability of our forces through the adoption in Istanbul of high-level political targets and to supplement such targets through individual national usability targets, and agreed to intensify our efforts, taking account of national priorities and obligations, to structure, prepare and equip land forces for deployed operations under NATO or other auspices;

[we] welcomed changes to the Alliance's planning processes, making them more responsive to current and future operational requirements. We have directed the Council in Permanent Session to produce for our consideration comprehensive political guidance in support of the Strategic Concept for all Alliance capabilities issues, planning disciplines and intelligence, responsive to the Alliance's requirements, including for forces which are interoperable and deployable, able to carry out major operations as well as smaller ones, to conduct them concurrently if necessary, as well as to operate jointly in a complex security environment. The interfaces between the respective Alliance planning disciplines, including operational planning, should be further analysed.⁶³

In his speech to the Manfred-Wörner-Circle the NATO Secretary General commented:

As you know, meeting our commitment vis-à-vis Afghanistan has been quite a difficult exercise for NATO. It has taken nations some time to provide all the forces and equipment that we need for such a challenging mission.

So I am pleased that the Istanbul Summit decided that we should re-examine our approach to force planning and force generation procedures. Because if NATO wants to continue to meet its commitments – in Afghanistan, Iraq or elsewhere – our military means must match our political ambitions.⁶⁴

⁶² "Istanbul summit: a reluctant Alliance stumbles into Iraq", *NATO Notes*, July 2004

⁶³ NATO Heads of State and Government, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004

⁶⁴ This speech is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040712a.htm>

2. NATO Response Force (NRF)

The purpose of the NRF is to provide NATO with “a robust and credible high readiness force, which is fully trained and certified as a joint combined force, and is able to deploy quickly to participate in the full spectrum of NATO missions when required”.⁶⁵ Intended to be at the centre of the Alliance’s expeditionary capability, the force will consist of 21,000 personnel when it achieves its Full Operational Capability (FOC), will be ready to deploy in five days and will be sustainable in theatre for up to 30 days.⁶⁶ The NRF will be able to deploy on its own or serve as part of a larger force. The NRF will be composed of national force contributions which will rotate through periods of joint training, followed by an operational “standby” phase of six months.

The NRF stood up an initial prototype capability at its formal inauguration on 15 October 2003. Initial Operational Capability (IOC) is expected to be achieved in October 2004 and an FOC in October 2006.

As a key enabler in modernising Alliance capabilities, one of the main challenges for the future effectiveness and credibility of the NRF is considered by analysts to be closely linked to the ability to generate credible and sufficient forces (see section B1).

The Istanbul Communiqué acknowledged this link and welcomed:

progress in the work to improve the force generation process for NATO-agreed operations and the NATO Response Force, including by moving towards a longer-term and more comprehensive and pro-active approach, and facilitating decisions that are matched at each stage with the requisite military capabilities.⁶⁷

However, it has been argued that the capacity of Member States to make rapid political decisions on the deployment and operational scope of the NRF represents its biggest challenge in the future, as the very essence of the NRF is its use as a rapid-reaction capability. Indeed, the use of the NRF to fulfil the rapid reaction role of the ‘over the horizon reserve’ assigned to support the forthcoming elections in Afghanistan was vetoed during the Istanbul discussions by France (see section A1).

Reforms of this nature would, therefore, require a revision of the Alliance’s traditional use of decisions by unanimity, a move that many analysts consider would be largely unwelcome.

In her speech at RUSI in May 2004 Baroness Symons highlighted this issue:

⁶⁵ http://www.nato.int/shape/issues/shape_nrf/nrf_intro.htm

⁶⁶ More information on the NRF is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/issues/nrf/index.html>

⁶⁷ NATO Heads of State and Government, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004

Although we are unlikely to see a new version of the Prague Commitments at the Istanbul Summit, I hope that there will be agreement to improve the decision making process with particular emphasis on the NATO Response Force. We do not wish to change the fundamentals of NATO decision making. But with a high readiness forces such as the NRF ready to be deployed at 3 days notice, we should be able to take decisions to send it on missions in the same sort of timeframe, otherwise we risk reducing its potential.⁶⁸

Although the Istanbul Communiqué touched upon the issue of political decision making it did not address the unanimity question. It stated:

NATO needs to be able to act quickly and is configured to so. At the same time, we are determined to further enhance our political decision-making process through in-depth consultations facilitating a common sense of purpose and resolve, the definition of clear strategies and objectives before launching an operation, as well as enhanced planning to support nation' contributions to operations recognising the sovereign right of each of our nations to decide upon the use of its forces.⁶⁹

At present it is unclear whether the NATO Secretary General and the Council in Permanent Session will address the issue of political decision making as part of a wider assessment of force generation and planning procedures.

3. Defence against terrorism

At the Prague Summit the NATO Heads of State endorsed a military concept for the defence against terrorism as part of a larger package of measures intended to strengthen NATO's capabilities in this area, including Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) countermeasures, intelligence sharing and crisis response arrangements.

