

CHAPTER 5

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THE ALLIANCE'S OPERATIONAL ROLE IN PEACEKEEPING

THE PROCESS OF BRINGING PEACE TO THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

The political basis for the Alliance's role in the former Yugoslavia was established at the North Atlantic Council meeting in Ministerial session in Oslo, in June 1992. At that time NATO Foreign Ministers announced their readiness to support, on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with their own procedures, peacekeeping activities under the responsibility of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (subsequently renamed the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe or OSCE). This included making available Alliance resources and expertise for peacekeeping operations.

In December 1992, NATO Foreign Ministers stated that the Alliance was also ready to support peacekeeping operations under the authority of the United Nations Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for international peace and security. Ministers reviewed peacekeeping and sanctions or embargo enforcement measures already being undertaken by NATO countries, individually and as an Alliance, to support the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions relating to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. They indicated that the Alliance was ready to respond positively to further initiatives that the UN Secretary General might take in seeking Alliance assistance in this field.

Monitoring and Enforcement Operations

Between 1992 and 1995 the Alliance took several key decisions which led to operations by NATO naval forces, in conjunction with the Western European Union, to monitor and subsequently enforce the UN embargo and sanctions in the Adriatic; and by NATO air forces, first to monitor and then to enforce the UN no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Alliance also provided close air support to the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and authorised air strikes to relieve the strangulation of Sarajevo and other threatened areas denominated by the UN as Safe Areas. Decisive action by the Alliance in support of the UN, together with a determined diplomatic effort, broke the siege of Sarajevo, led to a genuine cease-fire and made a negotiated solution to the conflict possible in autumn 1995.

Evolution of the Conflict

The evolution of the conflict and the process which culminated in the signing of the Bosnian Peace Agreement were long and drawn out. The successive actions taken by the Alliance in support of the United Nations between 1992 and 1995 are chronicled below.

Throughout this period, NATO conducted contingency planning for a range of options to support UN activities relating to the conflict. Contingency plans were provided to the UN for enforcement of the no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina; the establishment of relief zones and safe havens for civilians in Bosnia; and ways to prevent the spread of the conflict to Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹. Contingency plans were also made available for the protection of humanitarian assistance, the monitoring of heavy weapons, and the protection of UN forces on the ground.

July 1992

NATO ships belonging to the Alliance's Standing Naval Force Mediterranean, assisted by NATO Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA), began monitoring operations in the Adriatic. These operations were undertaken in support of the UN arms embargo against all republics of the former Yugoslavia (UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 713) and sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) (UNSCR 757).

October 1992

Aircraft belonging to NATO's Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AWACS) began monitoring operations in support of UNSCR 781, which established a no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina. Data on possible violations of the no-fly zone was passed to UN authorities on a regular basis.

November 1992

As an extension of maritime monitoring operations, NATO and WEU forces in the Adriatic began enforcement operations in support of the sanctions and embargo imposed by the UN (UNSCR 787). Operations were no longer restricted to registering possible violations but included stopping, inspecting and diverting ships when required.

March 1993

On 31 March the UN Security Council passed Resolution 816, which authorised enforcement of the no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina and extended the ban to cover flights by all fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft except those authorised by UNPROFOR.

¹ Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

April 1993

A NATO enforcement operation (Deny Flight) began on 12 April. Initially it involved some 50 fighter and reconnaissance aircraft (later increased to more than 200) from various Alliance nations, flying from airbases in Italy and from aircraft carriers in the Adriatic. By December 1995, almost 100 000 sorties had been flown by fighter planes and supporting aircraft.

June 1993

At a joint session of the North Atlantic Council and the Council of the Western European Union on 8 June, a combined NATO/WEU concept of operations was approved for the enforcement of the UN arms embargo in the Adriatic. The resulting operation (Sharp Guard) included a single command and control arrangement under the authority of the Councils of both organisations. Operational control of the combined NATO/WEU Task Force was delegated, through NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), to the Commander Allied Naval Forces Southern Europe (COMNAVSOUTH) in Naples.

During the enforcement operation approximately 74 000 ships were challenged by NATO and WEU forces, nearly 6 000 were inspected at sea and just over 1 400 were diverted and inspected in port. No ships were reported to have broken the embargo, though six attempted to do so and were stopped.

With the termination of the UN arms embargo on 18 June 1996, Operation Sharp Guard was suspended. The NATO and WEU Councils stated that both organisations were prepared to resume it, in accordance with UNSCR 1022, if UN sanctions were reimposed.

August 1993

A number of decisions were taken by the North Atlantic Council, following the adoption of a resolution by the UN Security Council in relation to the overall protection of Safe Areas (UNSCR 836). On 2 August, in the face of continued attacks, it agreed to make immediate preparations for undertaking stronger measures against those responsible, including air strikes, if the strangulation of Sarajevo and other areas continued and if interference with humanitarian assistance to the region did not cease. NATO Military Authorities were tasked to draw up operational options for air strikes, in close coordination with UNPROFOR.

On 9 August, the North Atlantic Council approved a series of "Operational Options for Air Strikes in Bosnia and Herzegovina" recommended by the NATO Military Committee. These options addressed the targeting identification process as well as NATO/UN command and control arrangements for air strikes.

January 1994

At the Brussels Summit, Alliance leaders reaffirmed their readiness to carry out air strikes in order to prevent the strangulation of Sarajevo and of other Safe Areas and threatened areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

February 1994

On 9 February, the North Atlantic Council, responding to a request by the UN Secretary General, authorised the Commander of Allied Forces Southern Europe (CINCSOUTH) to launch air strikes - at the request of the UN - against artillery and mortar positions in or around Sarajevo determined by UNPROFOR to be responsible for attacks against civilian targets in that city. The Council also decided that all heavy weapons had to be withdrawn from a 20-kilometre exclusion zone around Sarajevo or placed under UNPROFOR control within 10 days. After the expiry of the 10-day period, heavy weapons of any of the Parties found within the exclusion zone, unless under UNPROFOR control, would be subject to air strikes.

On 28 February, four warplanes violating the no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina were shot down by NATO aircraft in the first military engagement ever to be undertaken by the Alliance.

April 1994

Following a request from the UN, NATO aircraft provided Close Air Support on 10-11 April to protect UN personnel in Gorazde, designated by the UN as a Safe Area.

On 22 April, in response to a request by the UN Secretary General to support the UN in its efforts to end the siege of Gorazde and to protect other Safe Areas, the North Atlantic Council announced that air strikes would be launched unless Bosnian Serb attacks ceased immediately.

