



Atlantic Treaty Association
Association du Traité Atlantique

NATO Summit Declaration, Istanbul 2004

Our security in a new era

Declaration:

Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Istanbul (28 Jun. 2004)

We, the Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance, meet today in Istanbul to renew our commitment to collective defence, and to address together NATO's response to the security challenges we face at the beginning of the 21st century.

NATO embodies the vital partnership between Europe and North America. Our Alliance is founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Those values, rooted in the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Washington Treaty, underlie the unique character of the transatlantic link.

We celebrate NATO's critical role in fostering the spread of freedom throughout Europe. Today, we welcome seven new members. Their participation in this Summit demonstrates that we remain committed to a Europe whole, free and at peace. We pledge again that our Alliance remains open to all European democracies, regardless of geography, willing and able to meet the responsibilities of membership, and whose inclusion would enhance overall security and stability in Europe.

Collective defence remains the core purpose of the Alliance. But the threats that NATO faces have changed substantially. We remain committed to address vigorously the threats facing our Alliance, taking into account that they emanate from a far wider area than in the past. They include terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. North America and Europe face these threats together. NATO is engaged in fighting terrorism, strengthening security and building stability in many regions in the world. Now as ever, unity within the Alliance is essential, and the principle of the indivisibility of Allied security is fundamental. We are determined to address effectively the threats to our territory, forces and populations from wherever they may come.

The Alliance is adapting to meet these security challenges through its military operations and activities, its engagement with partners and its continued transformation of military capabilities.

Today, we have approved a major expansion of NATO's role in Afghanistan in support of the Afghan Authorities. We will commit the resources needed to make this mission a success.

NATO is also leading military operations in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, and supporting Poland's leadership of the Multinational Division in Iraq. We have also issued a separate statement on Iraq.

The decision to end NATO's nine year mission in Bosnia marks its success in ending the war and keeping the peace in that country. We welcome the decision of the European Union to mount a new operation in Bosnia, and look forward to continued cooperation.



NATO continues to build closer cooperation on common security concerns with the European Union and with states in Europe, including Russia, Ukraine and the states of Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as with states of the Mediterranean and the Broader Middle East. Today, we have taken decisions aimed at strengthening these relationships further in order to cooperate effectively in addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

NATO is transforming its military capabilities in order to adapt to the changing strategic environment. The new command structure, the NATO Response Force, and the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Defence battalion are progressing. Together, they give NATO much stronger and faster military capabilities. But transformation is a process, not an event. We are therefore committed to continued transformation and to further strengthen our operational capabilities and procedures so that our forces are more deployable and usable. To this end, we invite the Secretary General and the North Atlantic Council in permanent session to take the steps necessary to ensure that the transformation process is fully implemented, and to report to us at the next NATO Summit.

The North Atlantic Alliance has confronted challenge and change throughout its history, yet has always proved resilient in adapting to new situations. As we face a new era of danger and hope, NATO remains our vital multilateral bridge across the Atlantic, complementing a common political approach with its military capabilities. We renew our commitment to consult, deliberate and act together as Allies. We are confident that NATO will remain our indispensable instrument in defending our freedom and security.