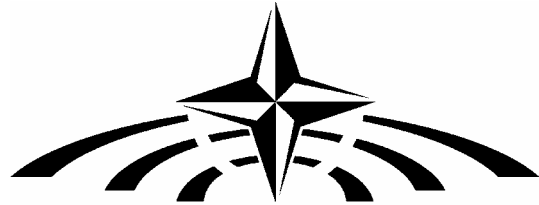


## **ANNEX 2.**

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### **MILITARY PREPARATIONS OF NATO CANDIDATE COUNTRIES**



NATO Parliamentary Assembly

#### **SUB-COMMITTEE ON FUTURE SECURITY AND DEFENCE CAPABILITIES**

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Defence and Security

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## Introduction

1. As NATO marked its 50th anniversary at the April 1999 Washington Summit, national leaders declared that the Alliance would revisit the subject of NATO enlargement at a summit to be held no later than 2002. The Alliance had admitted its three newest members - the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland - just a month earlier, and allied leaders recognised the importance of keeping NATO's door open to the other nine former communist countries that had applied for membership. That summit will be held in Prague in November 2002, at which time the Alliance has pledged to offer membership to "one or more" of the nine aspirant countries. While enlargement will not be the only agenda item at what Secretary General George Robertson has called the "transformation summit", the decisions on enlargement at Prague will help define the shape of the Alliance in years to come.

2. The decision on enlargement will be the next phase in NATO's post-Cold War transition, which began more than a decade ago. NATO was formed as a defensive military alliance, and that remains its primary role amid the uncertainty that characterises the international security environment. But NATO has also served a second purpose for over a half-century: allowing erstwhile foes in Europe to cooperate militarily and economically under a common security umbrella, enabling the peaceful integration of the region. Through NATO, European and North American countries have planned their defence jointly, removing any uncertainty about their intentions and facilitating cooperation. The applicant countries recognise that NATO can help them provide for their security against any threats that may arise, build confidence among domestic and foreign investors and facilitate the economic growth needed to overcome the legacy of communism. The latest round of enlargement - the fourth in NATO's history - anchored three countries in the Euro-Atlantic community of democracies. The next round will do the same for several nations that prove willing and able to assume the responsibilities of this collective defence organisation.

3. The process of NATO enlargement dates back to shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The Alliance's new goals were set forth in the London Summit Declaration of 1990, when NATO announced a new programme for cooperation open to the governments of the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern European countries, cooperation that was institutionalised in the form of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) during the 1991 Rome Summit. At the 1994 Brussels Summit, allied leaders reaffirmed that the Alliance was open to new members in accord with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty. The Brussels Summit also launched the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme, which included NACC

members and other countries of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that had the capacity and desire to contribute. In September 1995 the Alliance adopted its Study on NATO Enlargement, which described factors to be considered in the enlargement process and remains the basis for future NATO enlargement.

4. At the historic 1997 Madrid Summit, the Alliance invited the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to start individual talks to become full members of the Organisation. Accession Protocols were signed in December 1997 and were ratified by all 16 NATO parliaments during 1998. At the 1999 Washington Summit, three former Warsaw Pact countries participated in their first summit meeting as full members of enlarged NATO. The Washington Summit also introduced the Membership Action Plan (MAP), a programme through which the Alliance works with the other nine aspirant countries to help them reform their defence structures to operate more efficiently and to be prepared to work within the Alliance when they gain membership.

5. In an effort to demonstrate their commitment to work cooperatively, the foreign ministers of the nine applicant countries launched a political initiative in Vilnius, Lithuania, in May 2000 that called for the invitation of all nine aspirant countries, a proposal quickly dubbed the “Big Bang”. Other meetings of the “Vilnius Nine” - Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia - have reaffirmed this commitment to work together toward Alliance membership. Croatia was officially accepted into the MAP in May 2002, and the renamed Vilnius Ten met in July 2002 in Riga, Latvia. NATO has said, however, that Croatia will not be considered for membership at the Prague Summit.

6. Alliance governments have continued to reaffirm their commitment to further enlargement. In addition, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in October 2001 adopted a Declaration on Enlargement that reiterated the Assembly’s strong support for future NATO enlargement. It is becoming increasingly apparent that Alliance governments firmly intend to continue the enlargement process beyond the Prague Summit, as illustrated by the statement of US President George W. Bush in June 2001 at Warsaw University that NATO membership must be extended to all European democracies.

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<sup>1</sup> Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

## **Analysis of Previous Enlargement Round**

7. Three years after the most recent round of enlargement, the process has proved largely positive for both new allies and the Alliance. While all three countries still have significant shortcomings in their militaries, notably in planning, budgets, and personnel restructuring, they are making a net contribution to the security of the Alliance. At the same time, the fears expressed by many opponents of enlargement have not come to pass. Enlargement has not isolated Russia; in fact, NATO cooperation with Russia is closer than it has ever been. Special relationships with Russia and Ukraine, as well as the work of PfP and the open door policy, have ensured that enlargement has not drawn a new dividing line through Europe. Wildly outrageous estimates that enlargement would cost the allies hundreds of billions of dollars have proven off the mark by a factor of a hundred. And the new allies have not paralysed NATO decision-making. In short, NATO enlargement is working, and the Alliance is better off as a result.

8. A 2000 report by the US Congressional Budget Office (CBO) found that the new allies are moving toward making proportional contributions to the alliance, as measured by some indicators. Poland and the Czech Republic have increased their defence budgets relative to gross domestic product (GDP) to about the average level for the other European NATO members. All of the new allies are contributing personnel to Balkan peacekeeping operations at levels that are comparable to those of similarly sized long-standing NATO members. All three have successfully created Western-style command structures, and are taking steps to modernise their forces.

9. The new allies share some common challenges as well, especially in restructuring their militaries and overcoming the debilitating legacy of Warsaw Pact military doctrine. While the armed forces of all three new members are firmly in the hands of civilian defence ministries, a lack of civilian defence experts in the legislative branch has resulted in minimal parliamentary oversight. Moreover, all of the new allies need to develop larger non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps and junior officer corps, and imbue these new officers with better leadership qualities in order to move away from the Warsaw Pact model of top-down, centralised authority. All three countries share a need to modernise their equipment. But this is a lesser problem that can be addressed mainly by upgrading weapons platforms and buying communications gear that is interoperable with NATO systems.