The *Prague Summit Declaration* of 21 November 2002 stated:

To combat terrorism effectively, our response must be multi-faceted and comprehensive. We are committed, in co-operation with our partners, to fully implement the Civil Emergency Planning (CEP) Action Plan for the improvement of civil preparedness against possible attacks against the civilian population with chemical, biological or radiological (CBR) agents. We will enhance our ability to support, when requested, to help national authorities to deal with the consequences of terrorist attacks, including attacks with CBRN against critical infrastructure, as foreseen in the CEP Action Plan.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Speech by the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Baroness Symons, to RUSI, 4 May 2004

⁶⁹ NATO Heads of State and Government, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004

⁷⁰ Prague Summit Declaration issued by NATO Heads of State and Government, 21 November 2002.

Following the Madrid bombings in March 2004 the North Atlantic Council (NAC) issued a *Declaration on Terrorism* on 2 April 2004 which called for an enhanced set of counter-terrorism measures, building on those agreed at Prague, to be prepared for discussion at Istanbul. Those measures included:

- Improved intelligence sharing between Allies, including through the recently established NATO Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit, and with other international organisations and Partner countries.⁷¹
- Enhanced response to national requests for NATO support, including through the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre and the use of NATO chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence assets, to help protect against and following a terrorist incident.
- Developing the contribution of Operation *Active Endeavour*⁷² to the fight against terrorism and examining possible cooperation between Operation *Active Endeavour* and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).⁷³
- Supporting the commitment of Allies to address the threat posed by terrorist use of civil aircraft.
- Enhancing capabilities to defend against terrorist attacks.⁷⁴

The Declaration also directed the NAC to enhance cooperation on terrorism with NATO's partners through the Mediterranean Dialogue, the NATO-Russia Council and international organisations including the UN, EU and OSCE.

On 6-7 May 2004 the NATO National Armaments Directors also endorsed a Programme of Work for Defence against Terrorism which aimed to enhance Alliance capabilities in this area. The programme identified eight priority armaments projects:

- Reducing the vulnerability of aircraft to portable ground-air missiles;
- Protecting harbours and vessels from surface and sub-surface attack;
- Reducing the vulnerability of helicopters to ground attack;
- Countering improvised explosive devices;
- Precision air drop technology for Special Forces operations;
- Detection, protection and defeat of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons;

⁷¹ Partner countries refer to those members of the EAPC and PfP programmes.

⁷² More information on Operation *Active Endeavour* is available online at:

<http://www.afsouth.nato.int/operations/Endeavour/Endeavour.htm>

⁷³ More information on the PSI is available on the FCO website at:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1065432161812>

⁷⁴ A copy of the *Declaration on Terrorism* is available online at:

<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-057e.htm>

- New technology for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance of terrorist activities;
- Explosive disposal and consequence management.

At Istanbul NATO leaders confirmed their support for the ongoing campaign against terrorism as laid down in UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001)⁷⁵, including the use of NATO's military forces where necessary. The counterterrorism measures identified by the NAC in April 2004 were fully endorsed and in some areas supplemented by additional measures. The Communiqué outlined these measures:

NATO's maritime surveillance and escort operation, Operation Active Endeavour⁷⁶, demonstrates the Alliance's resolve and ability to respond to terrorism. In March of this year, the operation was extended to the whole of the Mediterranean. Work is underway to further enhance its contribution to the fight against terrorism, including through the contributory support of partner countries, including the Mediterranean Dialogue countries. We welcome the offers of contributory support by Russia and Ukraine and have invited both countries to discuss the modalities of their participation. All such offers of support, including by other interested countries, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In reviewing Operation Active Endeavour's mission, NATO may consider addressing, in accordance with international law, the risk of terrorist-related trafficking in, or use of, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials [...]

We have accordingly agreed today an enhanced set of measures to strengthen our individual and collective contribution to the international community's fight against terrorism, including the need to prevent WMD from being acquired by terrorists. These measures include:

- improved intelligence sharing between our nations, including through our Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit and a review of current intelligence structures at NATO Headquarters;
- a greater ability to respond rapidly to national requests for assistance in protecting against and dealing with the consequences of terrorist attacks, including attacks involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons and, in this regard, continued robust support for the NATO Multinational CBRN Defence Battalion;
- assistance to protect selected major events, including with NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Aircraft;
- an enhanced contribution to the fight against terrorism by Operation Active Endeavour;

⁷⁵ A copy of UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) is available online at: <http://ods-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N01/557/43/PDF/N0155743.pdf?OpenElement>

⁷⁶ Further information on Operation *Active Endeavour* is available online at: <http://www.afsouth.nato.int/operations/Endeavour/Endeavour.htm>

- a continued robust effort through our operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan to help create conditions in which terrorism cannot flourish;
- enhanced capabilities to defend against terrorist attacks, including through our programme of work to develop new, advanced technologies; and
- increased cooperation with our partners, including through the implementation of our Civil Emergency Action Plan and the Partnership Action Plan on Terrorism, and with other international and regional organisations, including the active pursuit of consultations and exchange of information with the European Union.⁷⁷

Full operational capability of the CBRN battalion was also announced at Istanbul.

Despite the extent of the counterterrorism measures agreed prior to, and during, the Istanbul Summit, concerns have been raised that they do not go far enough.