By 24 April, Bosnian Serb forces had pulled back three kilometres from the centre of Gorazde and humanitarian relief convoys and medical teams were allowed to enter the city. The Council declared that air strikes would be launched against remaining Bosnian Serb heavy weapons within a 20-kilometre Exclusion Zone around the centre of Gorazde from 27 April.

Air strikes were also authorised if other UN-designated Safe Areas (Bihac, Srebrenica, Tuzla and Zepa) were attacked by heavy weapons from any range. These areas could also become Exclusion Zones if, in the judgement of NATO and UN Military Commanders, there was a concentration or movement of heavy weapons within a radius of 20 kilometres around them.

July 1994

NATO military authorities were tasked to undertake contingency planning to assist the UN forces in withdrawing from Bosnia and Herzegovina and/or Croatia if that became unavoidable.

August 1994

On 5 August, at the request of UNPROFOR, NATO aircraft attacked a target within the Sarajevo Exclusion Zone. Agreement was reached by NATO and UNPROFOR to order this action after weapons were seized by Bosnian Serbs from a weapons collection site near Sarajevo.

September 1994

On 22 September, following a Bosnian Serb attack on an UNPROFOR vehicle near Sarajevo, NATO aircraft carried out an air strike against a Bosnian Serb tank at the request of UNPROFOR.

November 1994

On 19 November, in implementation of UNSCR 958, the North Atlantic Council approved the extension of Close Air Support to Croatia for the protection of UN forces in that country.

NATO aircraft attacked the Udbina airfield in Serb-held Croatia on 21 November, in response to attacks launched from that airfield against targets in the Bihac area of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On 23 November, after attacks launched from a surface-to-air missile site south of Otoka (north-west Bosnia and Herzegovina) on two NATO aircraft, air strikes were conducted against air defence radars in that area.

May 1995

After violations of the Exclusion Zones and the shelling of Safe Areas, NATO forces carried out air strikes on 25 and 26 May against Bosnian Serb ammunition depots in Pale. Some 370 UN peacekeepers in Bosnia were taken hostage and subsequently used as human shields at potential targets in a bid to prevent further air strikes.

On 30 May, NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, condemned the escalation of violence in Bosnia and the hostile acts against UN personnel by the Bosnian Serbs.

June 1995

Plans for a NATO-led operation to support the withdrawal of UN forces were provisionally approved by the North Atlantic Council. The Alliance expressed its hope that its planning and preparations would serve to underpin a continued UN presence in the area.

By 18 June, the remaining UN hostages had been released. UN peace-keeping forces which had been isolated at weapons collection sites around Sarajevo were withdrawn.

July 1995

On 11 July, the UN called for NATO Close Air Support to protect UN peacekeepers threatened by Bosnian Serb forces advancing on the UN-declared Safe Area of Srebrenica. Under the control of the UN, targets identified by the UN were attacked by NATO aircraft. Despite NATO's air support, the Safe Area of Srebrenica fell to Bosnian Serb forces. The nearby Safe Area of Zepa was overrun by Bosnian Serb forces shortly after.

On 25 July, the North Atlantic Council authorised military planning aimed at deterring an attack on the Safe Area of Gorazde, and the use of NATO air power if this Safe Area was threatened or attacked.

August 1995

On 1 August, the Council took similar decisions aimed at deterring attacks on the Safe Areas of Sarajevo, Bihac and Tuzla. On 4 August NATO aircraft conducted air strikes against Croatian Serb air defence radars near Udbina airfield and Knin in Croatia.

On 30 August, following continued attacks by Bosnian Serb artillery on Sarajevo, NATO aircraft commenced a series of air strikes against Bosnian Serb military targets in Bosnia, supported by the UN Rapid Reaction Force on Mt. Igman. The air operations were initiated after UN military commanders concluded that a mortar attack in Sarajevo two days earlier had come from Bosnian Serb positions.

The operations were decided upon jointly by the Commander in Chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe (CINCSOUTH) and the Force Commander, UN Peace Forces, in accordance with the authority given to them under UN Security Council Resolution 836, in line with the North Atlantic Council's decisions of 25 July and 1 August 1995 endorsed by the UN Secretary General.

The common objectives of NATO and the UN were to reduce the threat to the Sarajevo Safe Area and to deter further attacks there or on any other Safe Area; to bring about the withdrawal of Bosnian Serb heavy weapons from the total Exclusion Zone around Sarajevo; and to secure complete freedom of movement for UN forces and personnel and non-governmental organisations, as well as unrestricted use of Sarajevo Airport.

September 1995

On 20 September, the NATO and UN Force Commanders concluded that the Bosnian Serbs had complied with the conditions set down by the UN and air strikes were discontinued. They stressed that any attack on Sarajevo or any

other Safe Area, or other non-compliance with the provisions of the Sarajevo Exclusion Zone, or interference with freedom of movement or with the functioning of Sarajevo airport, would be subject to investigation and possible resumption of air strikes.

October 1995

On 4 October, three missiles were fired by NATO aircraft at Bosnian Serb radar sites at two different locations after anti-aircraft radar had locked on to Alliance aircraft.

On 9 October, in response to a request for air support from UN peace forces which had come under artillery shelling from Bosnian Serb guns for a second consecutive day, NATO aircraft attacked a Bosnian Serb Army Command and Control bunker, near Tuzla.

November 1995

As prospects for peace in Bosnia improved, the Alliance reaffirmed its readiness to help to implement a peace plan. Preparations were stepped up for a NATO-led force to implement the military aspects of the peace agreement. On 21 November, the Bosnian Peace Agreement between the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) was initialled in Dayton, Ohio (USA).

The conclusion of the Peace Agreement enabled the UN Security Council to suspend sanctions (UNSCR 1022) and to phase out its arms embargo, subject to certain conditions (UNSCR 1021).

Enforcement of sanctions by NATO and the WEU ceased on 22 November 1995 but could be reinstated if UN conditions were not met.

December 1995

The Bosnian Peace Agreement was signed in Paris on 14 December.

The NATO enforcement operation (Deny Flight), begun in April 1993, was terminated. On 15 December, the UN Security Council adopted UNSCR 1031, transferring authority for such operations from the UN to NATO from 20 December and giving NATO a mandate to implement the military aspects of the Peace Agreement.

The airspace over Bosnia and Herzegovina was subsequently controlled by the Implementation Force (IFOR) (see below) as part of its task.

The North Atlantic Council also decided that, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1037, Operation Joint Endeavour should provide Close Air Support for the UN Task Force in the region of Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES).

