
PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE: CHARTING A COURSE FOR A NEW ERA

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The Partnership for Peace has renewed importance in fulfilling NATO's wider post-9/11 commitments. To retain its relevance and effectiveness, PfP must be transformed, adequately funded, and better integrated with bilateral and regional efforts to address new security challenges. The Istanbul Summit should launch an initiative to promote new, tailored PfP programs in the Balkans, Greater Black Sea region, and Central Asia.

With 10 of the original 24 Partnership for Peace (PfP) partners having achieved full Alliance membership, questions about the program's direction and long-term viability are raised.

The original strategic rationale for PfP — enhancing stability among and practical cooperation with the countries along NATO's periphery — has become even more compelling in the context of the Alliance's further enlargement, the war on terrorism, and growing Western interests in Southwest and Central Asia. That said, the key incentive that animated partner engagement in the program, that it was the “best path to NATO membership,” is diminished since the remaining partners are either not interested or not likely to enter the Alliance for many years.

To retain its relevance and effectiveness, PfP must be transformed, adequately resourced, and better integrated with bilateral and regional efforts to address new security challenges. The Istanbul Summit could launch an initiative, backed by serious resources from allies, to promote new, tailored PfP programs in the Balkans, Greater Black Sea region, and Central Asia.

POST-9/11 CHALLENGES

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, NATO and many partner governments have struggled, with varying degrees of success, to reshape their defense capabilities to deal with the new risks posed by global terrorism. The United States increased

defense expenditures by \$48 billion — a sum equal to the entire defense budget of the United Kingdom. In contrast, the defense budgets of most other longtime allies have remained unchanged and, indeed, the overall capabilities gap between the United States and other NATO countries has widened further. And yet, in the aftermath of 9/11, NATO committed itself to a broader functional and wider geographic area of engagement.

The utility of the PfP was demonstrated as these partners bolstered and facilitated NATO operations in and around Afghanistan. At its first meeting after the 9/11 attacks, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) defense ministers affirmed their determination to use the partnership to increase cooperation and capabilities against terrorism.

In Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the U.S.-led military operation against terrorists in Afghanistan, many NATO allies —including two of the then newest — Poland and the Czech Republic — and six PfP partners rendered substantial assistance.¹

And when NATO assumed command of the International Security Force Operations in Afghanistan (ISAF) in April 2003, it did so with the participation of another six partners.² After Saddam Hussein was toppled in Iraq, NATO provided intelligence and logistical support to the Polish-led multinational division, comprised of many member allies and 11 partners.³

To better address the new challenges, the 2002 Summit approved the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC), the new Command Structure, and the NATO Response Force (NRF). The centerpiece is NRF, with high tech capabilities for expeditionary missions that would allow NATO's European allies to contribute small *niche* units — for example: police, engineering, demining, chemical decontamination, alpine, and special forces units — with secure communications, ample readiness, and the capability of deploying, sustaining, and operating with U.S. forces through the entire conflict spectrum. If implemented, this would provide a more constructive burden-sharing arrangement for NATO.

TERRORISM AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Prague Summit also endorsed the Military Concept for Defense Against Terrorism that calls for “improved intelligence sharing and crisis response arrangements [and commitment with partners] to fully implement the Civil Emergency Planning Action Plan...against possible attacks by...chemical, biological or radiological (CBR) agents.” So too, through the Partnership Action Plan Against Terrorism, adopted by the EAPC in November 2002, partners commit to taking a number of steps to combat terrorism and share their information and experience. Although the plan has not yet achieved much, it does establish a framework upon which necessary functions can be built.

A WAY AHEAD

Given that there are now more NATO allies, each struggling to transform its own armed forces and security institutions, than there are remaining partners (20, including the special cases of Russia and Ukraine) — and these are far weaker institutionally and have more diverse interests and broader needs than those which have already attained membership — if PfP is not seriously revived at Istanbul, it will be dead on departure.

Keeping PfP relevant requires focusing on the development of capabilities to combat terrorism and other transnational threats. New programs could

target sharing more intelligence from interior ministries, police, and border guards, as well as finance and banking information.

Budgets and functions also need to be re-examined and updated to support future counter-terrorist operations, including counter-proliferation efforts and missile defense systems.

A STRATEGIC VISION FOR PFP'S REVIVAL

Clearly the Istanbul Summit, marking 10 years since the inception of Partnership for Peace, requires a new strategic vision for PfP to deliver on NATO's commitment to wider geographic and broader functional engagement.