In his Statement to the House on 30 June 2004 the Prime Minister expressed concern that NATO's response to defending against terrorism was insufficient. He stated:

NATO's focus on these issues shows at least a start to understanding this threat and its implications. But I worry, frankly, that our response is still not sufficient to the scale of the challenge that we face.⁷⁸

C. Partnerships

In a speech in October 2002 the then NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson, identified instability in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Northern Africa and the Middle East as one of the main threats to future security.⁷⁹

One of the main conclusions of the Prague Summit was the need for NATO to strengthen its relationships with its partners in order to promote stability. Alliance leaders reaffirmed their commitment toward the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme, the Mediterranean Dialogue, the NATO-Ukraine Commission and developing NATO's relations with the EU.

Although the reiteration of NATO's commitment to augmenting its existing relationships was anticipated, and delivered, at Istanbul, it was the proposal to establish new

⁷⁷ NATO Heads of State and Government, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004

⁷⁸ HC Deb 30 June 2004, c287

⁷⁹ "NATO: A vision for 2012", Speech by Lord Robertson to the NATO/GMFUS Conference, 3 October 2002

relationships with countries on NATO's geographical periphery that was identified as the Alliance's main 'partnerships' priority for the Summit.

In a speech in Brussels on 17 May 2004 Mr de Hoop Scheffer stated:

Operations are only one tool available to NATO. We are also a forum for political consultations, especially regarding security issues. So let me be clear: projecting stability means first and foremost, building partnerships, to maximise our collective ability to defend the peace. That's what our Partnership for Peace and EAPC have always been about [...] At Istanbul we will enhance our partnerships to deliver more. We will concentrate more on defence reform to help some of our partners continue with their democratic transitions. We will also focus on increasing our co-operation with the Caucasus and Central Asia – areas that once seemed very far away, but that we now know are essential to our security...⁸⁰

1. Greater Middle East

The establishment of a greater role for NATO in North Africa and the Middle East, as a means to encouraging defence reforms and improving stability and security, has been supported by a number of analysts for several years. A role for NATO in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict specifically has been strongly advocated.

In an article in the *New York Times* in August 2001 Thomas L. Friedman presented the idea of NATO taking a role in settling the Israeli- Palestinian question. He suggested that:

Staying in the West Bank and Gaza will slowly destroy Israel from within, but just leaving and putting up a wall could destroy Israel from without. The only solution may be for Israel and the US to invite NATO to occupy the West Bank and Gaza and set up a NATO-run Palestinian state, a la Kosovo and Bosnia [...] what is needed is for Israel to turn these areas over to NATO or a NATO-like force. The Palestinians can have their state – but not army – under NATO's watchful eye. It's a long shot, but it addresses the real problem.⁸¹

More recently, support for a NATO presence in the Middle East has gained momentum in the US Senate. At the Munich Security Conference in February 2004 the Chairman of the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Senator Richard Lugar, stated:

The Greater Middle East is a source of conflict now and for years to come. I believe that NATO must become more fully engaged in this area, using both its military and its political strength [...]

⁸⁰ Speech by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in Brussels, 17 May 2004

⁸¹ "A way out of the middle east impasse", *The New York Times*, 24 August 2001

NATO should take the lessons learned from its own Mediterranean Dialogue with seven Middle East nations, including Israel, and launch [...] a major new effort open to countries throughout the Greater Middle East, a program which might be called Cooperation for Peace.

This program would cover many forms of military cooperation and education, much as Partnership for Peace did with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Unlike Partnership for Peace, the aim would not be eventual NATO membership. But following the Partnership for Peace model, a bold NATO Cooperation for Peace program such as this could help militaries in the region with training and education for peace-keeping missions, counter-terrorism, and border security, as well as with defense reform, and with important issues related to civilian control of the military.⁸²

In her speech to RUSI on 4 May 2004 Baroness Symons also supported these views. She stated:

NATO cannot exist in a vacuum where it cannot or will not have a dialogue with countries central to our security, notably in the Middle East [...] the proposed NATO initiative in the Middle East may provoke debate. But I also know that a transformed NATO has much to offer to the region. There will be discussion in other forums about political and economic reform. NATO could make a modest but important contribution to peace and security in the Middle East if it offered co-operation with those already engaged in fighting terrorism, in dealing with civil emergencies, in defence reform and in peacekeeping.⁸³

Chris Donnelly, a Senior Fellow at the UK Defence Academy, commented:

Israel's dilemma is that the stronger it has become militarily the less secure the Israeli population feels. An "honest broker" is needed, trusted by both sides, which can help negotiate and then enforce a sophisticated security package. The United States cannot do this, nor can Europe, as neither is seen as impartial. However far-fetched this might seem at the moment, NATO is probably the only institution that could tackle this problem in the next few years.⁸⁴

However, François Heibourg, writing in the *International Herald Tribune*, argued:

It is absolutely vital to the success of the Greater Middle East Initiative that adequate institutional machinery be established. NATO can play a useful supporting role in terms of peacekeeping or security sector reform, but education, women's rights, health care and free trade – which are of the essence – do not

⁸² Speech by Senator Richard Lugar at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, 8 February 2004

⁸³ Speech by the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Baroness Symons, RUSI, 4 May 2004

⁸⁴ "Forging a NATO partnership for the Greater Middle East", *NATO Review: Istanbul Summit Special*, May 2004

form part of its comparative advantage. Putting NATO at the pivot would make little sense.⁸⁵

Concerns have also been raised over the potential for involvement in the Middle East to cause overstretch at a time when the Alliance is fully engaged in the Balkans and Afghanistan, and in a more limited capacity in Iraq.