Control of the airspace over Bosnia and Herzegovina and the provision of Close Air Support to UNTAES continued under the Stabilisation Force (SFOR)

which succeeded IFOR on 20 December 1996. Provision of Close Air Support to UNTAES terminated in January 1998 on completion of the UNTAES mandate.

The NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR)

IFOR's Command Structure

As stipulated in Annex 1A of the Peace Agreement, Operation Joint Endeavour was a NATO-led operation under the political direction and control of the Alliance's North Atlantic Council. The Implementation Force (IFOR) had a unified command structure. Overall military authority rested in the hands of NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), at that time General George Joulwan. General Joulwan designated Admiral Leighton-Smith (NATO's Commander in Chief Southern Command (CINCSOUTH)) as the first Commander in Theatre of IFOR (COMIFOR). In November 1996, when IFOR Headquarters was transferred from Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH) to Allied Land Forces Central Europe (LANDCENT), General Crouch became Commander in Theatre. He was replaced by General Shinseki in July 1997. Details of the subsequent command structure of IFOR and of its successor force, SFOR, are given in the SFOR website (www.nato.int.sfor).

Major IFOR Milestones

An Advance Enabling Force of 2 600 troops began deploying to Bosnia and Croatia on 2 December 1995. Their task was to establish the headquarters, communications and logistics necessary to receive the main body of some 60 000 IFOR troops being deployed to the area. The deployment of the main force was activated on 16 December, after final approval by the North Atlantic Council of the Operational Plan (OPLAN) and the UN Security Council's Resolution 1031 of 15 December authorising IFOR's mission.

The transfer of authority from the Commander of UN Peace Forces to the Commander of IFOR took place on 20 December, 96 hours after the NATO Council's approval of the main deployment. On that day, all NATO and non-NATO forces participating in the operation came under the command and/or control of the IFOR Commander.

By 19 January 1996, 30 days after IFOR's deployment (D+30), the Parties to the Agreement had withdrawn their forces from the zone of separation on either side of the agreed cease-fire line. As of 3 February (D+45), all forces had been withdrawn from the areas to be transferred. The transfer of territory

between Bosnian entities was completed by 19 March (D+90), and a new zone of separation was established along the inter-entity boundary line.

Under the terms of the Peace Agreement, all heavy weapons and forces were to be in cantonments or to be demobilised by 18 April (D+120). This represented the last milestone in the military annex to the Peace Agreement. Technical problems prevented the Parties to the Peace Agreement from completing the withdrawal and demobilisation or cantonment of heavy weapons and forces by the deadline. However by 27 June 1996, the revised deadline set by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), the cantonment of heavy weapons was completed.

Civilian Implementation

To achieve lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, full implementation of the civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement is also crucial. By implementing the military aspects of the Agreement, IFOR contributed to the creation of a secure environment conducive to civil and political reconstruction. It also provided substantial support for civilian tasks within the limits of its mandate and available resources. The Implementation Force worked closely with the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the International Police Task Force (IPTF), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and many others, including more than 400 non-governmental organisations active in the area. It offered a range of support facilities to these organisations, such as emergency accommodation, medical treatment and evacuation, vehicle repair and recovery, as well as transport assistance, security information and advice, and other logistical support.

IFOR also provided a broad range of support to the OSCE, assisting in that organisation's task of preparing, supervising and monitoring the elections that took place on 14 September 1996. Following these elections, IFOR provided support to the Office of the High Representative in assisting the Parties in building new common institutions.

IFOR military engineers were able to repair and open more than 50 per cent of the roads in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to rebuild or repair over 60 bridges, including those linking the country with Croatia. They were also involved in the de-mining and repair of railroads and the opening up of airports to civilian traffic, in restoring gas, water and electricity supplies, in rebuilding schools and hospitals, and in restoring key telecommunication assets.

The NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR)

From IFOR to SFOR

After the peaceful conduct of the September 1996 elections in Bosnia, IFOR had successfully completed its mission. However, it was clear that much remained to be accomplished on the civil side and that the environment would continue to be potentially unstable and insecure. One week after the elections, at an informal meeting in Bergen, Norway, NATO Defence Ministers concluded that the Alliance needed to reassess how it might continue to provide support for the establishment of a secure environment after the end of IFOR's mandate in December 1996.

One month later, the North Atlantic Council approved detailed political guidance for a study to be undertaken by the NATO Military Authorities of post-IFOR security options. In November and December 1996, a two-year consolidation plan was established in Paris and elaborated in London under the auspices of the Peace Implementation Council established under the Peace Agreement. On the basis of this plan and of the Alliance's own study of security options, NATO Foreign and Defence Ministers concluded that a reduced military presence was needed to provide the stability necessary for consolidating the peace. They agreed that NATO should organise a Stabilisation Force (SFOR), which was subsequently activated on 20 December 1996, the day on which IFOR's mandate expired.

SFOR's Role and Mandate

Under UN Security Council Resolution 1088 of 12 December 1996, the Stabilisation Force was authorised to implement the military aspects of the Peace Agreement as the legal successor to IFOR, operating under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (peace enforcement). Rules of engagement adopted for SFOR were the same as for IFOR, authorising the robust use of force if it should be necessary for SFOR to accomplish its mission and to protect itself.

The primary task given to SFOR was to contribute to the secure environment necessary for the consolidation of peace. Its specific tasks included:

- deterring or preventing a resumption of hostilities or new threats to peace;
- consolidating IFOR's achievements and promoting a climate in which the peace process could continue to move forward;
- providing selective support to civilian organisations, within its capabilities.

It also stood ready to provide emergency support to UN forces in Eastern Slavonia.

SFOR's size, with around 31 000 troops in Bosnia, was about half that of IFOR. Building on general compliance with the terms of the Dayton Agreement achieved during the IFOR mission, the smaller-sized force was able to concentrate on the implementation of all the provisions of Annex 1A of the Peace Agreement. This involves:

- stabilisation of the current secure environment in which local and national authorities and other international organisations can work; and
- providing support to other agencies (on a selective and targeted basis because of the reduced size of the forces available).

NATO envisaged an 18-month mission for SFOR, reviewing force levels after six and 12 months to enable the focus to be moved from stabilisation to deterrence, with a view to completing the mission by June 1998. The six month review in June 1997 concluded that, with the exception of a force adjustment during the municipal elections in September, no other significant changes to the size and capabilities of SFOR would take place until the North Atlantic Council, in consultation with the non-NATO SFOR contributors, had undertaken a thorough assessment of the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the elections.

