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**NATO'S ENLARGEMENT**

**Poland's integration into NATO in the context of the current process of updating the Strategic Concept of the North Atlantic Alliance**

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The Alliance's Madrid Declaration—furnishing Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary with the possibility of opening up accession negotiations—amounted to crossing the threshold into a new stage in our relations with NATO, relations which are dominated by strivings for the broadest possible inclusion of our countries in the practical workings of the Alliance. Poland immediately responded in the positive to all initiatives conducive to accelerating the integration process.

Shortly after the Madrid summit, the invited countries were asked to submit their first Defence Planning Questionnaires (DPQs). The very tight deadline they were required to meet (the DPQs had to be ready by 1 October 1997) called for a sharply focused effort: for the first time Poland would place its forces at Allied High Command's disposal, complete with development plans and detailed schemes for selected units' capability and co-operation attainment plans. Poland also had to furnish details of the financial and technical back-up facilities necessary for drawing up such plans. All this amounted to being included in the Allied defence planning system.

The first preparatory planning cycle aimed to co-ordinate tasks for those units of the Polish Armed Forces set apart for service within the framework of Allied structures. Target Force Goals were arrived at during a series of negotiations conducted in the spring of 1998. They were approved on the 11 June 1998 at a meeting of NATO Defence Ministers and their Polish, Czech and Hungarian counterparts. The rationale behind the process was that following Poland's entry into NATO in 1999, and with the country getting itself gradually involved in the Allied system, the planning of tasks for those Polish units put at the disposal of the Alliance would comply with the relevant NATO procedures and time schedules.

In September 1997 the Alliance took a decision to open its structures wider to the three invited States. Representatives of a Polish Mission to NATO and the WEU, established in Brussels in the autumn of 1997 and supported by home-based experts, were free to regularly attend sessions of the North-Atlantic Council at the level of Permanent Representative, and to commit themselves more closely to the activities of individual NATO committees. Preparations for updating the NATO Strategic Concept, initiated in Madrid, staked out an area of special interest for Poland. It had become obvious to us there and then that the new concept would emphatically help spell out directions for the Alliance's development in the coming decade, both politically and militarily.

The swift and smooth progress of the accession negotiations, which were concluded in December 1997 with the Sixteen's adoption and commitment to ratification of the Accession Protocols, created conditions for greater involvement in the discussion on the updating of the Concept with the contribution of representatives of the countries invited to join the Alliance.

With the onset in early 1998 of a 'brainstorming sessions' phase, Poland joined discussions reviewing the 1991 Concept and freely traded views in a group of 19 States on the nature and range of changes that had to be ushered in.

Poland's 'Non-paper on Poland's Initial Position on the Examination and Update of the Alliance's Strategic Concept', unveiled during the (Sixteen plus Three) 30 April 1998 discussion, was a tangible result of our endeavours. The document acknowledged the importance of the invitation extended to Poland to join the debate and presented the main elements of Poland's initial position, highlighting, in particular:

- the significance of the new Concept as NATO's guideline for activities in a changed security environment, and the Concept's role as an instrument of public diplomacy,
- the need to preserve a suitable balance and flexibility in the process of formulating and adapting the Alliance's functions and structures in order to insure its ability to act effectively in a full spectrum of defence-related tasks and new missions,
- the fundamental importance of transatlantic bonds,
- the need to take account of defence planning of geo-strategic differences within the Alliance's area of responsibility,
- the need to harmonise the objectives of disarmament and arms reduction negotiations with collective defence requirements,
- the importance of an integrated military structure and a uniform planning process for the whole spectrum of future missions,

the need to uphold the general principle of the multinational character of the Allied forces and their stationing, geared to the defence needs of a collective system.

From Poland's viewpoint, which is in general outline in accord with the approach taken by the other participants in the discussion, the necessary changes in the Concept should include, among other things:

- the need to strongly reflect the growing importance of the Alliance for the security and stability of the entire Euro-Atlantic area,
- the need to revise risk-and-threat assessment and to focus more sharply on the development of a collective capability to enhance the defences of member States,
- the need to place new missions within a context of the Alliance's overall strategy and to meet new challenges in line with the fundamental objectives of the North Atlantic Treaty,

the further development and intensification of co-operation with partner states within the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and Partnership for Peace, taking account of the specific nature of NATO relations with Russia and Ukraine.

We also pointed out that decision-making flexibility and freedom in relation to actions not covered

by article five is a prerequisite for the Alliance's proper performance of its responsibilities as the key organisation within the Atlantic security system. The new Concept draft, prepared in September 1998 by NATO's international staff with due account taken of the results of the brainstorming sessions, has provided the basis for the detailed discussions now going on within the Policy Co-ordination Group.

During a number of sessions Poland has come forward with the following suggestions, among others:

- laying greater emphasis on the fundamental and unchanging role of article five (both in the preamble and in paragraphs dealing with the core functions),
- expanding the provisions handling the open-door policy in keeping with the progress made since the Madrid Summit by partner States, especially in the realm of improving the Partners' ability to co-operate and pursue common objectives with NATO,
- finer balancing of the provisions concerning the importance of co-operation with Russia and Ukraine for the security of the entire area; highlighting the opportunities presented for both countries in the continuation of democratic and market transformations, as well as in co-operation with the Alliance,
- clarifying the essential functions of the Alliance and the need to focus on creating conditions for NATO's cohesive actions to be pursued within the full spectrum of future tasks. In our opinion, the Allied States' maintenance of a full common defence capability and a further development of the capability to act outside article five, are preconditions for the effective defence of our common interests—the latter being proposed as the basis for defining both functions and tasks. Of lesser importance in this context is whether this is to be expressed by three or four core functions,

on mandating, we share the view that a UN mandate forms the appropriate legal basis for undertaking operations outside the area covered by article five. But, bearing in mind the difficulties Security Council members have in arriving at a common position or the dangers to security in instances of delay or inaction, we believe that the relevant provisions should be elastic enough not to constrain NATO decisions while still stressing the need to act in compliance with the provisions of the UN charter.

In late January and early February a discussion got under way on part four, including the Defence Guidelines. The general assumptions of our approach, outlined in the aforesaid non-paper, remain unchanged. This debate is of vital importance for us. We realise that its results, taken in conjunction with the initiatives voiced in the context of preparations for the summit meeting (Defence Capabilities Initiative, Initiative on Weapons of Mass Destruction), will decide NATO's future practical defence capabilities. While playing a key role in the new security system, the Alliance will also furnish a forum for the implementation of Poland's security interests.

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