The expansion of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue⁸⁶ to incorporate more countries in North Africa and the Middle East was proposed ahead of the Istanbul Summit as one possible scenario for addressing the momentum for a larger NATO role in the Greater Middle East. However, rather than directly expand the membership of the Mediterranean Dialogue to incorporate these countries, NATO leaders agreed at Istanbul to pursue a dual approach toward promoting stability and security in the region.

a) Mediterranean Dialogue

One of the conclusions of Istanbul was the need to elevate the status of the Mediterranean Dialogue to that of a formal partnership with the aim of expanding and strengthening cooperation between NATO and its seven partner nations.⁸⁷ With greater focus on the individual interests and needs of the participating countries, assistance would be provided in the area of defence reform and military interoperability, in efforts to combat terrorism and tighten border security and in developing the political dimension of the initiative.

The Istanbul Communiqué stated:

From its inception in 1994, NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue has greatly contributed to building confidence and cooperation between the Alliance and its Mediterranean partners. In the current security environment there are greater opportunities for effective cooperation with Mediterranean Dialogue partners. Following our decision at Prague to upgrade the Mediterranean Dialogue, we are today inviting out Mediterranean partners to establish a more ambitious and expanded partnership, guided by the principle of joint ownership and taking into consideration their particular interests and needs [...] our efforts will complement and mutually reinforce other Mediterranean initiatives, including those of the EU and the OSCE.⁸⁸

b) Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

With respect to the Greater Middle East, the Summit concluded that outreach could be more effectively achieved through the establishment of practical bilateral cooperation

⁸⁵ "Mideast democracy is a long-term, global project", *International Herald Tribune*, 24 March 2004

⁸⁶ Background information on the Mediterranean Dialogue is available in Library Research Paper RP03/05 *NATO: the Prague Summit and beyond*, 16 January 2003

⁸⁷ Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

⁸⁸ NATO Heads of State and Government, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004

between NATO and interested countries in the region. Referred to as the ‘Istanbul Cooperation Initiative’ the programme aims to foster individualised cooperation in areas such as defence reform, defence budgets and planning, military-to-military cooperation and training, civil-military relations, counterterrorism, the proliferation of WMD, organised crime and illegal trafficking.

The Communiqué stated:

We have today also decided to offer cooperation to the broader Middle East region by launching our ‘Istanbul Cooperation Initiative’. This initiative is offered by NATO to interested countries in the region, starting with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, to foster mutually beneficial relationships and thus enhance security and stability. The initiative focuses on practical cooperation where NATO can add value, notably in the defence and security fields. This initiative is distinct from, yet takes into account and complements other initiatives involving other international actors.

While respecting the specificity of the Mediterranean Dialogue, the enhanced Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative are complementary, progressive and individualised processes. They will be developed in a spirit of joint ownership with the countries involved. Continued consultation and active engagement will be essential to their success.⁸⁹

Despite the widespread support that has been given to this expansion initiative by both NATO Member States and political commentators, the success of the ‘Istanbul Cooperation Initiative’ is expected to be highly dependent upon how countries in North Africa and the Middle East perceive NATO, and the strategic gain that could be achieved from closer cooperation. This prerequisite was acknowledged by the NATO Secretary General ahead of the Istanbul Summit during a speech to the Centre for European Reform on 8 June 2004. He stated:

At Istanbul we will open up a dialogue, in a spirit of joint ownership with interested countries in this pivotal region. This dialogue must be, and will be, a two-way street. Such a bridge of open consultation will only be strong if it is built by all the participants together. And if it succeeds, over time, in breaking down stereotypes and building trust, our “Istanbul Cooperation Initiative” has the potential to make a real contribution to enhancing our common security.⁹⁰

Chris Donnelly has argued that:

If public opinion in these countries sees a new initiative as being a revival of a military alliance, as a tool for Western pressure or control, or worst of all, as a

⁸⁹ NATO Heads of State and Government, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004

⁹⁰ Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, at the Centre for European Reform, Brussels, 8 June 2004

tool to give Israel an early perspective of NATO membership, then no progress will be made.⁹¹

An article in *RUSI Newsbrief* supported this view:

Most countries in the Near East and North Africa had – and continue to have – very little idea about the aims and objectives of NATO beyond those of collective defence. The region still sees NATO as a purely military alliance: there is almost no appreciation of the transformation NATO has undergone in recent years and no understanding of the redefinition of NATO as a political entity (albeit with a military edge), much less a recognition of its aspirations to encourage stability as an ends unto itself.⁹²

