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## Partnership For Peace (PFP):

### *After the Washington Summit and Kosovo*

by Jeffrey Simon

#### Conclusions

- The NATO Washington Summit and the war in Kosovo pose serious challenges for the Partnership for Peace (PFP) in implementing reforms among its 24 partners and dealing with the expectations of the nine partners seeking NATO membership.
- Because the nine partners of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) have heightened expectations of NATO membership, the continuing lack of an invitation could lead to disillusionment. This could lead to cleavage among MAP partners.
- Lessons learned by Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic suggest that the nine MAP partners may find their human and material resources overwhelmed in harmonizing NATO Standardized Agreements (STANAGs) to their defense establishments and in responding to the NATO Defense Capabilities Initiative. The result could develop two-tier armed forces in the MAP states, one tier designed to function within the PFP, the second developed according to national defense, but neither able to function well as a whole.

A "security earthquake" shook Europe during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Limited crises reappeared and began to haunt Europe, making NATO look outward and take steps to project stability—its new mechanism was cooperation.

The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), formed in November 1991, brought former adversaries together to talk and to begin multilateral cooperation, not partnership. The emerging political dialogue helped Central and East European (CEE) politicians to better understand defense requirements; they slowly began to realize that defense encompassed more than just military issues (e.g., civil emergency planning, air space management, etc.)

#### PFP Genesis and Evolution

Partnership For Peace has undergone enormous change since its inception at the January 1994 Brussels Summit. Though some in CEE initially saw PFP as a palliative (no enlargement), PFP did move non-NATO members beyond dialogue and into practical

partnership. PFP developed a framework and process; it established the norm that partners should be "contributors" and marked a shift from purely multilateral dialogue to bilateral (partner and Alliance) relationships in the form of Individual Partnership Programs (IPPs) and self-differentiation. It marked the establishment of a wide environment of cooperation, to include the Planning and Review Process (PARP), transparency, civil control/oversight of the military, and peace support operations.

The July 1997 Madrid Summit made PFP more relevant and operational by introducing enhanced PFP and a second PARP cycle. It also marked the introduction of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)—which replaced the NACC—and creation of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC) and NATO-Ukraine Commission to keep Russia and Ukraine engaged in the partnership. It was also marked by the invitation of three PFP states to join in membership talks with NATO.

By the April 1999 Washington Summit, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic had joined NATO. The summit introduced programs to make PFP more operational and approved the new Alliance Strategic Concept, which for the first time mentioned PFP (para. 35) as an Alliance activity. It launched a Defense Capabilities Initiative to improve interoperability among Alliance forces and, where applicable, between Alliance and partner forces. The Membership Action Plan (MAP) and a third PARP cycle were intended to establish closer relations among partners and the Alliance for common operations.

NATO is developing an operational capabilities concept (OCC) that should help to engage partners in future military operations by identifying national or multinational forces that can be used in non-Article 5 activities. The OCC should be developed by autumn 1999 and will result in a pool of forces that can augment NATO forces.

The MAPs, a practical manifestation of the NATO (Article 10) Open Door policy, identify five partner activity areas (political and economic, defense/military, resources, security, and legal) that develop the capabilities needed for membership. The MAP annual National Plan (ANPs) generated by each partner allow each to set their own objectives and targets on preparations for possible future membership.

The PARP has been further enhanced so that it is similar to the force planning procedures among the allies. Ministerial guidance sets partner target force goals to build capabilities and permits partner support elements to be involved in exercise planning.

In sum, the Washington Summit poses serious challenges for PFP in the form of greater differentiation among the 24 partners (9 MAP and 15 non-MAP). In addition, because it is implausible to admit nine new members in the near term, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) must successfully deal with the expectations and needs of the MAP partners.

## **External Challenges**

The PFP future is challenged not only by internal factors, such as how well partners implement reform, but also by the external environment.

Kosovo is one external factor that will affect the PFP future of some partners. For those opposed to NATO actions in Kosovo (e.g., Russia), the phrase "partnership for peace" now has a hollow ring. NATO actions reinforce their perception that it intends to interfere in national

internal affairs. To change this perception, NATO needs to make PFP a flexible forum to explain its policies and listen to the views of those who may not share the same perspective. PFP is an open door to the rest of the world; some partners argue that that door needs to remain two way.