10. Jeffrey Simon, an analyst at the National Defense University in Washington DC who briefed the Committee in January, cites seven challenges to military reform among the new allies:

1. Force planning inadequacies;
2. Budgetary constraints;
3. Restructuring of military personnel, including cuts in the officer corps and building an NCO corps;
4. Constitutional and legal inadequacies, particularly regarding the relationship between defence ministries, general staffs and parliaments;
5. National security concepts and military doctrines that do not address the most likely security operations;
6. Defence planning complications, including a failure to fulfil NATO Force Goals;
7. Declining public support for the military, particularly in the Czech Republic.

11. In preparation for NATO accession, all three countries increased defence budgets in order to allow smoother transition to NATO standards. Poland increased its defence budget from \$3.2 billion (€3.28 billion) in 1996 to \$3.7 billion (€3.79 billion) in 2001. (All dollar amounts in this report are US dollars; at the time of writing, €1=\$0.975.) The Hungarian defence budget increased to \$963 million (€988 million) in 2001 from \$491 million (€504 million) in 1997, and the Czech defence budget grew to \$1.14 billion (€1.17 billion) in 2001 from \$869 million (€891 million) in 1997. In terms of gross domestic product, Poland spent about 2% of GDP on defence in 2001, Hungary 1.6%, and the Czech Republic 2.2%. The Polish and Czech figures are near the average for NATO's European members, while Hungary is below average.

12. Furthermore, changes are being made to overcome shortcomings in personnel and training as well as to decrease the size of militaries. Attempts are being made to build a strong non-commissioned officer corps with initiative and leadership skills and reduce reliance on top officers. Improved training, particularly in the field of language skills, is one important element to further integrate new armies into NATO, and must continue to be a priority for new members.

13. When Poland joined NATO it had around 200,000 troops. That number dropped to 165,000 in January 2002 and is set to fall to 150,000 by 2006. Hungary, which joined the Alliance with 52,000 troops, will decrease their numbers to 37,700 by 2003, and the Czech Republic, which joined NATO with a 60,000-strong military, will reduce it to a professional force of 35,000 in six years. Over the long-term, downsizing may free resources for

modernization, although the experience of other European countries indicates that in the short-term, the transition to a smaller, professional army could lead to increased costs.

14. With respect to modernization, the new members are as yet unable to contribute significantly to technology-intensive services, such as the air force. All three new members have expressed interest in acquiring NATO-standard aircraft in the next decade, although it is not certain that they would be able to provide the necessary support and training to make the new technology effective. NATO has stated that the new members should focus on procurement of essential military equipment such as command, control, and communication equipment, and that procurement of more sophisticated equipment can be postponed for several years.

15. All three countries actively participate and cooperate with NATO members and non-members on a bilateral level as well as take part in the Balkans by committing forces to the Bosnia Stabilisation Force (SFOR) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR). The number of troops in these operations fluctuates from month to month, however, as of June 2002, Poland had 271 troops in SFOR and 633 in KFOR; Hungary had 157 in SFOR and 333 in KFOR; and the Czech Republic had 14 in SFOR and 423 in KFOR. The number of their forces in the Balkans varies but it is comparable to longstanding NATO members of similar size.

16. Of the three new allies, Poland has made the greatest progress toward integrating its military into NATO. The CBO study, which relied on interviews with experts on the region and published data, cited the nation's size (a population of almost 40 million, similar to Spain's), a defence budget relative to GDP above the average for NATO's European members, a 15-year modernisation plan, and strong political support for the alliance when it concluded that Poland is likely to make a significant, even "above-average," contribution to European security. While Poland faces challenges in modernising its forces, some observers compare the state of the Polish military favourably to less affluent, long-time NATO members. The personnel turnover that is envisioned led one scholar quoted by CBO to note, "In five or six years, we're going to see guys making lieutenant colonel and colonel be the guys that we've trained. They're going to come into their own and have the *esprit de corps* of a Western military".

17. According to CBO, experts generally rate the Czech military between its Polish and Hungarian counterparts in terms of quality and contributions to NATO. On the positive side, experts point to a larger defence budget and a greater number of professional soldiers than Hungary, specialised units and the best communications system of the new allies as indicators

that the Czech military will be able to make a small but solid contribution to NATO forces, in line with that of comparably sized allies.

18. Potential pitfalls loom, particularly the challenge of maintaining government support for defence spending, poor allocation of resources, and a potential "brain drain" of talented young officers leaving for more lucrative jobs in the private sector. Prior to accession, polls showed Czech public support for NATO membership to be among the lowest of all aspiring countries. A recent study by RAND accused the political elite, who feared general public distrust of the military, of sidestepping the issue of membership rather than entering into an informative public debate. The general public continues to perceive a wide gap between its opinions and the elite's decisions on security issues. Analysts are split on whether the Czech Republic will allow its defence spending to wane now that it has joined NATO or if it will make a modest contribution to NATO capabilities.

19. CBO states that most analysts rank the Hungarian military at the bottom of the three countries that recently joined NATO. According to Thomas S. Szayna, a RAND analyst, Hungary's membership illustrates the danger of presuming that discipline imposed on a country by the pre-admission criteria will persist once that country becomes a NATO member: defence spending remains low, despite pre-accession pledges to increase it, and personnel levels are shrinking. In July 2002 the Deputy Defence Minister Imre Ivancsik recognised that, "while budgets have increased, capabilities have declined. Our NATO allies have justifiably criticised us - we have failed in the majority of our commitments". In August, the Deputy State Secretary at the Defence Ministry, Jozsef Bali, admitted that Hungary took on excessive commitments at the start of its NATO membership, which could not be met due to limited defence budgets. Several analysts declare that Hungary offers little hope of making a significant military contribution to common defence in the foreseeable future.

20. Others note that while Hungary devotes less of its national income to defence than most other NATO countries, its strategic geographic location allows the alliance to project stability into the most volatile part of Europe. Despite the limited capabilities of the Hungarian army, particularly its low levels of unit readiness, Hungary was able to play an active role in the Kosovo operations because of its host-nation support capabilities, which facilitated deployment and reinforcement of other NATO forces. A defence review scheduled for March 2003 will examine possible areas of specialisation; for instance, nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) defence, combat engineering and special forces.



21. The previous round of enlargement holds lessons for the admission of current candidate countries. Prior to the ratification in 2003 of the next enlargement, parliaments represented in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly should consider the state of preparedness of candidate countries' militaries. Candidate countries should have educated the public on NATO membership through an open debate. The potential to contribute to NATO in the future depends upon compatibility, both of structures and technical capabilities; therefore, reformed command structures and training programmes should be given attention alongside higher defence budgets and modernisation plans. The parliaments represented in the Assembly should regard the ratification process as a means of encouraging deep and permanent changes in the militaries of candidate countries.