2. Caucasus and Central Asia

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) provides the overarching framework for NATO's cooperation with its partners from Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. It brings NATO Member States together with 20 Partner nations for regular discussions on issues encompassing all aspects of security in the Euro-Atlantic area. A two-year EAPC Action Plan provides for long-term consultation and co-operation on regional issues, arms control, proliferation, peacekeeping, defence economic issues, civil emergency planning and scientific and environmental issues.⁹³

As a multilateral forum, the EAPC also acts as the political framework for the PfP, a programme focusing on bilateral co-operation between NATO and individual partner countries (26+1). The basic aims of the PfP programme are to promote transparency in national defence planning and budgets, to promote the democratic control of national armed forces and to develop the capacity for joint action between forces from partner countries and NATO members in peacekeeping or civil emergency operations. Within the PfP Framework Document there is also a commitment by NATO members to consult bilaterally with any partner country that perceives a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence or security.⁹⁴

At the Prague Summit in 2002 NATO leaders endorsed the decision to rationalise the relationship between the EAPC and the PfP and bind them together in a common security

⁹¹ “Forging a NATO partnership for the Greater Middle East”, *NATO Review: Istanbul Summit Special*, May 2004

⁹² “The Istanbul Initiative? Finding a real role for NATO in the Middle East and North Africa”, *RUSI Newsbrief*, June 2004, p.65

⁹³ More information on the EAPC is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/issues/eapc/index.html>. A full list of the 46 members of the EAPC can be located on the NATO website at: <http://www.nato.int/pfp/eapc-cnt.htm>

⁹⁴ More information on the PfP is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/issues/pfp/index.html>. Members of the PfP are all members of the EAPC. A list is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/pfp/sig-cntr.htm>

architecture referred to as the ‘Euro-Atlantic Partnership’ (EAP). Within that framework the functions of the EAPC and the PfP remain the same.

The Prague Summit also highlighted the need to enhance co-operation between the EAP countries, with specific reference to defence reform, military-to-military cooperation and measures to defend against terrorism. As part of the development of NATO’s overall partnerships policy, the decision was also taken to launch the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) as a practical mechanism for facilitating greater cooperation on an individualised level.

In his speech on 8 June 2004 Mr de Hoop Scheffer confirmed that further evolution of NATO’s partnerships policy and a specific focus on the Caucasus and Central Asia were priorities for Istanbul. He stated:

We must keep the evolution of NATO’s Partnerships closely in line with the Alliance’s own transformation. At the summit we will launch a new phase in our Partnership policy – with more individualised cooperation, a greater emphasis on defence reform, and a stronger focus on cooperation with the Caucasus and Central Asia.⁹⁵

As expected, the Istanbul Summit reiterated the commitment of the Alliance toward greater cooperation with its partner nations through the EAP. Defence reform, organised crime and trafficking, proliferation of WMD and counterterrorism were identified as specific areas where further progress could be achieved. NATO leaders also agreed to launch the Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building, aimed at assisting partner nations to build democratically responsible defence institutions; and to provide partner nations with greater opportunities to contribute to NATO-led operations, including the earliest possible involvement in the decision making process. Partner nations are also expected to be offered appropriate representation in the Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia.⁹⁶

In order to develop closer cooperation with countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia, the Alliance also endorsed the assignment of two international liaison officers and a special representative for the two regions within the NATO International Staff.

The Istanbul Communiqué stated:

In enhancing the Euro-Atlantic Partnership, we will put special focus on engaging with our Partners in the strategically important regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Towards that end, NATO has agreed an improved liaison arrangement, including the assignment of two international liaison officers, as

⁹⁵ Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, at the Centre for European Reform, Brussels, 8 June 2004

⁹⁶ NATO heads of State and Government, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004

well as a special representative for the two regions from within the International Staff. We welcome the decision by Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan to develop Individual Partnership Action Plans with NATO. This constitutes a significant step in these countries' efforts to develop close Partnership relations with the Alliance. We welcome the commitment of the new government of Georgia to reform.

We remain committed to partnership with the Republic of Moldova and encourage it to make use of Partnership instruments to take forward its aspirations or promoting stability in the region as a Partner of this Alliance.⁹⁷

Analysts have considered that, comparable to NATO's expansion into the Greater Middle East, the longer term success of enhancing cooperation with these countries may depend on the perceived strategic gain of closer relations with the Alliance, including the opportunity for full NATO membership at some point in the future. At the Prague Summit in 2002 Georgia submitted a formal application for NATO membership and on 13 September 2002 the Georgian Parliament pre-emptively approved an army reform plan aimed at preparing the country for NATO entry.⁹⁸ In an interview with *Le Figaro*, following the Istanbul Summit, the Georgian President, Mikhail Saakashvili, reiterated his government's belief that Georgia should become an official candidate for NATO membership.⁹⁹

Many commentators have argued that, for the long term therefore, a more co-ordinated approach in establishing partnerships with these countries may be necessary if they are to be effectively engaged. The idea of drawing all of NATO's partnership initiatives, including the EAP and the Mediterranean Dialogue, into one overarching partnership initiative has, in particular, been widely advocated.