SFOR's Command Structure

The Stabilisation Force has a unified command and is a NATO-led operation under the political direction and control of the Alliance's North Atlantic Council, as stipulated by Annex 1 A of the Peace Agreement. Overall military authority is in the hands of NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).

Participation of non-NATO Nations

Every NATO nation with armed forces committed troops to SFOR, as was also the case with IFOR. Iceland, the only NATO country without armed forces, provided medical support. All 18 non-NATO nations which participated in IFOR also participated in SFOR, namely Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Sweden and Ukraine - all of which are Partnership for Peace countries - plus Egypt², Jordan², Malaysia and Morocco². Four more countries (Argentina,

2 Participant in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue.

Ireland, Slovakia and Slovenia) have also joined SFOR, bringing the total of non-NATO participating nations to 22.

Non-NATO nations have been incorporated into the operation on the same basis as forces from NATO member countries. Special arrangements apply to Russian forces participating in SFOR but, in general, all participating forces receive their orders from the SFOR Commander through the multinational divisional headquarters. The SFOR headquarters in Sarajevo has personnel from 25 NATO and non-NATO nations.

Contributing non-NATO countries have liaison officers at SHAPE and have been involved in planning operations and in generating the necessary forces through the International Coordination Centre. At NATO headquarters, contributing non-NATO countries are consulted at key junctures and have the opportunity to express their views or to associate themselves with the decisions of the North Atlantic Council. The main mechanism for political consultation among the contributing countries was the so-called "NAC+N" format (now referred to as "EAPC(SFOR)"), consisting of the North Atlantic Council meeting with non-NATO contributing countries. Consultation with non-NATO contributors has also taken place in the context of the meetings of the EAPC and of the Policy Coordination Group (PCG) in SFOR format.

Participation by non-NATO countries not only contributes to the accomplishment of the SFOR mission but has a wider significance. It provides all the participating forces from Partnership Countries with practical experience of operating with NATO forces and demonstrates that NATO and non-NATO countries can work closely together in a NATO-led operation in the cause of peace. This has a broad impact on the region and contributes to enhanced security in the whole of Europe and beyond.

Civilian Aspects

Full implementation of the civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement continues to be a crucial factor in building the basis for a lasting peace. Like the Implementation Force, the Stabilisation Force provides support for civilian tasks, but with fewer forces at its disposal has to prioritise its efforts and to apply them selectively.

As directed by the North Atlantic Council, SFOR provided the secure environment for the municipal elections that took place in September 1997. It also provided other forms of support to the OSCE in the preparation and conduct of these elections. It continues to support the OSCE in its role of assisting the Parties in the implementation of agreements reached on Confidence and Security Building Measures and on Sub-Regional Arms Control. The latter lim-

its the holdings of heavy weapons by the Parties in order to eliminate the danger of a sub-regional arms race and to bring about an overall reduction of heavy weaponry in the area.

Direct support to the Office of the High Representative (OHR) is provided by making available technical expertise and assistance in telecommunications and engineering, air transportation, and assets used for information purposes. Support of this kind is provided on a routine basis.

SFOR also continues to support UNHCR in its tasks in arranging for the return of refugees and displaced persons. It does this by helping to implement procedures designed to facilitate returns to the Zone of Separation, negotiated among the various organisations concerned and the Parties to the Peace Agreement, for example by ensuring that no weapons other than those of SFOR itself are brought back into the Zone. SFOR also supports UNHCR by assessing infrastructure, housing, economic and social factors in over 80 cities. Information is then shared with the Repatriation Information Centre to assist in maintaining its data-base on projects related to the agreements on returns.

Like its IFOR predecessor, SFOR continues to work closely with the UN International Police Task Force (IPTF) through surveillance, communications and transportation, and by providing security for its activities. SFOR's law enforcement support team continues to provide technical assistance to the IPTF and supports the implementation of the IPTF checkpoint policy. The implementation of the Brcko Arbitration Agreement of 15 February 1997 is also supported by SFOR by providing a secure environment in and around Brcko and by supporting the Brcko Supervisor, the International Police Task Force, UNHCR and other agencies involved in its implementation.

The support already provided by IFOR to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has been maintained by SFOR. This includes the provision of security and logistic support of ICTY investigative teams, and surveillance and ground patrolling of alleged mass grave sites. The North Atlantic Council has authorised SFOR to detain and transfer to the ICTY persons indicted for war crimes when SFOR personnel come into contact with them while carrying out their duties. A number of such persons have been detained and immediately transferred to the jurisdiction of the ICTY in The Hague. Several indicted persons have surrendered themselves voluntarily.

Support for civil implementation is provided by local forces and by SFOR's Civil-Military Task Force (CMTF). The CMTF, located in Sarajevo, consists of approximately 350 military personnel. Initially drawn mainly from US Army reserves, the Task Force has subsequently become multinational. CMTF personnel have mid-level and senior civilian skills in 20 functional areas, including law, economics and finance, agriculture, industry, commerce and business,

structural engineering, transportation, utilities, housing, social services (education, public health, etc.), cultural affairs, government, management and political science.

THE FURTHERANCE OF THE PEACE PROCESS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Continuation of a NATO-led Multinational Military Presence

In December 1997, NATO Foreign and Defence Ministers took a number of additional decisions in relation to the implementation of the Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Recognising the fragility of the peace, despite positive achievements in several fields, they reiterated NATO's commitment to the establishment of a single, democratic and multiethnic state. They applauded the measures being taken by the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia to facilitate the implementation of the Peace Agreement by using its full authority to promote the resolution of difficulties through binding decisions on issues identified by the Peace Implementation Council. The NAC also acted upon the consensus emerging in the Peace Implementation Council and elsewhere on the need for a military presence to continue beyond the expiry of SFOR's mandate, and requested the NATO's Military Authorities to present options.

On 20 February 1998, the Council issued a statement announcing that, subject to the necessary UN mandate, NATO would be prepared to organise and lead a multinational force in Bosnia and Herzegovina following the end of SFOR's current mandate in June 1998, and directed the Military Authorities to initiate the necessary planning.

The new force would retain the name "SFOR" and would operate on a similar basis, in order to deter renewed hostilities and to help to create the conditions needed for the implementation of the civil aspects of the Peace Agreement. At the same time the Council projected a transitional strategy, involving regular reviews of force levels and progressive reductions as the transfer of responsibilities to the competent common institutions, civil authorities and international bodies became possible.

In view of the generally stable situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the North Atlantic Council directed NATO's Military Authorities in the autumn of 1999 to restructure and reduce the size of the Stabilisation Force. As a result, force levels have since been reduced to approximately 23 000 troops. These

forces are provided by 17 NATO member countries and 17 non-NATO nations, among them 12 Partner countries, including a 1 200-strong Russian contingent. For the foreseeable future, an SFOR presence will be needed to ensure the maintenance of a secure environment and to underpin the work being undertaken to further the civilian reconstruction process.