### **Membership Action Plan**

22. To help countries prepare for alliance membership, the Alliance at the 1999 Washington Summit developed a series of Membership Action Plans with each of the nine candidates. The MAP is designed to assist these countries with their preparation by providing advice, assistance and practical support on all aspects of NATO membership. The guiding principle behind all NATO activities in regard to MAP partners, however, is that all enlargement decisions remain political. The list of issues identified in MAP - political and economic, defence and military, resources, security, and legal issues - do not constitute criteria for membership. The MAP only defines what aspirant countries need to accomplish on the path to membership, based on the lessons learned in accession discussions with the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. Each aspirant country chooses the elements of the MAP best suited to its national programme and circumstances.

23. There are three main military criteria that aspirant countries must meet. First, they must be able to contribute to the defence of their national territory. Second, they must be able to contribute military assets and capabilities to assist in an Article 5, collective-defence mission involving an armed attack on another Alliance member. Third, they must be able to contribute to NATO peace-support operations.

24. The military preparations of candidate countries differ according to the structure and size of pre-existing defence establishments. As inheritors of a large military establishment from the communist era, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia face problems of military reform similar to those faced by new members in 1999. Like the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, the main goals for these states should be to cut back force size and gradually make equipment

interoperable. The goals for the Baltic States and Slovenia should be to build up a NATO-compatible military establishment, more or less from scratch. In all cases, the successful achievement of goals depends upon willingness to invest resources in defence, the creation of a Western-style command structure and effective planning.

25. All of the countries with legacy armed forces face the short-term hurdle of downsizing their militaries to create smaller, better-equipped forces. Following the example of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, these nations must cut the number of senior officers while building a larger corps of junior officers and non-commissioned officers with leadership skills. As noted above, this creates a short-term drain on resources, as defence ministries must spend a disproportionate amount of money on severance and retirement benefits for departing senior officers. In the long-term, however, this downsizing will free money to modernize the armed forces.

26. Consistent with the MAP guidelines, all aspirant countries submit an Annual National Programme on preparations for future membership, including objectives on all relevant issues. These national programmes are to be updated each year to record the current progress of the aspirant country. A report on the progress made by each aspirant country is presented at the regular spring meetings and discussions at the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and throughout the year at meetings and workshops with NATO civilian and military experts. In addition, an annual report on MAP is presented to NATO foreign and defence ministers at their regular spring meetings each year. Members of three NATO Parliamentary Assembly committees are briefed on the MAP in the course of their meetings with NATO officials each February, and the Assembly's International Staff regularly meets with NATO officials for periodic updates on the MAP.

27. Furthermore, the MAP provides aspirant countries with advice and feedback on their preparations for future membership. The feedback is provided in 19+1 format at the NAC level, as well as with a NATO team, and other NATO bodies if requested. A "clearing-house meeting" helps coordinate bilateral and multilateral defence assistance to aspiring countries from NATO members. The MAP does not replace Partnership for Peace or the Planning and Review Process (PARP) but anticipates full participation in PfP operations as an essential part of developing closer political and military ties as well as interoperability with NATO forces and future members. While the MAP does not constitute a checklist for membership, the progress made on each of the five chapters helps determine if an aspirant country is ready to begin

accession negotiations. The MAP also serves as the vehicle for delivering sustained reform in candidate countries through the invitation, ratification and accession processes.

28. NATO expects the aspirant countries to achieve certain political and economic progress. Progress should be made in settling any international, ethnic or external territorial disputes by peaceful means; adherence to the rule of law and respect of human rights; establishing democratic control over armed forces; and promoting stability through economic liberty. The MAP defence and military issues focus on the ability of the aspirant country to contribute to collective defence and overall NATO capabilities. Effective information-security procedures are an important component of this, including secure communication links; the ability to receive and store NATO classified material; and a system for vetting officials with access to classified information. Likewise, applicant countries must have a sufficient number of qualified military personnel with a knowledge of English who can serve on NATO staffs and work with the Alliance and their counterparts in other allied countries.

29. The aspirant countries are expected to commit sufficient resources to allow themselves to meet the commitments of NATO collective defence obligations. With regard to safeguards and procedures, aspirants are expected to have policies in place to ensure the security of classified information. And last, in the course of legal issues, the aspirant countries have to ensure that their domestic law is compatible with NATO rules and regulations as well as become acquainted with the appropriate legal arrangements and agreements that govern cooperation within NATO. This includes the ability to deploy their forces abroad and to host allied forces on their territory.

30. The latest MAP round began in Autumn 2001, when the applicant countries submitted their national programs. NATO officials assessed those reports in January through March 2002, and those findings were shared with applicants in the 19+1 format in March and April 2002. Progress reports, which were written by NATO officials in April 2002 and approved by the NAC in May 2002, represent the most recent analysis by NATO of the applicant countries' progress. While the details of these reports are classified, their broad conclusions are reflected in the analyses of individual candidate countries contained in Chapter V.

31. In addition, before the Prague Summit, NATO member nations will be able to review each applicant's PARP survey, which details what each PfP member is doing to enable its armed forces to operate together with NATO. The PARP survey also includes information on

progress made in fulfilling NATO Partnership Goals and on defence budget plans. The 2002 PARP surveys were to be submitted on October 12.

## **Non-Military Criteria**

32. In the structure of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Political Committee has concerned itself with the non-military aspects of enlargement. In particular, its Subcommittee on Central and Eastern Europe has addressed the enlargement process through the reports of Bert Koenders of the Netherlands. Readers wishing greater detail on the non-military criteria may wish to consult Mr Koenders's spring report, *NATO Enlargement and Partnerships*, as well as the report he is preparing for this year's Annual Session. As a result, this report focuses largely on the military aspect of enlargement.

33. The enlargement study that NATO issued in 1995 introduced a set of criteria that aspirant countries are to meet prior to accession. The criteria outlined in the study stressed the need for aspirant countries to have a democratic political system, to establish democratic civilian control of the armed forces, to adhere to the principles of the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe, and to contribute militarily to the Alliance. In addition to sharing democratic values, new members must demonstrate a clear commitment to a free-market economy and economic reform, and they must enjoy public support for NATO membership. This study still represents the basic principles that any aspirant country has to fulfil in order to be recognised as a serious candidate. These principles have been further elaborated in the MAP process.