Another external effect of the war in Kosovo on NATO political decisions is the yet unanswered question of whether the war will become a catalyst for South East European enlargement or whether lessons learned from Kosovo by the NAC, at 19, could become an impediment to further enlargement.

Finally, another external factor is the so-called "new member" effect. For example, if new members fail to meet NATO force goals and create the impression that enlargement has contributed to more "consumers" and not "producers" of security, NATO might well be hesitant to further enlarge anytime soon.

### **Lessons Learned by the New NATO Members**

Because Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are the only NATO members who have been PFP partners, their experience is particularly useful in helping the Alliance deal with the partnership's new challenges. One fundamental difference between the three new allies and current PFP partners is that each new member significantly downsized its armed forces *before* accession; experiencing many of the resulting social pains and political consequences prior to accession. Nevertheless, these new members have many of the same military challenges as the partners, such as dealing with top-heavy officer corps, reducing conscription service, building noncommissioned officer corps, and modernizing armed forces with scarce resources. Their experience can help the Alliance to more effectively implement PFP after the Washington Summit.

The experiences of the new members highlight three major gaps that could affect the PFP.

1. Political ambition drove the three new members; as a result, practical cooperation was merely a derivative of the process. The disparity between partner expectations and reality was large, even at accession on March 12, 1999. Their general staffs stressed military modernization; the defense ministries, the political imperatives. Funds were scarce and bureaucratic hurdles immense. The entire political system was not ready for NATO membership. But Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic differed from the nine MAP partners in that they held an invitation since July 1997, so their governments had political reason to justify devoting scarce resources to the armed forces.

2. Resource scarcity (in terms of trained personnel and money) is similar. For the three new members, the PARP prepared roughly 15 percent of the armed forces to NATO standards, creating dislocations among the remaining forces and resulting in two-tier military structures. The enhanced (third cycle) PFP and Defense Capabilities Initiative applies PARP procedures to all the MAP partners' armed forces. This is not only a great burden to the MAP partners' nascent militaries and defense ministries; it also creates an implicit NATO obligation toward partners who do not yet enjoy Article 5 protection.

3. The application and incorporation of NATO STANAGs were huge hurdles and overburdened the physical capacity of the new members. For example, it was an enormous effort for Hungary just to translate 621 STANAGs into Hungarian and begin military

harmonization. Poland was overwhelmed. Initially it needed to build from just three people to roughly 600 to harmonize the 50 initial NATO STANAGs, to roughly 700 STANAGs by the Madrid Summit, to 1,500 by the time of accession. The 1,169 STANAGs now made available to MAP partners could likely overwhelm their limited physical capacities.

### **MAP Partner Expectations and NATO Challenges**

Compared to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, which downsized their armed forces before their entrance into NATO, the MAP partners either must still downsize (Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia) or build new armed forces (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Slovenia). Albania and Macedonia fall into yet a third MAP subgroup. As reduced partner armed forces result in social dislocation, NATO may become the object of blame.

NATO also needs to prevent two-tier armed forces from developing among MAP partners. In their effort to achieve membership, the danger is that MAP partner force distortions will result. For example, Slovakia is committing 5 percent of its defense budget just to PFP. If NATO ultimately does not reciprocate with an invitation, some MAP partners may end up with two-tier forces that will have little utility in helping the partner deal with its own security.

Though NATO has stated that the MAP is a "practical manifestation of the Open Door," and that the MAP "does not imply any timeframe for any accession decision nor any guarantee of eventual membership," each MAP partner wants to (or actually does) believe an invitation is in the offing. Each to varying degrees believes that its commitment of scarce resources to augment NATO will result in a reciprocal obligation.

Hence, NATO needs to seriously consider just how far the NAC at 19 can enlarge to accommodate the 7 to 9 MAP aspirants (to 26+?). If any or all of the MAP aspirants fail to receive membership invitations, they will likely be disillusioned, resulting in a cleavage of the MAP partners from the Alliance. Some MAP partners have expressed skepticism about NATO efforts to develop regional cooperation in the Baltic region and South Eastern Europe and fear that efforts to regionalize will undermine the fulfillment of their enlargement objective. Hence, NATO needs to examine seriously how far it is willing to enlarge and to stress that MAP participation prepares the political conditions for compatibility but does not guarantee enlargement.