There have nevertheless been encouraging signs of progress in this context. Refugee returns, and in particular the rate of spontaneous returns, accelerated in 1999 and 2000 reflecting growing confidence among the population that they can return to their former homes and villages in relative safety. Moreover, the results of municipal elections in April 2000 indicated decreased support for nationalist parties and some increase in political diversity. A further event which served to promote stability was the peaceful demilitarisation of Brcko.

Despite these positive developments, dissatisfaction was expressed at the meeting of the Peace Implementation Council in Brussels in May 2000 with the pace of progress in the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement and with the fact that, after five years, more progress had not been made in key areas. The Peace Implementation Council established three priority areas: deepening economic reform; accelerating the return of displaced persons and refugees; and fostering democratically accountable common institutions.

As part of this process, the North Atlantic Council has tasked SFOR with providing guidance and advice to the Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM). Further reference to the role of the SCMM is made in the following section.

On 11 November 2000 elections took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A state-level government was finally constituted on 22 February 2001 by a number of moderate parties that came together to form an Alliance for Change. This was the first government which did not include the major nationalist parties of the three ethnic groups in the country.

Security Cooperation Activities

In December 1997, in addition to decisions relating to SFOR, the Council initiated a series of further actions labelled Security Cooperation Activities. These are quite distinct from SFOR operations designed to ensure compliance by all sides with the military aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Their purpose is to promote confidence and cooperation among the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to encourage the development of democratic

practices and central defence mechanisms, such as the Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM).

An initial set of Security Cooperation Activities endorsed by the Council included setting up courses for military and civilian defence officials of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany. These courses are designed to promote reconciliation, dialogue and mutual understanding among the former warring factions within the three entities that which make up the country and their constituent parties. The programme also involves visits and seminars designed to help defence officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina to familiarise themselves with NATO and to increase their understanding of the role of the international community in laying the foundations for future peace and stability in their country. In addition, an assessment was undertaken to establish how NATO could best assist the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in making its central defence institution, the SCMM, fully effective.

The SCMM is one of the common institutions set up by the Dayton Peace Agreement and is responsible for coordinating the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is composed of the Presidents of the ethnic groups within the country, namely the Bosnian Croats, the Bosnian Muslims, and the Bosnian Serbs; the Defence Ministers and Chiefs of Defence of the Bosniac-Croat Federation and of the Republika Srpska; and national and international observers, as well as a Secretariat. It is strongly supported by NATO and is developing its role in dealing with defence issues at the state level.

The Security Cooperation Activities sponsored by NATO are coordinated through the SCMM and involve representation from both the Bosniac-Croat Federation and the Republika Srpska, as well as from the three ethnic groups. Courses are conducted on security cooperation issues. Results are judged by participants and organisers alike to be positive. Without losing sight of its original goals, the Security Cooperation Programme (SCP) is focusing increasingly on more specific objectives. In cooperation with other international bodies, for example, and as part of the Programme, NATO is helping Bosnia and Herzegovina to respond to tasks identified in the May 2000 Work Plan drawn up by the Peace Implementation Council. These include the restructuring of the Entity Armed Forces, the strengthening of a common defence institution at state level, and the development of a common security policy for the country.

Reduction of the Entity Armed Forces (EAF)

Following a 15 percent reduction in 1999, the Entity Armed Forces (EAF) were to achieve a second round of 15 percent reductions in active manpower by the end of 2000. SFOR is monitoring the situation and is also working with

EAF Commanders on the development of common security and defence policies designed to ensure that the future structure of EAF is affordable and meets security requirements.

Weapon Collection (Operation HARVEST)

In 1998 SFOR began to collect and destroy unregistered weapons and ordnance held in private hands, to improve the overall safety of the citizens and to build confidence in the peace process. About 11 000 arms, 10 000 mines and 35 000 hand grenades as well as 3 700 000 rounds of ammunition (2 800 000 in 1999 and 900 000 in 2000) have been collected since the beginning of the operation, significantly reducing the threat to the local population. The aim of Project Harvest 2000 was to build upon the success of the work undertaken in 1999 by shifting the responsibility for the collection of weapons and ordnance to the national authorities and their armed forces. The operation is continuing in 2001.

War Crimes/ War Criminals

The apprehension of war criminals is the responsibility of the national authorities. Nevertheless, SFOR has been providing security and logistic support to investigative teams of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), as well as surveillance and ground patrolling of alleged mass gravesites. Since 1996, NATO forces have been involved in the detention and transfer to The Hague of 37 people indicted for war crimes.

Upper Airspace Control

Under the Dayton Peace Accords, SFOR is responsible for normalising the airspace over Bosnia and Herzegovina by fostering a stable, safe and secure airspace environment that can eventually be returned to civilian control. A step in this direction was made in January 2000, when the upper airspace over Bosnia and Herzegovina was returned to civilian control. Plans are being made for a reduction of NATO military flight operations to make way for normalisation of the medium level airspace, with a view to full normalisation of the airspace by the end of 2001.

UNHCR/Refugees and Displaced Persons

Since November 1995, the security provide by SFOR has resulted in more than 723 000 returns (368 000 refugees and 355 000 displaced persons). The

effective implementation of property laws is a crucial part of the process. The overall figure for repossession of houses and flats reached 51 500 cases by December 2000. However the pace of progress remains slow and only 21 per cent of all claims lodged with the Commission for Real Property Claims (CRPC) have been decided.

NATO'S ROLE IN RELATION TO THE CONFLICT IN KOSOVO

Background to the Conflict

Kosovo lies in southern Serbia and has a mixed population of which the majority are ethnic Albanians. Until 1989, the region enjoyed a high degree of autonomy within the former Yugoslavia, when Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic altered the status of the region, removing its autonomy and bringing it under the direct control of Belgrade, the Serbian capital. The Kosovar Albanians strenuously opposed the move.

During 1998, open conflict between Serbian military and police forces and Kosovar Albanian forces resulted in the deaths of over 1 500 Kosovar Albanians and forced 400 000 people from their homes. The international community became gravely concerned about the escalating conflict, its humanitarian consequences, and the risk of it spreading to other countries. President Milosevic's disregard for diplomatic efforts aimed at peacefully resolving the crisis and the destabilising role of militant Kosovar Albanian forces were also of concern.