34. In the MAP assessments, seven countries - Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia - receive generally satisfactory marks with regard to the non-military criteria of the MAP. Few concerns are cited in the cases of Estonia, Lithuania and Slovenia. Crime and corruption are cited as concerns in Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia, but all are commended for progress in this area, especially Bulgaria's October 2001 judicial reforms. Romania has a legal and administrative framework in place for its anti-corruption campaign, but political will is needed to implement reforms. Likewise, while reforms are underway in Latvia and Slovakia, more work remains to be done.

35. In Slovakia, the success of the centre-right coalition in the September parliamentary election put concerns to rest that former Slovak Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar might return to power, as the Slovak electorate voted for parties that clearly advocated NATO membership.

The Slovak Democratic and Christian Union of current Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda is expected to lead a four-party coalition that should keep Slovakia on the path to integration with NATO and the EU. The Movement for a Democratic Slovakia party of Mr. Meciar, whose government in the mid-1990s proved hostile to NATO and democratic values, received the largest number of votes in the election, with 19.5% of the total, but it was unable to form a ruling coalition as other parties rejected an alliance with Mr. Meciar. The showing was the worst ever for Mr. Meciar's party, and analysts indicated that it may signal the end of his political career.

36. Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are struggling to meet the political standards for both NATO and EU membership. The 2002 report of a joint EU-Balkan initiative to improve conditions in the Balkans cites Albania's principal problems as a weak and ineffectual judiciary, electoral processes that are "not yet up to international standards", political instability, poor governance, widespread corruption and organised crime. The same report states that the conflict in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 2001 exposed severe flaws in the country's democratic institutions, while the weakness of the judiciary, inadequacy of public administration and pervasive corruption are ongoing problems.

37. Having suffered under perhaps the most repressive communist government in the world, Albania entered the 1990s as the poorest country in Europe. A decade of friction between the Socialist Party and the Democratic Party hampered the development of a market economy and democratic institutions. In 1997, the collapse of a pyramid investment scheme sparked an economic crisis, the government was forced to resign as the country descended into anarchy, and looting of military hardware left Albania without functioning armed forces. Weak state institutions were unable to instil stability or tackle rampant criminality. The political culture remained combative and at times violent. Despite efforts to fight corruption, organised crime and trafficking of human beings, the overwhelming magnitude of illegal activity remains a challenge to the very structure of the state.

38. Political deadlock followed the victory of the Socialist Party in the parliamentary elections of June 2001 as the opposition Democratic Party, claiming fraud, boycotted parliament for six months. The boycott ended in January 2002, due to intense pressure from the EU. A deep split within the Socialist Party further complicated the political landscape. The Democratic Party's return to parliament did not ease the political tensions; there were conflicts both within the Socialist Party and between the two parties over the choice of presidential candidate. Again EU intervention prompted a solution in the form of a joint candidate, Alfred Moisiu, who

was elected president in June 2002. Analysts speak of the “normalisation” of the political process over the past few months, fueling hope that divisive and sometimes violent competition will give way to a “politics of collaboration”. A retired army general, Mr. Moisiu stated that his first objective will be to hasten the country’s integration into the EU and NATO.

39. The Koenders' report states that Macedonian membership will depend on the “peaceful and sustainable solution of the conflict” that struck that country in 2001, prompting questions about the outgoing nationalist government’s ability to guarantee respect for democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, despite its official commitment to those principles. The August 2001 peace agreement is being implemented and political compromise between the ethnic Albanian and Macedonian communities is taking hold, a process that should be helped by the victory of the Social Democratic Union in the September 2002 parliamentary elections. Those elections were generally free and fair, even though they were preceded by escalated violence between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians. The 700 NATO peacekeepers in Operation *Amber Fox* are to remain at least through October 26, 2002, and will provide protection for the OSCE civilian monitors who are overseeing implementation of the peace agreement. The European Union had proposed taking over that mission after the NATO mandate ends, but arrangements had not been finalised at the time of this writing.

40. Your Rapporteur believes that seven of the applicant countries have made sufficient progress on NATO’s non-military criteria, and they should be considered for membership in the Alliance at the Prague Summit. He will devote the remainder of his report to examining the state of their militaries to help evaluate whether they would be able to contribute to the security of the Alliance. As for Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, despite efforts to establish stable democratic institutions, much work remains to be done. He is particularly impressed by the important steps taken by the Macedonian government and parliament in granting rights to the country’s ethnic Albanian minority, and he would urge NATO and its members to continue working with the new government in Skopje to develop and solidify its democracy so it might join the Alliance in the next round. However, with NATO peacekeepers currently stationed in the country, it is clear that the country is not yet ready for Alliance membership.

## **Military Preparations of Candidate Countries**

### ***Bulgaria***

41. In 2001, Bulgaria conducted a force structure review in close consultation with the Alliance, and as a result the previous Plan 2004 has been significantly adjusted. The updated Plan 2004 outlines projected improvements in the functional and organisational structure of the Bulgarian armed forces. According to the plan, the forces will be smaller, more capable and NATO interoperable, and fully professional armed forces are planned for 2010. The plan is compatible with financial resources, but additional personnel funding will be needed. The revised plan is expected to create a force structure more in line with NATO force structures, but its objectives are judged to be “very ambitious”, and fulfilment will require continued effort.

42. Operational capabilities today are judged to be low overall, but the priority for the future will be given to developing deployable forces that could be used for NATO crisis management and Article 5 operations. The plan aims to increase the number of professional, mobile units by 50% in the next three years, which would enable Bulgaria to increase its participation in peace support operations. As of today, Bulgaria has prepared and trained 1,650 military personnel for units earmarked for participation in NATO-led peace support operations. These professional units include a mechanised infantry battalion, engineering battalion, NBC defence battalion, NBC reconnaissance company, logistics company, special operations company, and an airfield engineering company. In addition, ten helicopters, three aircraft and six ships can be deployed. Bulgaria has 309 troops in SFOR, KFOR and in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the peacekeeping force in the Afghan capital of Kabul.

43. Limited defence budgets (\$337 million/€346 million in 2001) have presented an obstacle to reform and greater participation in peacekeeping. However, the defence budget increased in 2002, and Bulgaria's defence spending of \$445 million (€456 million) is the highest proportion of GDP among aspirant countries at 3.1%. Modernisation funding is modest because of the need to provide severance pay and training for released service members, but has increased from 4.7% of the defence budget in 2001 to about 18% in 2002, and is planned to reach 28% by 2007. Plans call for the armed forces to be cut from 77,000 in 2001 to 45,000 in 2004. The Bulgarian armed forces are stepping up the training of special forces and are in the process of developing a full brigade that would be combat-ready for special operations. Bulgaria is in the final stage of developing a modernisation plan for 2002-2015, which sets out

a long-term strategy for future equipment modernisation and rearmament. This includes upgrades of MiG-29 fighter aircraft and establishment of an air sovereignty operations centre.