The ANP assessment is important to NATO credibility. NATO feedback from the assessment to the MAPs needs to be rigorous and precise to encourage real military reform, to temper potentially false expectations, and to stress that the MAP is a route to compatibility, not necessarily a route to membership. This may be difficult, because existing NATO staff, already burdened by 19 (rather than 16) Defense Planning Questionnaire assessments, would be further burdened by providing nine additional ANP assessments. However, if NATO succeeds in providing rigorous appraisals that result in partner reforms, it would imply a reciprocal NATO political commitment.

Another important NATO tool is the Defense Capabilities Initiative. NATO has thus moved away from the merely diplomatic to being more involved with the MAP partners' force planning process. Some MAP partners actually see the DCI as leading to a de facto (vice de jure) operational Article 5. The multi-year planning guidelines help MAP partners sell their defense programs to their parliaments, but, to the degree to which each MAP partner succeeds, the partner perceives a reciprocal NATO obligation.

## **Fifteen non-MAP Partners**

The 15 non-MAP partners include Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova; the neutrals—Austria, Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland; the Caucasus—Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan; and Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan).

Russia at first did not want to participate in PFP, but as other countries joined they reluctantly approached the Alliance. Russia initially refused to submit an IPP, then after six months submitted one they did not implement. Later, Russia negotiated a second IPP they have not implemented. So, relations exist only on an ad hoc basis working on specific activities. Russia has participated in IFOR/ SFOR and participates on the EAPC and Political-Military Steering Group and other fora, but mostly as a silent partner. They have essentially withdrawn from PFP and the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council pending the outcome of the Kosovo conflict. It remains unclear what relations will be after they return.

Ukraine's participation in PFP is the link drawing Ukraine to the West. Since 1994, 5,000 military officers have participated in PFP activities (3,800 in PFP military exercises). During the second PARP cycle, Ukraine fulfilled 11 Interoperability Objectives thanks to NATO financial assistance. Participation in IFOR/ SFOR has been important; in March 1999, NATO established a training center and, in May, a liaison office in Kiev, which should give impetus to cooperation. In sum, PFP remains Ukraine's main path to advance military training and to work with the West.

Moldova, though a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States, does not participate in any of its military or political-military bodies. It pursues neutrality and does not see NATO enlargement as a threat to security. Moldova sees active participation in PFP as an important avenue for its future integration in European security structures. Not surprisingly, scarcity of economic resources, language problems, and lack of experience constrain its participation in PFP activities.

Austria has been a member of the European Union (EU) since January 1995, after which it joined the PFP (February 1995). PFP plays an important political unifying function by allowing Austria to maintain neutrality while meeting its EU peace support operations requirement. After the July 1997 Madrid Summit, Austria joined the EAPC, but delayed participating in enhanced PFP until November 1998. Austria now has diplomatic representation and staff elements at NATO headquarters. PFP is important in that it is the only dimension in Austria's security policy (aside from EU and Common Foreign and Security Policy) that has a consensus among all the political parties represented in its Parliament.

Croatia is not yet a member of PFP because of incomplete implementation of Dayton, return of refugees, and democratization. It has made progress in all three deficiencies and views the partnership as a path toward full NATO membership. In sum, it plans to join the MAP.

Initial concerns about differentiated (MAP and non-MAP) partnerships resulting from the Washington Summit may have been overdrawn. Many non-MAP partner subgroups appear to exist. As a result, participation in the Partnership may atrophy for some (Russia, Belarus), but become more significant among others (Austria), particularly among partners with greater proclivity toward liberal democratic institutions.

## Recommendations

- U.S. bilateral efforts will most likely be needed in aiding partners' nascent defense ministries by training civilian and military personnel to fulfill MAP and STANAG requirements.
- U.S. defense assessments that have been conducted for some M/ partners—Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria, and Romania—also need to be provided to Slovakia and Slovenia.
- NATO credibility on further enlargement and its capability to encourage partner military reforms will hinge, in large measure, on how thorough and critical its annual National Program Assessments are conducted. Hence, NATO needs to ensure that adequate staff elements are available to meet the task.

This paper is the result of a conference hosted by INSS and the Slovenian Defense Ministry Center for Strategic Studies held in Bled, Slovenia, on June 4-5, 1999. Dr. Jeffrey Simon is a Senior Fellow at INSS. He can be reached at (202) 685-2367, by fax at (202) 685-2972, or by e-mail at [simonj@ndu.edu](mailto:simonj@ndu.edu). Opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied in this paper are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of National Defense University, the Department of Defense, or any other government agency.

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