On 28 May 1998, the North Atlantic Council, meeting at Foreign Minister level, set out NATO's two major objectives with respect to the crisis in Kosovo, namely:

- to help to achieve a peaceful resolution of the crisis by contributing to the response of the international community; and
- to promote stability and security in neighbouring countries with particular emphasis on Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia³.

On 12 June 1998 the North Atlantic Council, meeting at Defence Minister level, asked for an assessment of possible further measures that NATO might take with regard to the developing Kosovo crisis. This led to consideration of a large number of possible options.

³ Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

On 13 October 1998, following a deterioration of the situation, the NATO Council authorised Activation Orders for air strikes. This move was designed to support diplomatic efforts to make the Milosevic regime withdraw forces from Kosovo, cooperate in bringing an end to the violence and facilitate the return of refugees to their homes. At the last moment, following further diplomatic initiatives by NATO and US officials, President Milosevic agreed to comply and the air strikes were called off.

UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1199 among other things expressed deep concern about the excessive use of force by Serbian security forces and the Yugoslav army, and called for a cease-fire by both parties to the conflict. In the spirit of the Resolution, limits were set on the number of Serbian forces in Kosovo, and on the scope of their operations, following a separate agreement concluded with the Serb government.

It was agreed, in addition, that the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) would establish a Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) to observe compliance on the ground and that NATO would establish an aerial surveillance mission. The establishment of the two missions was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 1203. Several non-NATO nations agreed to contribute to the surveillance mission.

In support of the OSCE, the Alliance established a special military task force to assist with the emergency evacuation of members of the KVM, if renewed conflict should put them at risk. This task force was deployed in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁴ under the overall direction of NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

Despite these steps, the situation in Kosovo flared up again at the beginning of 1999, following a number of acts of provocation on both sides and the use of excessive and disproportionate force by the Serbian Army and Special Police. Some of these incidents were defused through the mediation efforts of the OSCE verifiers but by mid-January the situation had deteriorated further after escalation of the Serbian offensive against Kosovar Albanians.

Renewed international efforts were made to give new political impetus to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict. The six-nation Contact Group⁵ established by the 1992 London Conference on the former Yugoslavia met on 29 January. It was agreed to convene urgent negotiations between the parties to the conflict, under international mediation.

4 Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

5 France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

NATO supported and reinforced the Contact Group's efforts by agreeing on 30 January to the use of air strikes if required, and by issuing a warning to both sides in the conflict. These concerted initiatives culminated in initial negotiations in Rambouillet near Paris from 6 to 23 February, followed by a second round in Paris from 15 to 18 March. At the end of the second round of talks, the Kosovar Albanian delegation signed the proposed peace agreement, but the talks broke up without a signature from the Serbian delegation.

Immediately afterwards, Serbian military and police forces stepped up the intensity of their operations against the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, moving extra troops and tanks into the region, in a clear breach of compliance with the October agreement. Tens of thousands of people began to flee their homes in the face of this systematic offensive.

On 20 March, the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission was withdrawn from the region, having faced obstruction from Serbian forces to the extent that they could no longer continue to fulfil their task. US Ambassador Holbrooke then flew to Belgrade in a final attempt to persuade President Milosevic to stop attacks on the Kosovar Albanians or face imminent NATO air strikes. Milosevic refused to comply, and on 23 March the order to carry out air strikes was given (Operation Allied Force).

NATO's Objectives

NATO's objectives in relation to the conflict in Kosovo were set out in the Statement issued at the Extraordinary Meeting of the North Atlantic Council held at NATO on 12 April 1999 and were reaffirmed by Heads of State and Government in Washington on 23 April 1999:

- a verifiable stop to all military action and the immediate ending of violence and repression;
- the withdrawal from Kosovo of the military, police and paramilitary forces;
- the stationing in Kosovo of an international military presence;
- the unconditional and safe return of all refugees and displaced persons and unhindered access to them by humanitarian aid organisations;
- the establishment of a political framework agreement for Kosovo on the basis of the Rambouillet accords, in conformity with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Throughout the conflict the achievement of these objectives, accompanied by measures to ensure their full implementation, was regarded by the Alliance

as the prerequisite for bringing to an end the violence and human suffering in Kosovo.

On 10 June 1999, after an air campaign lasting 77 days, NATO Secretary General Javier Solana announced that he had instructed General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, to suspend NATO's air operations. This decision was taken after consultations with the North Atlantic Council and confirmation from General Clark that the full withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo had begun.

The withdrawal was in accordance with the Military Technical Agreement concluded between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the evening of 9 June. The agreement was signed by Lieutenant General Sir Michael Jackson on behalf of NATO, and by Colonel General Svetozar Marjanovic of the Yugoslav Army and Lieutenant General Obrad Stevanovic of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on behalf of the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Republic of Serbia. The withdrawal was also consistent with the agreement between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the European Union and Russian special envoys, President Ahtisaari of Finland and Mr. Victor Chernomyrdin, former Prime Minister of Russia, reached on 3 June.

On 10 June the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1244 welcoming the acceptance by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of the principles for a political solution to the Kosovo crisis, including an immediate end to violence and a rapid withdrawal of its military, police and paramilitary forces. The Resolution, adopted by a vote of 14 in favour and none against, with one abstention (China), announced the Security Council's decision to establish an international civil and security presence in Kosovo, under United Nations auspices.

Acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the Security Council decided that the political solution to the crisis would be based on the general principles adopted on 6 May by the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Seven industrialised countries and the Russian Federation - the Group of 8 - and the principles contained in the paper presented in Belgrade by the President of Finland and the Special Representative of the Russian Federation which was accepted by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 3 June. Both documents were included as annexes to the Resolution.

The principles included, among others, an immediate and verifiable end to violence and repression in Kosovo; the withdrawal of the military, police and paramilitary forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; deployment of an effective international civil and security presence, with substantial NATO participation in the security presence and unified command and control; establishment of an interim administration; the safe and free return of all refugees; a political process providing for substantial self-government; the demilitarisation

of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA); and a comprehensive approach to the economic development of the crisis region.

The Security Council authorised Member States and relevant international organisations to establish the international security presence, and decided that its responsibilities would include deterring renewed hostilities, demilitarising the KLA and establishing a secure environment for the return of refugees and in which the international civil presence could operate. The Security Council also authorised the UN Secretary General to establish the international civil presence and requested him to appoint a Special Representative to control its implementation.

Following the adoption of UNSCR 1244, General Jackson, designated as the Commander of the force and acting on the instructions of the North Atlantic Council, made immediate preparations for the rapid deployment of the security force mandated by the United Nations Security Council.

The NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR)

The first elements of KFOR entered Kosovo on 12 June 1999. As agreed in the Military Technical Agreement, the deployment of the force was synchronised with the departure of Serb forces from Kosovo. By 20 June, the Serb withdrawal was complete and KFOR had accomplished its initial deployment task.

At its full strength KFOR comprised some 50 000 personnel. All 19 NATO members and 20 non-NATO countries participate in KFOR under unified command and control (among them 16 Partner countries, including a Russian contingent of 3 200 men).

Also on 20 June, following confirmation by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) that Serb security forces had vacated Kosovo, the Secretary General of NATO announced that, in accordance with the Military Technical Agreement, he had formally terminated the air campaign.

Throughout the crisis, NATO forces were at the forefront of the humanitarian efforts to relieve the suffering of the many thousands of refugees forced to flee Kosovo by the Serbian ethnic cleansing campaign. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁶ NATO troops built refugee camps, refugee reception centres and emergency feeding stations, and moved many hundreds of tons of humanitarian aid to those in need. In Albania, NATO deployed substantial forces to provide similar forms of assistance and assisted the UN High

6 Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Commission for Refugees - UNHCR - with the coordination of humanitarian aid flights, as well as supplementing these flights by using aircraft supplied by member countries. The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) established at NATO in June 1998 also played an important role in the coordination of support to UNHCR relief operations.

Of particular concern to NATO countries and to the international community as a whole, from the outset of the crisis, was the situation of the Kosovar Albanians remaining in Kosovo, whose plight was described by refugees leaving the province. All indications pointed to organised persecution involving mass executions; exploitation of civilians as human shields; rape; mass expulsions; burning and looting of homes and villages; destruction of crops and livestock; suppression of identity, origins and property ownership by the confiscation of documents; hunger, starvation and exhaustion; and many other abuses of human rights and international norms of civilised behaviour.

Support for neighbouring countries

The Alliance fully recognised the immense humanitarian, political, and economic problems facing the countries in the region as a result of the conflict in Kosovo. In particular, Alliance efforts focused on providing immediate practical assistance in dealing with the refugee crisis by reassigning NATO forces in the region to humanitarian tasks.

At the beginning of April 1999, the NATO Commander in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁷ was given full authority to coordinate NATO's assistance to that country and to establish a forward headquarters in Albania, in coordination with the Albanian authorities and the UNHCR, in order to assess the humanitarian situation and provide support. The North Atlantic Council also tasked the NATO Military Authorities to undertake further planning to this end. Subsequent assistance included the provision of emergency accommodation and building of refugee camps, and assisting humanitarian aid organisations by providing transport and other forms of help including the distribution of food and aid. NATO countries provided financial and other support to Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁷ and gave reassurances that they would respond to any challenges to their security by Yugoslavia stemming from the presence of NATO forces and their activities on their territories.

NATO Heads of State and Government in Washington set out their vision for achieving lasting peace, stability and future prosperity, based on increasing

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integration of the countries in the region into the European mainstream, working hand in hand with other international institutions towards these goals. They established a process of individual consultations and discussions between the 19 NATO countries and the countries of the region and undertook to promote regional cooperation within the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). They also agreed to use the resources of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) to provide more direct and focused assistance in addressing their security concerns. The Alliance welcomed related measures being taken in other forums, including the European Union proposal to convene a conference on a stability pact for South Eastern Europe at the end of May 1999. The Alliance also recognised that the G7 group of countries and financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund would play a vital role in the process of reconstruction following the end of the Kosovo crisis.

The situation in Kosovo is closely monitored by the North Atlantic Council. At Ministerial meetings held in May 2000, NATO countries reaffirmed their determination to play a full part in meeting the aims of the international community, as set out in UNSCR 1244, to work towards a peaceful, multiethnic, multicultural and democratic Kosovo in which all its people can enjoy universal rights and freedoms. NATO Foreign Ministers expressed strong support for the work being undertaken by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the UN Secretary General's Special Representative and for the continuing high level of cooperation between UNMIK and KFOR. They also reaffirmed their determination to ensure that KFOR force levels and capabilities will be maintained at the levels required by the challenges it will face. These include maintaining a secure environment in a still unsettled Kosovo, discouraging and preventing ethnic violence, providing security and protection for all minorities, assisting the return of refugees, whether of Albanian, Serb, or other communities, and supporting the OSCE in the conduct of free, fair and safe elections.

In spring 2001, following violent clashes on the border with Kosovo, involving forces of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁸ and ethnic Albanian extremist groups reportedly based on Kosovo, KFOR initiated additional actions including increased ground and aerial patrols, anti-smuggling operations, and search and seizure operations. Reconnaissance and surveillance flights were also increased, as were intelligence gathering efforts.

8 Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE KOSOVO AREA AND KFOR ASSISTANCE FOR HUMANITARIAN CAUSES

The creation of conditions in which the underlying political problems of Kosovo can be resolved is a challenging and long-term task. Given the scale of the growing humanitarian crisis that faced Kosovo in the spring of 1999 and the destruction and violence directed by the Milosevic government in Belgrade, the situation has improved greatly. There is still a long way to go but the facts and figures below represent a solid list of achievements which are paving the way for the future stability of the province and the security of the region as a whole.

The findings of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission, which was sent to Kosovo from January to March 1998, pointed to organised and systematic atrocities carried out by Serb and Yugoslav forces against Albanian communities. Expulsions, arbitrary arrests and killings and other human rights violations and methods of intimidation were already in evidence. The Mission's report found that violations were committed on both sides of the ethnic divide during the conflict but that the suffering was overwhelmingly on the Kosovo Albanian side at the hands of the Yugoslav and Serbian military and security apparatus. The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has reported that some 526 mass graves have been identified in Kosovo and more than 4 000 bodies exhumed. A further 300 sites are being investigated.

Refugees

The scale of the problem involved in the relocation of displaced persons and refugees in Kosovo has been a major concern. By the beginning of April 1999, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees estimated that the campaign of ethnic cleansing had resulted in 226 000 refugees in Albania, 125 000 in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁹, and 33 000 in Montenegro. By the end of May 1999, over 230 000 refugees had arrived in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁹, over 430 000 in Albania and some 64 000 in Montenegro. Approximately 21 500 refugees had reached Bosnia and over 61 000 had been evacuated to other countries. An estimated 1.5 million people, i.e. 90 percent of the population of Kosovo, had been expelled from their homes and within Kosovo itself, some 580 000 people had been rendered homeless. Approximately 225 000 Kosovar men were believed to be missing and as many as 5 000 Kosovars executed.