44. During the Sub-Committee's visit to Bulgaria in December 2001, officials emphasised the country's geographic position and host-nation support capabilities in describing what the country could offer NATO as a contribution to the security of the Alliance. Most notably, Bulgaria has offered its air base at Burgas, on the Black Sea, to American tanker aircraft. The US tankers based in Bulgaria met up over the Caspian Sea with attack aircraft headed for Afghanistan. Bulgarian officials made a compelling argument that they are already acting as an ally in assisting the first collective-defence operation in NATO's history, and they have pledged their support for any future operations in the war against terrorism, including a possible campaign against Iraq.

45. Closer to home, Bulgaria borders the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, and it is near to Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, making it a key partner in helping to bring stability to the region. By increasing its KFOR and SFOR contributions since 11 September 2001, Bulgaria has freed up allied troops for operations in Afghanistan.

46. Bulgaria has been providing host-nation support to transiting KFOR troops, and in March 2001, signed an agreement with NATO regarding the transit of NATO forces and personnel. To view an example of Bulgaria's host-nation support capability, the Sub-Committee visited the Graf Ignatievo Air Base outside of Plovdiv. Its 3,000-meter runway was completely repaved in Summer 2001, and the base hosted the *Cooperative Key* exercise in September 2001, which underscored its ability to handle all NATO fighter and transport aircraft. The base can refuel any NATO aircraft, and it could host three NATO fighter squadrons. Future plans call for adding identify-friend-or-foe capabilities and navigation aids, as well as training all personnel in NATO operating procedures.

47. Parliament intends to keep the defence budget constant at 2.85% of GDP in 2003 and 2004, which would provide for steady growth as GDP is expected to increase by 5% annually. Projections for defence spending in 2007 are \$650 million (€667 million). Plans call for personnel costs to make up no more than 30% of the budget, and for a reduction in Bulgaria's 1,200 tanks, many of which are outdated and costly to maintain.



## **Estonia**

48. Estonia's 2001 National Military Strategy defined the tasks for its defence forces and developed guidelines for development of military capabilities. To successfully implement this strategy, a comprehensive Force Structure Review was conducted in 2001. The Estonian defence forces are organised along land, naval and air components, with a joint operational command overseeing the component commands. The force currently numbers 4,450 professionals, and each year about 3,000 conscripts and 2,000 reservists are trained over an 8- to 11-month conscription period. Planned wartime strength is 26,500.

49. Analysts find the Estonian plans realistic and affordable. While Estonia currently has limited capabilities for national defence and deployment of its forces, this should improve as the plans are implemented. According to the Review, the army will consist of one active infantry brigade and a territorial defence structure. Last year, the army focused on establishing this light infantry brigade and combat support units. Included in the brigade will be one rapid reaction Estonian Battalion (ESTBAT) that could participate in NATO missions, plus a second high-readiness battalion for internal missions. The full brigade will be operational in 2006 and will include four reserve battalions and reserve support units.

50. The Estonian navy consists of 110 professional sailors, 220 conscripts, and 55 civilians. They operate three patrol boats, two minelayers, three mine countermeasures ships, and one command and support ship. Two vessels assigned to the three-nation Baltic Naval Squadron (BALTRON) have met the relevant training requirements and are available for NATO and PfP operations as well. BALTRON brings together one vessel from each country (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), plus a staff and support vessel, largely for multinational exercises in the Partnership for Peace programme. The squadron focuses on mine hunting (there are still numerous mines in their waters from the two world wars) and dealing with possible environmental threats. Estonia has a small air force responsible for surveillance of national airspace and air defence. The air force has 120 professionals, 50 conscripts, and 30 civilians, with five small helicopters and three small transport airplanes.

51. Another element of the Estonian armed forces is the Defence League, a reserve territorial defence unit that trains reservists and would provide a structure for territorial defence in wartime. The Defence League has around 16,000 members including women and youth. Military service is compulsory for all male citizens with a duration of eight months for conscripts, and 11 months for sergeants and reserve officers. Service in reserve units is also compulsory.

52. Estonia has been active in cooperating with its neighbours Latvia and Lithuania to create multinational defence capabilities. In addition to BALTRON, Estonia contributes a company to the Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT), a peacekeeping formation to which each country contributes an infantry company; hosts the Baltic Defence College, a senior-office training programme in Tartu; and coordinates air sovereignty operations through BALTNET, an integrated air surveillance system that is an outgrowth of NATO's Regional Airspace Initiative. BALTNET monitors the country's airspace and communicates this picture to similar centres in neighbouring countries.

53. In order to successfully develop efficient forces, Estonia's defence budget will be directed toward building military infrastructure and acquisition of equipment. Estonia's priority in enhancing its host-nation support capabilities is reflected in the reconstruction of the Amari airfield. Procurement will focus on air and sea surveillance systems, air defence weapons, anti-tank systems, navy mine-warfare equipment, and reserve mobilisation equipment. Foreign assistance has already helped Estonia procure modern communications equipment, light armament and anti-tank weaponry for its infantry units. Defence expenditure in 2002 reached \$100 million (€103 million), 2% of GDP, an increase from \$88 million (€90 million) in 2001 (1.76% of GDP).

### **Latvia**

54. Having built its military from scratch after regaining its sovereignty in 1991, Latvia is working to strengthen its self-defence capabilities, develop interoperability with NATO forces, and contribute to allied collective-defence and crisis-management operations. The 1999 Latvian Security and Defence Concept makes full membership in NATO the country's main security policy goal. Future plans call for the country to develop armed forces of about 5,000 professionals as well as a high-readiness Latvian Battalion (LATBAT) by 2003 that would be able to deploy and sustain an infantry company in missions abroad. That battalion has received substantial assistance from Sweden in the form of donated equipment. In addition, as discussed above, tri-national cooperation with Estonia and Lithuania is extensive. Latvian defence plans have been judged to be realistic and affordable, but implementation will require a long-term allocation of human and financial resources.