But for a revival to succeed, the program will need to be tailored to the needs of NATO's remaining 20 partners and two PfP aspirants who fall into the following eight distinct groups with very diverse needs, interests, and capacities:

- Five “advanced” partners — Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Austria, and Switzerland — with no interest yet in joining the Alliance.
- The three Membership Action Plan (MAP) partners — Albania, Macedonia, and Croatia — who do aspire to membership and for whom NATO must keep its Open Door credible.
- Ukraine, who claims to be an aspirant with an Action Plan, and aspires to join the MAP.
- Russia, who does not aspire to membership but maintains a special relationship in the NATO-Russia Council.
- Two relatively inactive partners — Moldova and Belarus.
- Three Caucasus partners — Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia,
- Five Central Asia partners — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan; and
- Two Balkan PfP aspirants — Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia-Montenegro.

The incentives for PfP participation vary widely between Russia, with no interest in formal membership, and Ukraine, who aspires to join NATO.

PfP also provides incentive for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia-Montenegro because it remains their one pathway to Euro-Atlantic structures and legitimacy. While Moldova and Belarus remain relatively inactive in PfP, their role could change as they adjust to their altered geo-strategic environment after enlargement. The remaining 16 PfP partners comprise the following four groups:

Advanced Partners

All of the five advanced partners (except Switzerland) are already in the EU and remain outside formal NATO membership by choice. Their increased participation in PfP in recent years primarily focused on the Balkans and serves as an example of partnership participation being important in its own right, while *not* necessarily being a route to membership. These five, as well as NATO members, should be encouraged to establish a “buddy” system (as Sweden and Finland have already done with the Baltic states) with Caucasian and Central Asian partners (similar to what Lithuania has been doing with Georgia). This may not be easy, as the advanced partners have been and remain more active in local Baltic and Balkan peace support operations that have been inexorably shifting to the EU.⁴ Hence, it will be a challenge to keep them engaged in NATO’s wider geographic interests. One way might be to make NATO exercises in the Caucasus and Central Asia more flexible and allow non-aligned partners to take a greater part in their planning, while encouraging their security sector expertise.

Balkan Aspirants

NATO enlargement, the MAP process, and PfP have played, and continue to play, a very important but under-appreciated role in enhancing Balkan stability and security. Slovenian, Bulgarian, and Romanian membership in NATO forms a stable security foundation. The MAP — as long as Article 10, the Open Door policy, remains credible — keeps Albania, Macedonia, and Croatia positively engaged in activities consistent with NATO principles, and the incentive of joining PfP keeps Serbia-Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina productively focused. Their continued engagement has become increasingly important in light of the transfer of NATO’s Operation Allied Harmony mission in Macedonia to the EU

(“Concordia”), and will become even more important after the likely transfer of NATO’s SFOR to the EU.

If PfP were to become moribund and lose credibility, security in the Balkans could be severely undermined because some nations might be tempted to move in unconstructive directions.

With this in mind, NATO should establish more precise goals for keeping its Open Door program credible for the three remaining MAP members. This is likely to become an issue for Albania and Macedonia, who have been in PfP for almost a decade, have had five years of MAP and annual national plan experience, and whose patience may wear thin. If NATO is unprepared to offer membership soon, it needs to establish the *prospect* of it. NATO might consider some version of a “regatta” to link Balkan MAP partner accession to the completion of specific, well-defined NATO “acquis” with a notional time horizon of roughly five-to-eight years — even though the regatta concept was rejected for the 2002 Prague Summit invitees because many politicians claimed that accession is ultimately a political issue, which it is.

PfP programs, with EU assistance, should be coordinated to security sector reforms to tackle the new security threats.

PfP needs to be linked to the successful sub-regional Southeast European Defense Minister (SEDM) process — which should also be broadened to include interior and intelligence functions, the Southeast European Cooperation Initiative (SECI) to combat trans-border crime, and the Southeast European Brigade (SEEBRIG) in the Balkans. If this proves difficult in the Balkans, as it likely will beyond, then PfP’s mandate, consistent with the Prague Summit’s Action Plan Against Terrorism, ought to be broadened to include partnership goals with police activities. The objective is to improve interagency coordination and cooperation within and among Balkan states.

This could be accomplished within the annual SEDM meetings that began in 1996⁵ and have succeeded in enhancing transparency, cooperation, and security in

Southeastern Europe. In 1999, the SEDM approved the creation of the SEEBRIG, a 25,000-troop force that can be assembled as needed by the brigade's commanders and which *might* deploy to Bosnia sometime in the future.

It is time to build further upon SEDM's successes to deal with the new risk environment and broadened it to include civil emergency planning and interior and intelligence ministers, creating an annual Southeast European Defense, Interior, and Intelligence Ministerial (SEDIIM). This new SEDIIM should be encouraged to further coordinate its work with SECI⁶ which, among other things, combats trans-border crime involving trafficking of drugs and weapons, prostitution, and money laundering. Since Moldova is in SECI and Serbia-Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina are PfP aspirants, they should all become SEDM observers, with the goal of ultimate NATO membership.