9 Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Assistance given by NATO forces to alleviate the refugee situation included providing equipment and building camps to house 50 000 refugees in Albania; assistance in expanding camps in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹⁰; providing medical support and undertaking emergency surgery; transporting refugees to safety; and providing transport for humanitarian aid and supplies.

NATO forces flew in many thousands of tons of food and equipment into the area. By the end of May 1999, over 4 666 tons of food and water, 4 325 tons of other goods, 2 624 tons of tents and nearly 1 600 tons of medical supplies had been transported to the area.

Positive progress has been made with regard to returns. Approximately 1 300 000 refugees and displaced persons, from inside Kosovo and abroad, have been able to return to their homes and villages. However some 200 000 Kosovar Serbs and up to 40 000 people from other minorities are still displaced within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In May 2000, a Joint Committee on Returns (JCR) was established to explore ways and means for the safe and sustainable return especially of Kosovar Serb residents. KFOR, the United Nations Mission to Kosovo (UNMIK), and other international organisations have helped to coordinate and support resettlement activities, within their means and capabilities, and to limit the potential for ethnic violence. KFOR forces have increased their presence in minority enclaves to provide more security in the wake of localised violence against Kosovo Serbs and other minorities.

Reconstruction

In June 1999 there were more than 128 000 damaged and destroyed houses in Kosovo. By 31 January 2001, about 18 000 houses had been reconstructed, with more than 8 000 are still under construction. Activity has also focused on repair and renovation of the electrical power system, restoration of roads and railroads and the reparation of bridges.

Medical assistance

Medical assistance has been another major sphere of activity for KFOR, with over 50 000 civilian patients receiving treatment annually.

¹⁰ Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Security

Kosovo today is a vastly different place from the Kosovo that KFOR found when it arrived in the province in June 1999. Its capital, Pristina, is now a bustling centre of cars, traffic, commerce and open shops, as are other major towns. Most citizens of Kosovo enjoy a measure of security and normal life that has been denied to them for years. Continuous efforts are made to make Kosovo safe for all. KFOR conducts up to 800 patrols every day, guards over 550 key sites and mans over 250 vehicle checkpoints. On any single day, two out of three KFOR soldiers are deployed in security operations.

One of the highest priorities for KFOR is improving security for the ethnic minorities. Over 50 percent of its manpower is engaged in the protection of minority (mainly Serb) populations in Kosovo. This includes guarding individual homes and villages, transporting people to schools and shops, patrolling, monitoring checkpoints, protecting sites and assisting the local people. KFOR forces have also been deployed in Mitrovica to ensure security on either side of the river Ibar.

There has been a significant reduction in incidents of accidents involving unexploded ordinance, including mines and cluster bombs, due to the work being undertaken by civilian demining companies working under contract to United Nations Mine Action and Coordination Centres as well as KFOR.

Border controls

KFOR continues to control the border area, using a combination of foot, vehicle and helicopter patrols to man eight crossing points and to support the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) at four others, as well as providing aerial surveillance.

KFOR is constantly engaged in border security tasks. Vehicles are thoroughly searched or subjected to document checks and random searches at border crossings. Close coordination is maintained with border guards on both sides and with UNMIK border police and customs officials at most official border and boundary crossings.

Following the escalation of border violence in spring 2001, NATO authorities successfully brokered a cease fire on 12 March 2001. The North Atlantic Council subsequently decided to implement a phased and conditioned reduction of the Ground Safety Zone (GSZ) around Kosovo as provided for by the Military Technical Agreement, based on the plan submitted by the new Yugoslav government under President Kostunica (Covic Plan).

Civil Implementation

In June 1999, there were no civil structures and no administrative services in Kosovo. By contrast, all executive, legislative and judicial structures have now been integrated into Joint Integrated Administrative Structures (JIAS). Of the 19 administrative departments to be established under the JIAS, the first four were set up in February 2000 and others have been gradually set up since.

On 2 February 2000, the Kosovar Albanian leader, Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, formally announced the dissolution of the so-called shadow government and associated structures. The President of the Parliament, Mr. Idriz Ajeti, confirmed the dissolution.

The expanded Kosovo Transitional Council held its second session on 16 February 2000 with 28 members in attendance, including the Catholic bishop. Administrators have since been appointed in all 29 municipalities. Budgets have been allocated for all core local government activities. In October 2000, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) played an important role in the planning of municipal elections, including voter registration, under security arrangements provided by KFOR, in coordination with UNMIK, to protect freedom of movement in the area.

The elections were conducted without major incident, resulting in victory for the moderate Democratic League of Kosovo party (LDK), led by Dr. Rugova. Together with the outcome of the December 2000 Serbian elections, in which the Democratic Opposition of Serbia Party (DOS), led by Vojislav Kostunica, succeeded in overthrowing the regime of former President Milosevic, this is expected to have far reaching political implications throughout the region.

Law and Order

In June 1999, when KFOR arrived in Kosovo the weekly murder rate was 50. By spring 2000 the figure had dropped to 7 per week, comparable with many large European cities. Much of the violence can now be attributed to criminal activities, as opposed to acts motivated by ethnic hatred. Such acts nevertheless continue to take place. However an important part of KFOR resources continues to be engaged in patrolling and manning checkpoints and protecting patrimonial sites, as part of the process of restoring law and order.

The Kosovo Police Service (KPS) established by the OSCE and committed to fair and impartial law enforcement for the population as a whole, now has some 3 100 active police and is beginning to contribute significantly to the establishment of law and order. The goal for 2001 is to achieve a force level of

4 000 active Kosovo police. This is a significant step towards self-sufficiency and one that should lead to reduced dependence on the UNMIK Police.

International assistance is also helping to rebuild the judicial and penal system, including the appointment of a substantial number of international judges.

Rotation of Headquarters Staff

The Kosovo Force comes under the overall command of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).

Operational command of KFOR was initially assumed by the Allied Command Europe (ACE) Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), which is the land component of the ACE Rapid Reaction Forces. It subsequently passed to Headquarters Allied Land Forces Central Europe (LANDCENT), a Principal Subordinate Command under the former Subordinate Command known as Allied Forces Central Europe (AFCENT).

In April 2000, operational command of KFOR passed from Allied Forces Central Europe (LANDCENT) to the 5-nation Eurocorps¹¹. This was in line with the agreement reached between the nations contributing to the Eurocorps and NATO as a whole, that the corps could be made available to support operations under NATO command. Operational command passed to AFSOUTH in early 2001. In April 2001, NATO's Northern region HQ (Regional Command North) takes over operational command of the force.

11 Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Spain.