55. The Latvian armed forces consist of about 4,000 active-duty personnel, including almost 2,500 professionals and 1,500 conscripts. Land forces consist of one mobile rifle brigade with one infantry battalion, one reconnaissance battalion, one headquarters battalion, one

peacekeeping company, an artillery unit, and one special forces team. The number of reserve self-defence forces currently stands at 20,000 and will increase to 32,000 by 2008 as conscripts are trained and moved into reserve status. In addition, the territorial National Guard, has 1,405 professional soldiers, 77 conscripts, and 82 civilian personnel, with approximately 14,000 volunteer reservists.

56. The small navy consists of 526 professionals, 291 conscripts and 132 civilian personnel. The fleet includes 17 ships, including mine-hunters, mine-sweepers, fast patrol boats, SAR ships and support / auxiliary ships. As for the Air Force, the priority is to continue to develop capabilities for air surveillance of its territory and within the BALTNET project with Lithuania and Estonia. The Air Force has 15 airplanes and 3 helicopters with 232 professional soldiers and 65 civilian personnel.

57. The foundation for the reserve force will be individuals who have successfully completed 12 months of compulsory military service in the national armed forces, in the Guard Regiment or in the Ministry of Interior. The long-term objective is a well-trained force of 50,000, equipped and capable for mobilisation on short notice in event of civil disaster or war. The mobilisation system will be designed to provide a necessary pool of reservists. Mobilisation plans will be ready by 2003.

58. As part of the tri-national cooperation with Estonia and Lithuania, Latvia serves as the home base for the Baltic Battalion. Latvia aims to contribute to European strategic security, creating a zone of stability in the Baltic region and providing specialised military capabilities. Budgets have already been allocated toward peace-support units, an explosive ordnance support team, military medics and military police. There are further plans to provide a nuclear, biological and chemical weapons defence unit, mine-clearing divers and special operations forces. During 2001 and 2002, Latvia continued to participate with troops and personnel in all NATO-led operations in the Balkans, a contribution that has been assessed positively by the Alliance. In January 2002 the Parliament took the decision to deploy an air movement control team (as part of the Danish contingent) in Operation *Enduring Freedom*.

59. The defence budget has doubled as a percentage of GDP from 0.84% in 1999 to 1.75% in 2002 (\$150 million/€154 million). In May 2002 the Parliament confirmed that 2% of GDP will be allocated for defence and NATO integration from 2003 through 2008. The share of the budget dedicated to investment and modernisation has increased from 11% in 1999 to 23% in

2002. While defence resources have increased greatly, the Latvian military still depends on donations of equipment and training assistance.

### ***Lithuania***

60. The Lithuanian Armed Forces were re-established in November 1992, and Lithuania is working to configure its forces to be able to defend the country, respond to major crises, carry out peace missions, maintain readiness, and fulfil international commitments. Priority has been given to the development of efficient, reliable and mobile ground forces, based on a reaction brigade, as well as territorial forces deployed in two military regions for the defence of Lithuania. Lithuanian forces are to be able to conduct NATO operations outside Lithuanian territory with a NATO-compatible battalion, and to be able to conduct joint NATO operations with its reaction brigade on the territory of Lithuania, if the country were to face a threat to its territory.

61. Parliament has approved Defence Policy 2001-2004, a document that sets out plans to strengthen the armed forces to be prepared for homeland defence, collective defence and participation in NATO, EU and UN-led operations. According to this defence policy, Lithuania will have a mechanised infantry battalion operational by the end of 2002 and ready to be deployed for NATO missions. By the end of 2006, the reaction brigade will be fully operational for missions on Lithuanian territory, including Article 5 operations. This plan has been judged to be realistic, sustainable and affordable, though the focus should be on a smaller number of capable, deployable forces, rather than a large force structure. Continued implementation is essential if Lithuania is to make a fair contribution to the Alliance.

62. As of August 2001, the strength of the Lithuanian armed forces stood at 7,425 professional soldiers and 4,643 conscripts, with a reserve force of about 20,000 that receives regular training. Ground forces are the main defence forces and are structured on the brigade level. Lithuania currently has one brigade with three battalions and two military regions with four infantry battalions. Other ground forces include a special operations Jaeger Battalion, an engineering battalion, and a headquarters battalion.

63. The Lithuanian Air Force is responsible for airspace surveillance and defence, and has around 1,000 personnel in two air force bases, structured in command, surveillance and air defence units. As noted above, the air surveillance component is integrated with the tri-

national BALTNET initiative. The air force has at its disposal three transport airplanes, six auxiliary airplanes, four training airplanes and eight transport helicopters.

64. The third component of the regular armed forces is the navy, which consists of 650 personnel and is responsible for shore defence and sea coastal surveillance. It is supplemented by an air defence company and a guard company. The main elements of the navy are a combat ship squadron with two light frigates, two mine-hunters, and patrol and support ships and, as discussed above, Lithuania is a contributor to BALTRON.

65. The National Defence Volunteer Forces consisting of 11,000 personnel (1,800 fulltime) is an integral part of the ground forces in territorial defence, assistance to civil authorities in the event of natural and other disasters, and protection of inland strategic assets. The force is composed of 10 battalion-sized reserve units.

66. The size of Lithuania's population (3.6 million) has led the country to maintain conscription in order to increase the pool of reservists if needed. Compulsory military service lasts 12 months in the regular armed forces, with subsequent service in the active reserve. One of the priorities is to enhance the mobilisation reserve. In addition, Lithuania has put high emphasis on Western-style military training and English-language training for its officers.

67. According to Brig. Gen. Jonas Kronkaitis, a retired US Army officer who is Commander-in-Chief of the Lithuanian armed forces, Lithuania is focused on building military capabilities that will enable it to defend its territory against any aggressor and to operate together with NATO forces should the Alliance assist them in this effort. Lithuania has identified two military installations, one airfield and one seaport, to provide assistance to allied forces should they need access to Lithuanian territory. Additionally, three civilian airports could also be used for host-nation support. With a view to enhancing military capabilities, Lithuanian equipment procurement plans involve medium range three-dimensional radar, short-range air defence system, anti-tank weapons, tactical communication equipment, transport vehicles, logistical equipment, mine detection equipment, and night vision equipment.

68. Currently there are 32 Lithuanian military personnel serving in the NATO KFOR/SFOR missions in the Balkans. The Lithuanian Air Force has also provided a transport aircraft and its crew to the KFOR/SFOR missions. The Parliament voted to send as many as 12 Lithuanian military medical personnel to participate in the Operation *Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan and is considering the participation of special forces.