Greater Black Sea Defense Ministerial and Caucasian Partners

The Black Sea has acquired increased strategic importance since NATO assumed command of Afghanistan's ISAF in August 2003, and assisted the Polish-led division in Iraq. Coupling the facts that NATO is now actively engaged out-of-area beyond the Balkans in the greater Black Sea region, and that all the Black Sea defense ministers have *never* met together, it is time to apply Central European and Balkan lessons to this region. The first step to stabilization is to build understanding through discussion of security risks, and then to build greater regional cooperation through implementation of military activities in support of a transparent agenda.

The Balkan's SEDM (and potential SEDIIM), SECI, and SEEBRIG can serve as models to further expand to the greater Black Sea littoral beyond the formation of the Black Sea Force (BLACKSEAFOR) that was established in April 2001 among the six Black Sea states⁷ for search and rescue humanitarian operations, clearing sea mines, protecting the environment, and promoting good will visits. One can envision the creation of a Black Sea Task Force to deal not only with civil emergency contingencies such as the earthquakes that perennially strike the

region and potential CBR after-effects, but also to interdict the trafficking of drugs, weapons, and humans across the greater Black Sea region, especially with the participation of Ukraine, the Russian Fleet, and the Caucasus. Here, too, since the continued engagement of Ukraine in PfP is important, the Istanbul Summit might consider commencing intensified dialogues with Ukraine as a pre-requisite to joining the MAP, assuming Ukraine's presidential elections are held in accordance with OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) standards and adhere to Ukrainian constitutional procedures.

The Central and East European experience since the late 1980s also provides numerous successful examples of combined peacekeeping and/or civil-emergency units that should be explored for possible adaptation to improve interstate relations here.

The likely new United States presence in Bulgaria and Romania can be leveraged to improve interoperability through joint training and logistics facilities and in building an expeditionary Black Sea Task Force. Together with Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey — NATO's three Black Sea allies with a rich experience in SEDM and SEEBRIG — the U.S. presence could be beneficial in fostering wider Black Sea stability and cooperation under a revived PfP program.

Although all three Caucasus partners were 1994 signatories of PfP, their participation has varied considerably. This has been particularly evident with the PfP Peace Planning and Review Process (PARP), which remains the core of transparent defense planning, accountability, and democratic oversight of the military and provides the foundation to enhance sub-regional cooperation. After 9/11, all three Caucasus partners joined the PARP.⁸

Though Armenia participates in PfP, NATO membership remains controversial because of unresolved problems with Turkey and Azerbaijan. Armenia has close relations with Greece, Romania, and Bulgaria and remains very close to Russia. An original signatory of the 1992 Tashkent Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

Collective Security Treaty with Russia, Armenia is the only Caucasus state to have renewed its commitment for another five years in 1999.

Both Azerbaijan and Georgia withdrew from the CIS in 1999. Azerbaijan remains in conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh and has problems with terrorism, drugs, crime, and human trafficking. It cooperates with the United States in counter-terrorism and participates in KFOR, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Georgia participates in KFOR and Black Sea regional cooperation, wants NATO to play a role in solving the Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts on Georgian soil, and, in September 2002, its parliament adopted a resolution claiming the goal of NATO membership. The U.S. has assisted the Georgian armed forces through the Train and Equip program and in establishing control over the Pankisi Gorge near the border with Russia.

The U.S. has greater influence among Caucasian (and Central Asian) partners than NATO because NATO has been more hampered by what it can offer in terms of assistance.⁹ But this can change *if* the NATO Security Investment Program (NSIP) were more directly focused on the region and the PfP Trust Fund were made more robust.

The PfP Trust Fund, which has allocated \$4.2 million for destroying anti-personnel mines in Albania, Ukraine, Moldova and disposing of missile stockpiles in Georgia, must be expanded.

The NSIP, a much larger program with an annual budget of over \$600 million, covers installations and facilities dealing with communications and information systems, radar, military headquarters, airfields, fuel pipelines and storage, harbors, and navigational aids. Since NATO has assumed the lead in Afghanistan, NSIP funds now ought to be eligible for the ISAF operation and be applied to the broader Black Sea region to augment NATO air, road, and rail support. The Istanbul Summit should look at redirecting NATO infrastructure funds in support of NATO-led operations in Afghanistan.

In addition, the Summit should authorize the Secretary General to restructure the NATO

International Staff to consolidate PfP in one directorate,¹⁰ perhaps headed by its own assistant secretary general. This would symbolize the Alliance's commitment to a revived PfP, and highlight the program's renewed importance in fulfilling NATO's wider commitments.