Chris Donnelly has commented:

As the Partnership for Peace is itself overhauled and re-branded, there will almost inevitably be a greater degree of collaboration between it and the new mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation with North Africa and the Middle East. Perhaps the best solution, therefore, would be one common umbrella programme covering all aspects of partnership, both the Partnership for Peace and the Mediterranean Dialogue, beneath which there could be a greater distinction between the regions, and between parts of the whole: a "Partnership for Cooperation" which takes in Central and Eastern Europe, the wider Mediterranean Dialogue and the Greater Middle East.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ NATO Heads of State and Government, *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, 28 June 2004

⁹⁸ "President Shevardnadze is soon to announce Georgia's bid to join NATO", *Atlantic News*, 16 October 2002

⁹⁹ <http://www.eubusiness.com/afp/040630094149.iom8q7xg>

¹⁰⁰ "Forging a NATO partnership for the Greater Middle East", *NATO Review: Istanbul Summit Special*, May 2004

III Comments

In a speech to the Netherlands Atlantic Association on 5 July 2004 the NATO Secretary General hailed the success of the Istanbul Summit. He commented:

All Summits have two dimensions. They are about symbolism, and they are about substance. Both dimensions are crucially important. I am happy to report that Istanbul delivered on both counts.

The symbolic meaning of this event was clear: to demonstrate new transatlantic unity. Istanbul was the place where NATO Allies had to show that they were prepared to look to the future rather than to the past.

In fact, everyone signalled that it was time to think imaginatively about how to move forward. And I had the firm impression that this was a deeply shared desire.¹⁰¹

However, the perceived success of Istanbul has not been widely shared by commentators. In its *NATO Notes* series the International Security Information Service (ISIS) Europe argued:

Although much had been expected in the months leading up to the Istanbul Summit, it had become apparent to NATO officials on the eve of the Summit that it would not be as significant as Prague. Istanbul's rallying cry of 'projecting stability' appeared shallow when Allies could not agree on the nature of the training for Iraqi security forces, and whilst clear efforts are being made to honour existing commitments to Afghanistan, the emotional plea of the Afghan President betrayed the Allies caution [...]

Incremental adjustments rather than bold new policies characterised the impact of Istanbul [...] NATO's global agenda of projecting stability has indeed a long way to go.¹⁰²

Bronwen Maddox, Foreign Editor of *The Times*, suggested:

[The] Istanbul Summit has seen the end of NATO as a serious military alliance [...] If NATO has grown by more than a third this year, its power has shrunk. In military might, it seems able to muster only a glorified police force: if that. For all the effort of the summit it managed to squeeze out only a tiny band of soldiers to help quell the violence in Afghanistan. That was the only test NATO had to pass this week, and it failed.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ A copy of this speech is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040705a.htm>

¹⁰² "Istanbul Summit: a reluctant Alliance stumbles into Iraq", *NATO Notes*, July 2004

¹⁰³ "Stunt marked moment that an alliance died", *The Times*, 30 June 2004

However, she went on to state:

Despite Istanbul's failures, it would be wrong to write off the value of NATO entirely. Many of its members, particularly the newest ones, are delighted to be part of the club, and value the promise of protection if they are ever attacked. That is worth something.¹⁰⁴

An article in *Strategic Comments* presented a more ambivalent view of the Summit. It stated:

By NATO's modest goals, the summit was not a failure. But it did not surge with institutional confidence. NATO leaders may have given up arguing publicly over Iraq but they hardly furnished the US with the kind of support it once hoped for. Members reaffirmed their commitment to Afghanistan, but pessimism abounds about saving the country from another descent into state failure. It is notable, to be sure, that the whole 'out of area' debate [...] has been relegated to historical theology. Still, the abiding question is whether NATO as an institution will be important and effective in the critical theatres of the 21st century.¹⁰⁵

The response to the success of the Summit has also been mixed among NATO Member States. In a Statement to the House on 30 June 2004 the Prime Minister welcomed the conclusions of the Istanbul Summit, although he expressed concern over the extent of the response in meeting the challenges of terrorism. He stated:

The terrorism that we face is not confined now to any one continent, let alone any one country. From Saudi Arabia to the cities of Europe, it is there, active and planning. Since 11 September 2001 in New York we have known its potency. So what now happens in Iraq and Afghanistan affects us here as it does every nation, supportive or not of the actions we have taken.

NATO's focus on these issues shows at least a start to understanding this threat and its implications. But I worry, frankly, that our response is still not sufficient to the scale of the challenge that we face. I repeat what I said at the NATO plenary session: this threat cannot be defeated by security means alone. It also needs us to focus on the causes of it. Progress on the Israeli-Palestinian issue remains a vital strategic necessity, as does the recognition that our ultimate security lies in the spread of our values—freedom, democracy and the rule of law. The more we can assist in the development of these values in the wider middle east, in partnership with reform-minded Governments and people, the better will be our long-term prospects of defeating the threat.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*

¹⁰⁵ "NATO's Istanbul Summit", *Strategic Comments*, June 2004

¹⁰⁶ HC Deb 30 June 2004, c287

In reply the Leader of the Opposition, Michael Howard, commented:

We welcome NATO's decision to offer assistance to the Government of Iraq with the training of its security forces [...] we welcome the measures announced to enhance the fight against terrorism and on non-proliferation, and also the ongoing review of NATO's capabilities, but does the Prime Minister agree that a step change is necessary in the thinking of NATO members themselves? In particular, the communiqué itself calls for greater willingness and preparedness of nations to provide the resources and capabilities required. What progress does the Prime Minister envisage being made in that area?