69. Lithuania is committed to fulfilling its MAP goals, but has found it challenging to summon the financial resources. To ensure funding for a successful build-up of military capability, the Lithuanian parliament signed an agreement that defence spending shall be 2% of GDP from 2002 until 2005. This will allow for a steady increase from the 2002 budget of \$292 million (€300 million). The Lithuanian government has pledged to allocate 2% of GDP for defence at least until 2008, which would provide a firm financial footing for reforms.

## **Romania**

70. Romanian officials in 2002 approved an “Objective Force” plan that will reduce its active-duty force to 75,000 military personnel by the end of 2007, from the 2003 target of 112,000. Such a force will enable Romania to focus its limited, but increasing, defence resources on better training and equipping units that could be used for NATO operations. While the new force plan was approved after NATO completed its MAP assessment, the broad direction of the plan is in keeping with MAP suggestions that countries develop smaller, more capable forces. Romania is implementing NATO procedures and concepts in its military and continues to train and equip its high-readiness units so they can operate alongside Alliance forces.

71. The Romanian military aims to have an active duty corps of about 50,000, 90% of whom will be professionals, that would be kept in high readiness (7 to 30 days). A lower readiness territorial force of about 25,000 will be deployable in 90 to 360 days. Previous reserve forces will be completely dismantled. Of the 75,000 active duty and territorial forces, 12,500 are to be officers, 25,500 non-commissioned officers, 23,500 contract personnel and 13,500 conscripts. The intention was announced to accelerate professionalisation of the armed forces, which will lead to gradual elimination of conscripts by 2007. The military will include 15,000 civilians.

72. Romania is centering its reaction force capability on the 21st Mountain Battalion, a high-readiness unit pledged to NATO missions. Currently, one company is ready to deploy on 30 days notice and is comprised of contract soldiers on their second or third tour of duty. Admission is competitive, with less than 25% of applicants being accepted, most of them coming from the region near the unit’s base, in the Transylvanian Alps near Braşov, meaning that they are already acclimated to working at high altitude. All officers are required to speak English and are given one year to learn the language – NATO’s operational language – or they are transferred out of the unit. The battalion has trained with British, American, Turkish, Greek and Italian special operations units. Brig. Gen. Ion Bucaciuc, commander of the 2nd Mountain

Brigade, which includes the 21st Battalion, said that his entire brigade will become operational in 2003 and will be able to send a complete battalion on NATO missions, rather than just a single company.

73. Romania's focus on developing the Mountain Brigade to NATO standards is an excellent example of how a NATO applicant country can use its comparative advantage in a military specialty to make a concrete contribution to Alliance defence capabilities. The recent experience of Allied forces in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan illustrates the need for such forces. As Romania continues its programme to equip the full brigade and make it operational for NATO missions, the Alliance will have access to a needed capability. One cannot ignore the tremendous restructuring challenge facing the Romanian military as a whole, but the defence ministry and parliament are to be commended for concentrating their efforts on helping Romania contribute positively to Alliance capabilities.

74. Romania has pledged more than 3,700 military personnel to be available for NATO or EU-led operations and has deployed an infantry combat battalion to Operation *Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan. In 2002, Romania had 343 troops in the Balkans and 51 people in the ISAF peacekeeping force in Kabul. It also had an NBC company of 70 people on stand-by in the Afghan theatre. The Air Force has made available for NATO operations six MiG-21 fighters and two C-130 transport aircraft, one of which is currently deployed to Karachi, Pakistan, in support of operations in Afghanistan. The naval contribution would be seven vessels ranging in size from a frigate and a minesweeper to a river tugboat.

75. Romania's 2002 defence spending is \$1.07 billion (€1.1 billion), equal to 2.38% of GDP. Plans call for the defence budget to increase to \$1.4 billion (€1.44 billion) by 2005, with a government commitment to maintain defence budgets at 2.38% of GDP.

## **Slovakia**

76. Last year was a busy one in terms of Slovak defence reforms, as parliament approved a new national security strategy in March, a defence strategy in May and a military strategy in October. The reform plan, known as Model 2010, supersedes a 1999 programme that was judged to be too ambitious in light of the available resources. A series of studies and reviews, with the assistance of seven NATO countries, resulted in Model 2010, which aims to establish "effective but affordable" armed forces that will be interoperable with NATO. The plan is

expected to remedy shortfalls in areas like effective engagement, command and control, host-nation support, deployability and sustainability.

77. The landlocked country of about 5.4 million people is developing land and air forces, plus a training component, that will number 24,500 personnel, composed of about 20,000 military and 4,500 civilians. The 9,500-strong land forces will consist of a light infantry brigade, mechanised brigade, mixed artillery regiment, and several support battalions. Among the equipment of the land forces will be 52 main battle tanks and 164 armoured personnel vehicles. The air force will have about 6,400 personnel, organised in a fighter wing, a helicopter wing, an air-defence brigade, and several support battalions. Air force equipment will include 18 multi-role fighters, six to 10 trainers, about 10 transport aircraft, 18 attack helicopters and 18 transport helicopters. The training and support command will have 4,600 military and civilian personnel, organised in training, logistics and support commands, plus a garrison in the capital.

78. One of the greatest challenges facing the Slovak military comes in the personnel field, as it moves from 42,600 military and civilian personnel today to 24,500 in 2006. Slovakia must implement a new system of ranks and career advancement as it moves toward a professional force, while helping thousands of officers transition to civilian life. Slovakia has more than 2,200 officers with the rank of lieutenant colonel or higher, a number set to drop to 622 by 2006. Plans call for creation of a volunteer reserve system to be developed as conscription is eliminated.

79. Slovakia's planned contribution to NATO centres on a high-readiness unit, currently a battalion based in the northwestern city of Martin. One company of that Immediate Reaction Battalion will be available on a rotation basis for NATO peacekeeping and collective defence operations until 2005. At that point, Slovakia expects to be able to sustain a full battalion abroad on a rotation basis. Slovakia has also pledged an engineering company (though only a platoon until 2006), an MP platoon, four combat and four transport helicopters, an air defence battery (a platoon until 2006), and a field mobile hospital to NATO by the end of 2003. In August 2002 Slovakia sent 40 troops to Operation *Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan and a helicopter unit with two helicopters and 21 troops to strengthen SFOR operations in Bosnia.

80. One part of the modernisation plan that has drawn criticism from NATO officials was a proposal to purchase 18 new multi-role fighter aircraft at a cost of \$356 million (€368 million). Such a large procurement program would take funding away from other programs more critical



to interoperability with NATO forces, while providing assets that NATO already has in abundance. A decision on whether to go ahead with the fighter aircraft procurement will be made by the new government, but officials expect that the program will go forward before 2008.