After PfP's launch in 1994, when it became obvious that necessary resources were lacking, the U.S. started its Warsaw Initiative with \$100 million in annual funding. The program achieved enormous success with most of the key recipients now members of the Alliance. But the remaining 20 partners, particularly around the greater Black Sea, in the Caucasus, and Central Asia, have significantly *weaker* political, economic, social, and security and defense institutions and require *greater* assistance to bring their personnel and institutions closer to NATO standards.

The United States ought to launch a new Istanbul Initiative, funded at roughly the same amount as the current Warsaw Initiative, to focus on a more sophisticated program stressing the PfP basics in this region to promote the development of a Greater Black Sea Defense, Interior, and Intelligence Ministerial, and to support a Greater Black Sea Task Force to deal with civil emergency contingencies and interdiction operations.

It should challenge other allies to offer similar funding, including support for Central and Eastern European members to transfer the lessons of their security sector transition to these other partners.

Central Asian Partners

Four of the five Central Asian states — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan — were among the original signatories of the 1992 CIS Collective Security Treaty with Russia. When the protocol extending the treaty was signed in 1999, Belarus had joined, but Uzbekistan had dropped out. Four of the Central Asian states were among the 1994 signatories of PfP: Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Only after 9/11 did Tajikistan finally join PfP and Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan join PARP. Although it had been the intention to extend PfP to the Central Asian

successor states to bind them to Western values, their practice of political democracy has generally deteriorated over the past decade.

Though none of the Central Asian partners participated in any of the Balkan operations (IFOR [Bosnia Implementation Force]¹¹, SFOR, KFOR), they have supported U.S. and NATO-led operations in Afghanistan and Iraq: Uzbekistan in OEF, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan provided airbases and overflights for U.S. and coalition troops for ISAF, and Kazakhstan supported Poland with demining troops in Iraq and permitted the overflight and transport of supplies and U.S. troops in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Increasingly, these activities have irritated the Russians. Hence, encouraging the active participation of Russia in a revived PfP and in the Russia-NATO Council will be increasingly important to reduce inevitable frictions and build on cooperative relations.

CONCLUSION

Although faced with greater challenges in the requirements of a post-9/11 era, PfP must remain true to the enduring values that prompted the original partnership a decade ago — that is, to promote political democracy, economic free enterprise, the rule of law, equitable treatment of ethnic minorities, good neighbor relations, and democratic oversight and effective management of not just the armed forces, but *all* security sector institutions.

If the Istanbul Summit fails to revive PfP, there are likely to be serious destabilizing consequences throughout the EAPC region, and NATO will find it increasingly difficult to fulfill its Balkan, Afghanistan and Iraq missions. If the Summit revives PfP, NATO's ability to achieve its broader functional and geographic objectives will be enhanced. ●

¹ Central Asian partners Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan; Black Sea partners Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine; and MAP invitee Slovakia, with new members Poland and the Czech Republic, participated in Operation Enduring Freedom.

² PFP partners Finland, Sweden, and Austria; MAP-member Albania; and NATO invitees Romania and Bulgaria participated in ISAF.

³ MAP member Macedonia; MAP invitees Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia; Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria on the Black Sea; Azerbaijan and Georgia in the Caucasus; and Kazakhstan in Central Asia participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

⁴ For example, Austria, Finland, and Sweden participated in Bosnia-IFOR, to be joined later by Ireland in SFOR. All five participate in KFOR. Only Finland, Sweden, and Austria have engaged in ISAF, and none are in OIF.

⁵ SEDM members include Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Slovenia, Romania, and Macedonia (with the U.S. and Italy as observers). Croatia joined SEDM in October 2000.

⁶ Launched in December 1996, the U.S. initiated and supported SECI to advance Balkan environment, transport infrastructure, and trade cooperation. In Bucharest, SECI includes Balkan members (without Serbia-Montenegro) plus Hungary and Moldova.

⁷ Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia.

⁸ The first PARP cycle launched in 1995 had 14 participants: Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Finland, Sweden, Albania, and Ukraine. The second cycle, launched in 1996, which introduced interoperability objectives, had 18 partners sign up; and, eventually, there were 19, including Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and then Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia.

⁹ The U.S. has been working closely with Georgia (and Uzbekistan in Central Asia) on training forces to deal with their internal requirements for over a decade.

¹⁰ PfP "drift" has resulted in part to an earlier restructuring of the international staff so that PfP is now subordinate to two ASGs — to the Political Affairs Security Policy Division and the Defense Policy and Planning Division (DPP).

¹¹ The following 14 of 26 Pfp partners participated in IFOR: Austria, Finland, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine

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