Does not the Istanbul Summit point not only to the progress NATO has already made in adapting to changed circumstances, but also to the huge amount that there is still to do? Does the Prime Minister agree that the future development of NATO as a whole is at a crossroads?¹⁰⁷

The Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Charles Kennedy, also welcomed the agreement to assist with the training of Iraqi security forces, although he expressed concern over the ability of NATO to meet this commitment while maintaining an extended presence in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁸

The attitude of the US administration toward the outcome of the Summit has been portrayed as largely positive. US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was reported by *The Washington Post* to have commented "I don't know when in the history of the alliance we've seen so many successes".¹⁰⁹

The article went on to state:

[Rumsfeld] and other administration officials extolled NATO's decision to help train Iraqi security forces and its commitment of more troops to Afghanistan. They echoed President Bush's claim that the feuding about Iraq that nearly destroyed the alliance last year was over. "We got everything we wanted," one White House official said.¹¹⁰

However, the article also argued that the attitude of the US administration had been shaped by the forthcoming Presidential elections:

Such rhetoric is a logical response to John F. Kerry's tactic of making Bush's mismanagement of NATO, and its consequences in Iraq, a central part of his argument to voters. It is even partly true -- at least in the sense that the Bush administration is now eager to work with the allies in Iraq and Afghanistan, in

¹⁰⁷ HC Deb 30 June 2004, c288-9

¹⁰⁸ HC Deb 30 June 2004, c291

¹⁰⁹ "NATO's myth in Afghanistan", *The Washington Post*, 5 July 2004

¹¹⁰ *ibid*

contrast to the stiff-arm Rumsfeld delivered to the Europeans hoping to join the first offensive against the Taliban in the fall of 2001.¹¹¹

This opinion has been shared by a number of commentators who have suggested that the apparent conciliatory attitude of the US towards France's opposition to deploying troops on the ground in Iraq and the NRF to Afghanistan was motivated by a need to play down the divisions between the two countries ahead of the election in November 2004.

During a press conference on 28 June 2004 the French President, Jacques Chirac, made the following comments on these two issues:

In Afghanistan, it is our duty to support the political process and the action carried out by President Karzai. At lunch the NATO Secretary-General asked whether it was right, in the run-up to the forthcoming elections – which we are naturally anxious to see held calmly and democratically – whether or not it was appropriate to mobilize and deploy in Afghanistan units of the new NATO Response Force, the NRF. Some of our colleagues were in favour of this idea. I pointed out that, firstly, it wasn't the role of the NRF whose remit is to act in the event of an established crisis, which is obviously not the case in Afghanistan today. Moreover, on the eve of political elections, too emphatic, too large a presence of NATO was perhaps politically not the wisest and most sensible course of action [...]

As regards NATO's role in Iraq, you know my position: I don't believe it is NATO's job to intervene in Iraq and, above all, I am convinced that if NATO were to do so, the negative consequences would definitely outweigh, particularly at the psychological and political levels, the positive ones. It isn't appropriate, it wouldn't be understood. I am convinced that the only solution, I repeat, is really to make the Iraqi people believe they have regained control of their destiny.¹¹²

Opposition by the French to what have been regarded as the two main issues of the Summit has, however, prompted criticism among several observers.

An article in the *New York Times* commented:

Mr. Chirac's opposition to President Bush's call at the summit meeting in Istanbul this week for NATO to play a meaningful role in Iraq has opened him up to criticism that he is trying to sabotage the efforts to stabilize and reconstruct Iraq.¹¹³

¹¹¹ "NATO's myth in Afghanistan", *The Washington Post*, 5 July 2004

¹¹² http://www.ambafrance-uk.org/asp/presse_item.asp?ID=1437&LNG=en

¹¹³ "Chirac's rule, a new rule, is applied to a rival", *New York Times*, 30 June 2004

Charles Krauthammer, writing in *Time Magazine*, also argued:

[French] obstructionism was on amazing display at the recent NATO summit in Istanbul. The supremely courageous President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, flies there to beg for our troops to protect his country in the run-up to September elections. Two female election workers had already been murdered and some 16 men had been shot to death by insurgents for registering to vote.

NATO responds with an offer of a small number of troops to be sent around September. Karzai pleads for a more immediate deployment. Britain and the U.S. request deployment of NATO's new rapid-reaction force created precisely for such contingencies. France's President Jacques Chirac vetoes it, saying the force should not be used "in any old way."