81. Outside of the fighter-acquisition program, the modernisation plan is projected to cost \$1.7 billion (€1.9 billion) through 2015. Over the five years from 2002 through 2006, annual defence budgets are projected to range from \$455 million (€467 million) to \$590 million (€605 million). The 2002 defence budget is 1.89% of GDP, with plans to increase the percentage spent to at least 2% of GDP in 2003. Between 2003 and 2008, \$603 million (€618 million) has been earmarked for modernisation. Over this period Slovakia has allotted \$382 million (€392 million) over six years to fulfil its 55 NATO Partnership Goals, 37 of which are related to its Membership Action Plan. Priorities include language training; a command, control and communications system; logistics; infrastructure; host-nation support capabilities; and integrated air defence.

## **Slovenia**

82. Slovenia has recently overhauled its defence strategy with the goal of creating a small core of professional forces that could be augmented with reserves in times of crisis. "Our focus is a capable, deployable force that will be interoperable with NATO," Defence Minister Anton Grizold said. "We've been successful in streamlining our force structure, we're developing interoperable command, control and communication systems, and we're developing deployable and professional reaction forces." The long-term plan runs through 2007, with some procurement plans running through 2010. It was approved by the parliament in November 2001, along with the funding plan.

83. The latest Slovenian reform plans call for a professional active-duty military of 6,100 personnel by 2010. The current force numbers 5,346 personnel. The reform plan calls for a reduction of the military from a wartime strength of 47,000 today to 18,000 by the time of the country's accession to NATO. In September 2002, the Slovenian parliament adopted a law phasing out conscription in the active force by the end of 2003. Compulsory service in reserve forces will be phased out by the end of 2010.

84. Main defence forces will consist of two army brigades, air and air defence units, and support units. Slovenia will not purchase fixed-wing combat aircraft, instead focusing on its

eight transport helicopters, a fixed-wing training unit and air defence equipment. The small naval detachment focuses on port defence and has divers trained in defusing mines.

85. The all-professional 1st Brigade, which the Sub-Committee visited, will be responsible for territorial defence, NATO collective defence, peace support operations, and disaster relief. The leading unit is the 10th Motorised Battalion, which plans to deploy a 110-strong company to the SFOR mission in Bosnia in January 2003 as part of a battalion led by Portugal. That battalion will rotate three companies on that mission, with each spending six months with SFOR. Plans call for the current 182nd Infantry Battalion to be reconstituted as the 20th Motorised Battalion in 2005, a unit that would additionally be pledged to the tri-national Italian-Hungarian-Slovenian Brigade. The 1st Brigade also contains a military police battalion and a special operations detachment. The 350-strong MP unit also maintains two platoons in Bosnia that serve with Italian Carabinieri, a total of about 50 personnel. (In addition, medic and helicopter units from other formations are in Bosnia.) Planned end-strength in 2005 is 2,300, but the brigade currently has only 1,100 troops.

86. Defence budgets are expected to rise as the Slovenian economy grows, Mr Grizold said. Expenditures in 2001 were \$266 million (€304 million), 1.42% of gross domestic product, and the 2002 budget is \$300 million (€308 million), 1.55% of GDP. Mr Grizold said defence should consume 1.6% of GDP through 2006, with a target of 2% in 2008, which would result in a projected defence budget of \$616 million (€632 million). While Slovenia spends less of its GDP on defence than several other candidate countries, its relatively high per capita GDP (about \$12,000 / €12,300) generates a defence budget in absolute terms that is roughly comparable to or exceeds those of all candidates except Romania, whose population is more than 10 times larger. Personnel costs account for more than half of the budget, while 17% is earmarked for modernisation. Operations and maintenance make up the remainder.

## **Conclusion**

87. Your Rapporteur believes that seven of the nine candidates for NATO membership have made sufficient progress in reforming their societies and their militaries, and the Alliance should issue them invitations to join at the Prague Summit. Furthermore, he believes that those seven countries have all developed reasonable, affordable, and sustainable plans to be able to work within the Alliance structure and to contribute forces to NATO collective-defence and crisis-management operations. In the past 18 months, he has had the opportunity to visit five of those countries -- Lithuania in May 2001, Romania and Bulgaria in December 2001, and

Slovenia and Slovakia in March 2002 – to see their elite units at work in the field and to meet with top defence officials and military commanders. Based on those visits and additional research, he believes that those countries, plus Estonia and Latvia, will make a net contribution to the security of NATO if they fully implement their defence reform plans.

88. In addition, all seven of those countries have offered their complete support for the war on terrorism, the first collective-defence operation in NATO's history. Most notably, Romania and Bulgaria have contributed troops to the ISAF force in Kabul, Bulgaria has granted basing rights to American tankers participating in the operation, and Romania has offered a unit from its mountain battalion for combat operations in Afghanistan. As noted above, Romania's decision to emphasise development of this mountain unit is an excellent example of how an applicant country can offer NATO a specialised capability that will make a positive contribution to the defence of the Alliance.

89. At the same time, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia do not yet meet the political criteria for Alliance membership, despite the progress they have made toward establishing stable, representative democracies. Because these countries do not meet the Alliance's standard for political stability, it would be difficult to evaluate their defence plans. One important aspect of evaluating long-term defence planning in applicant countries is having confidence in the stability of the political system, so that one can be reasonably certain that plans will be implemented over the long term. Such an assurance is lacking in these two countries, though the election of a new president in Albania and a new Macedonian government could contribute significantly to political stability in both countries. NATO must continue to work with them, as well as Croatia, to help them gain membership in the next round of enlargement.

90. Your Rapporteur cautions that the Prague Summit is only the beginning of the formal accession process. In 2003, the parliaments represented in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly will consider whether their countries should ratify the protocols that would allow invited countries to join the Alliance. While seven candidate countries are on track to meet the criteria for membership and contribute to Alliance security, none of them meet the criteria today. Should any country falter in its commitment to reform, parliaments may decide to delay or even reject its accession to the Washington Treaty, judging that the country may not be a dependable ally.

91. Based on their progress so far and the plans they are working to implement, your Rapporteur finds that Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia are well on their way to meeting the criteria for NATO membership. If NATO member governments in November offer membership to any or all of those seven countries, and if reforms proceed as promised, it appears today that parliaments would be well-advised to give their consent in 2003 to ratification of the necessary treaty protocols. As we move closer to the ratification debate, your Rapporteur stands ready to discuss this issue further with any member of Parliament from the Alliance who might desire more information on enlargement and the qualifications of the candidate countries.