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NATO Policy doc

Policy document

Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

9 July 2004

1. With a transformed Alliance determined to respond to new challenges, NATO is ready to undertake a new initiative in the broader Middle East region to further contribute to long-term global and regional security and stability while complementing other international efforts.



Events

- [NATO Istanbul Sumr](#)

2. In this context, progress towards a just, lasting, and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should remain a priority for the countries of the region and the international community as a whole, and for the success of security and stability objectives of this initiative. Full and speedy implementation of the Quartet Road Map is a key element in international efforts to promote a two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in which Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace and security. The roadmap is a vital element of international efforts to promote a comprehensive peace on all tracks, including the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks.

3. NATO's initiative, based on a series of mutually beneficial bilateral relationships aimed at fostering security and regional stability, should take account the following principles:

- a. the importance of taking into account ideas and proposals originating from the countries of the region or regional organisations;
- b. the need to stress that the NATO initiative is a cooperative initiative based on joint ownership and the mutual interests of NATO and the countries of the region, taking into account their diversity and specific needs;
- c. the need to recognise that this process is distinct yet takes into account and complements other initiatives including by the G-8 and international organisations such as the EU and the OSCE as appropriate. The NATO initiative should also be complementary to the Alliance's Mediterranean Dialogue and could use instruments developed in this framework, while respecting its specificity. Furthermore, the new initiative could apply lessons learned and, as appropriate, mechanisms and tools derived from other NATO initiatives such as the Partnership for Peace (PfP);
- d. the need to focus on practical cooperation in areas where NATO can add value, particularly in the security field. Participation of countries in the initiative as well as the pace and extent of their cooperation with NATO will depend in large measure on their individual response and level of interest;
- e. the need to avoid misunderstandings about the scope of the initiative which is not meant to either lead to NATO/EAPC/PfP membership, provide security guarantees, or be used to create a political debate on

issues more appropriately handled in other fora.

4. Taking into account other international efforts for reforms in the democratic and civil society fields in the countries of the region, NATO's offer to those countries of dialogue and cooperation will contribute to those efforts where it can have an added value: in particular, NATO could make a notable contribution in the security field as a result of its particular strengths and the experience gained with the PfP and the Mediterranean Dialogue.

Aim of the initiative

5. The aim of the initiative would be to enhance security and regional stability through a new transatlantic engagement with the region. This could be achieved by actively promoting NATO's cooperation with interested countries in the field of security, particularly through practical activities where NATO can add value to develop the ability of countries' forces to operate with those of the Alliance including by contributing to NATO-led operations, fight against terrorism, the flow of WMD materials and illegal trafficking in arms, and improve countries' capabilities to address common challenges and threats with NATO.

6. Countries of the region might see benefit in cooperation with the Alliance through practical support against terrorist threats, access to training, defence reform expertise and opportunities for military cooperation, as well as through political dialogue on issues of common concern.

Content of the initiative including priority areas

7. The initiative's aim would be essentially achieved through practical cooperation and assistance in the following priority areas, and illustrative list of specific activities:

- a. providing tailored advice on defence reform, defence budgeting, defence planning and civil-military relations.
- b. promoting military-to-military cooperation to contribute to interoperability¹ through participation in selected military exercises related education and training activities that could improve the ability of participating countries' forces to operate with those of the Alliance including contributing to NATO-led operations consistent with the UN Charter:
 - o invite interested countries to observe and/or participate in selected NATO/PfP exercise activities as appropriate and provided that the necessary arrangements are in place;
 - o encourage additional participation by interested countries in NATO-led peace-support operations on a case-by-case basis;
- c. fighting against terrorism including through information sharing and maritime cooperation:
 - o invite interested countries, in accordance with the procedures established by the Council for contributory support from non-NATO nations to join Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) in order to enhance their ability to help deter, defend, disrupt and protect against terrorism through maritime operations in the OAE Area of Operations;
 - o explore other forms of cooperation against terrorism including

- through intelligence exchange and assessments as appropriate
- d. contributing to the work of the Alliance on threats posed by weapon mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery;
 - e. promoting cooperation as appropriate and where NATO can add value in the field of border security, particularly in connection with terrorism arms & light weapons, and the fight against illegal trafficking:
 - o offer NATO-sponsored border security expertise and facilitate follow-up training in this respect;
 - o access to appropriate PfP programmes and training centres.
 - f. promoting cooperation in the areas of civil emergency planning:
 - o offer NATO training courses on civil emergency planning, civil-military coordination, and crisis response to maritime, aviation and surface threats;
 - o invitations to join or observe relevant NATO/PfP exercises as appropriate and provision of information on possible disaster assistance.

Geographical scope of the initiative

8. Based on the principle of inclusiveness, the initiative could be opened to interested countries in the region who subscribe to the aim and content of the initiative, including the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as described above. Each interested country would be considered by the North Atlantic Council on a case-by-case basis and on its merit. This initiative would complement NATO's specific relationship with partner countries of the Mediterranean Dialogue ².

Implementing the new initiative

9. This initiative would carry NATO into a new set of relationships with countries that may have a limited understanding of the Alliance as it has been transformed. Since an underlying requirement of success for the initiative is the development of ownership by countries of the region, it will be necessary to update governments' and opinion-formers' understanding of NATO and the initiative and, in the light of the reactions of the countries concerned, consider a joint public diplomacy effort. Furthermore, in developing and implementing the initiative, the views of interested countries in the region will have to be taken into account through a process of regular consultation.

10. This initiative will be launched at the Istanbul Summit. Subsequently, through consultation with interested countries, NATO would offer a menu of practical activities within the above-mentioned priority areas for possible development with interested countries of the region. The Alliance would engage these countries, on a 26+1 basis, to develop and execute agreed work plans. When doing so, the new initiative could apply lessons learned and, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis, mechanisms and tools derived from other NATO initiatives such as the Partnership for Peace (PfP). Appropriate legal, security and liaison arrangements should be put in place.

1. Interoperability requirements constitute firm prerequisites for contributing nations such as the need to communicate with each other, to operate together, to support each other, and to train together.

2. Specificity in this respect refers in particular to the composition of this initiative the Mediterranean Dialogue, as well as the multilateral dimension of the Mediterranean Dialogue.