Afghanistan is the good war, remember. The war of undeniable necessity. The war everyone supported. It is hard to imagine a more important mission for NATO, or for the civilized world for that matter, than assuring free elections in Afghanistan, crucible for the worst terrorist attack in history. Yet with a flick of a hand, Chirac dismisses Karzai--and, of course, the U.S.¹¹⁴

The willingness of the US to compromise was also hailed by the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, as the main reason for the success of the Summit. An article in the German magazine *Expatica* reported that Chancellor Schröder had commented: "The cooperative positions taken by the United States at the NATO Summit showed that Washington had learned its lesson from the Iraq war", and "American willingness to cooperate and compromise helped make the summit a success".¹¹⁵

However, the German media were critical of the achievements of Istanbul. *BBC News Online* reported:

Commenting on the NATO Summit in Istanbul, Germany's *Der Tagesspiegel* describes its results as "meagre". As the paper sees it, the summit failed to heal the split between those NATO members who opposed the war in Iraq and those who backed it. "The NATO summit was superfluous and took place at the wrong time" It says the decisions taken by the 26 Heads of State and Government could equally have been left to foreign ministers. And the fact that the United States is shouldering the security burden in Afghanistan is a sign of Europe's military weakness [...]

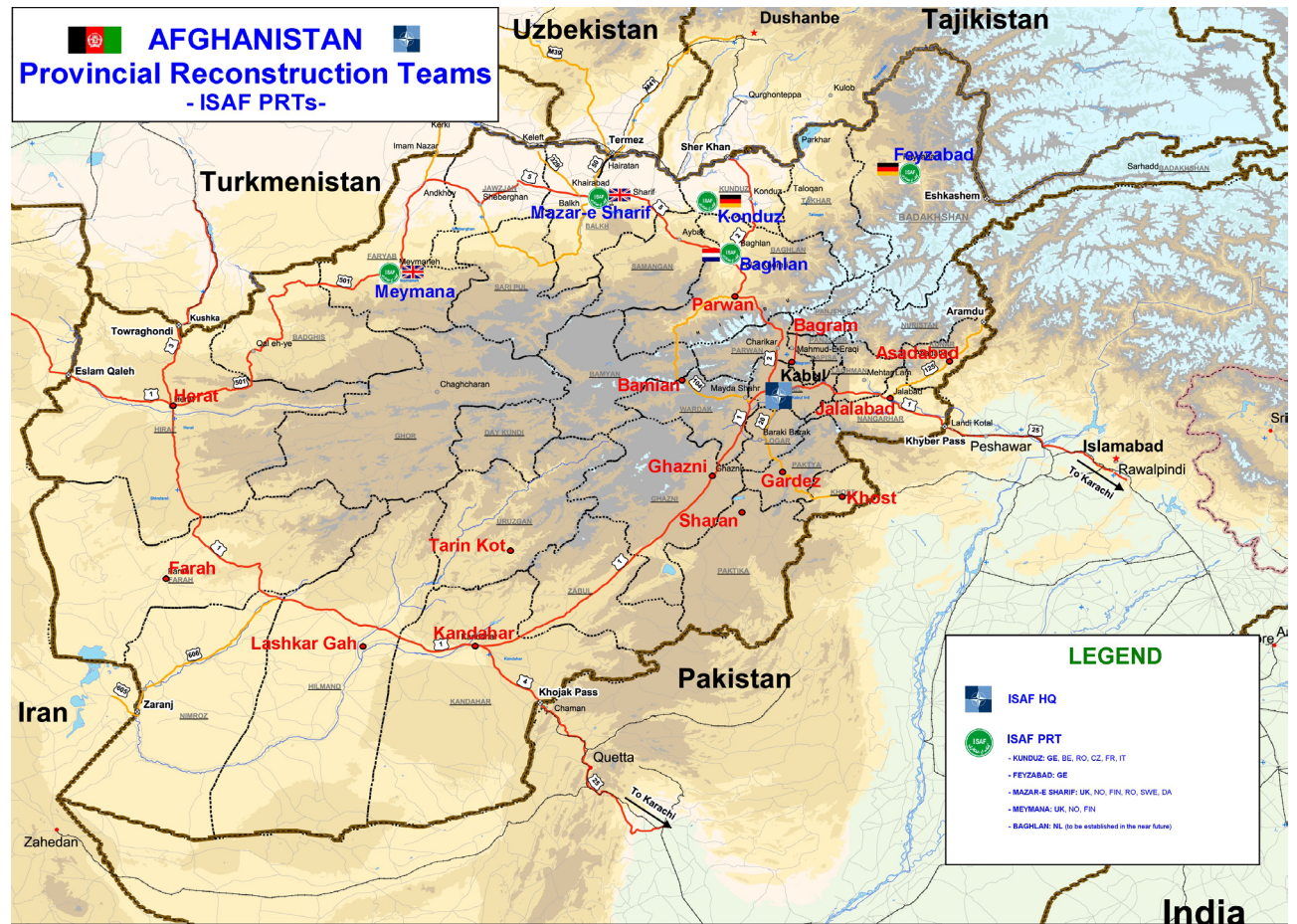
Germany's *Berliner Zeitung* says that although NATO cannot afford to fail in Afghanistan, its resources there are pitifully limited.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ "Why the French act isn't funny any more", *Time*, 12 July 2004

¹¹⁵ "Schröder: US has learned its lesson from Iraq war", *Expatica*, 29 June 2004

¹¹⁶ "European press review", *BBC News Online*, 30 June 2004

Appendix One – Map of Afghanistan



Source: NATO in Afghanistan Fact Sheet, 7 July 2004 ¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ This is available online at: <http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/graphics/e040628a.jpg>