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NATO's Evolution: A Selected Chronology from the Fall of the Berlin Wall to the Madrid Summit 1989-1997

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Summary

Today's NATO is different in many ways from the alliance that existed prior to the November 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall. This chronology records some significant developments affecting the dual processes of NATO enlargement and adaptation from that time until the July 8-9, 1997 NATO summit meeting in Madrid, Spain.

1989

Nov. 9-10 Berlin Wall is breached. Widespread demonstrations and demands for political reform in East Germany result in lifting of travel restrictions to the West and the establishment of new crossing points into the Federal Republic of Germany.

1990

March 11 Lithuanian Parliament votes to regain its independence by breaking away from the Soviet Union.

March 26 Government of Czechoslovakia orders border installations dismantled along its frontiers with Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany.

July 6 NATO Heads of State and Government, meeting in London, publish the "London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance" initiating a study of NATO's rationale in view of changing European circumstances.

- July 17 'Two Plus Four' Conference in Paris concludes with agreement on conditions governing German unification.
- Oct. 3 NATO welcomes united Germany as a full member of the Alliance on the day of German unification.
- Nov. 19 The 22 member states of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization, meeting at the summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Paris, sign the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and publish a Joint Declaration on non-aggression.
- Nov. 21 Heads of State and Government of the CSCE publish the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and sign the Vienna Document on Confidence and Security-Building Measures.

1991

- June 25 Slovenian and Croatian Parliaments proclaim independence from Yugoslavia. Conflict results when the Yugoslav federal army attempts to reestablish control over the breakaway republics.
- July 1 The Warsaw Pact is formally disbanded.
- Aug. 19 Soviet President Gorbachev is removed from office in a coup and replaced by an "emergency committee." NATO warns the Soviet Union that if it abandons reform there will be serious consequences. Programs for Western aid are suspended.

Russian President Yeltsin calls for a general strike as loyalist tanks flying Russian flags are positioned by the Russian parliament building.
- Aug. 21 President Gorbachev returns to Moscow as the 19 August coup collapses and its leaders are arrested.
- Sept. 27 U.S. President Bush announces sweeping cuts in U.S. nuclear weapons including the removal of nuclear cruise missiles from submarines and warships and the destruction of all U.S. ground-launched tactical nuclear missiles. Bush asks the Soviet Union to make cuts as well.
- Oct. 6 The Foreign Ministers of Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, meeting in Cracow, express their desire to be included in NATO activities.

President Gorbachev announces the removal of all tactical nuclear weapons from submarines, land-based naval aircraft, and ships as well as the abolition of Soviet short-range nuclear weapons.
- Nov. 7-8 NATO Heads of State and Government meeting in Rome, Italy, issue the Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation and publish the Alliance's new Strategic Concept.

Dec. 9-10 Heads of State and Government of the European Community (EC), meeting in Maastricht, The Netherlands, reach agreement over the Treaty on European Union (EU). The EU consists of three pillars: an expanded and strengthened EC, including provisions for the establishment of a single European Currency, a common foreign security policy, and a common internal security measure.

Western European Union (WEU) member states invite EU members to become observers or accede to the WEU, and other European members of NATO to become associate members of the WEU.

Dec. 20 NATO Foreign Ministers and Representatives of 9 Central and East European countries attend the inaugural meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), a forum for consultations between NATO and non-NATO European countries.

The Soviet Union is effectively dissolved.

1992

March 3 President Izetbegovic proclaims Bosnia-Herzegovina's independence from Yugoslavia.

April 2 UN Security Council recommends the full deployment of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) to be stationed in Serb populated areas in Croatia for patrolling four UN Protected Areas (UNPAs) or buffer zones between Croatian and Serb forces.

June 4 NATO Foreign Ministers, meeting in Oslo, Norway, announce that NATO will give conditional support for peacekeeping activities under the responsibility of the CSCE on a case-by-case basis.

Sept. 2 The North Atlantic Council agrees to make Alliance resources available to support efforts of the UN, CSCE and EU to bring about peace in the former Yugoslavia, including protection of humanitarian relief and support for the UN monitoring of heavy weapons.

Oct. 1 U.S. Senate gives its advice and consent to ratification of the START Treaty which cuts U.S. and Russian nuclear forces by one-third.

Nov. 9 CFE Treaty enters into force.

1993

Jan. 1 The Republic of Slovakia and the Czech Republic become independent states.

April 3-4 The first U.S.- Russian Summit between Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin is held in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Oct. 4 Troops loyal to President Yeltsin storm the headquarters of the Russian Parliament with tanks and machine gun fire. This ends the occupation of the headquarters by parliamentarians opposing Yeltsin's reform program.

1994

Jan. 10-11 Alliance Heads of State and Government meeting in Brussels, launch Partnership for Peace (PfP). All NACC partner countries and CSCE states capable and willing to participate are invited. The leaders endorse the concept of Combined Joint Task Forces Headquarters to give NATO greater flexibility in future deployments of allied forces and support development of a European Security and Defense Identity in the Alliance.

April 22 North Atlantic Council agrees on the use of air power to protect UN personnel in Bosnia-Herzegovina and UN designated safe areas. The Council threatens air strikes unless all Bosnian Serb heavy weapons are withdrawn by April 27 from all UN designated safe areas.

June 22 Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, visiting NATO Headquarters, signs a PfP Framework Document and holds discussions with the Council.

Aug. 13 NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner dies in Brussels.

Sept. 8 U.S., U.K., and France withdraw their remaining Allied troops from Berlin.

Oct. 17 Willy Claes, former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, replaces Manfred Wörner as Secretary General of NATO.

Dec. 5-6 CSCE Heads of State and Government, meeting in Budapest, rename CSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

1995

Aug. 30 NATO launches "Operation Deliberate Force," a series of air attacks on Bosnian Serb targets across Bosnia. NATO Secretary General Claes indicates that the attacks are designed to bring the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table.

Sept. 20 NATO's North Atlantic Council approves the study on the extension of the Atlantic Alliance to Central and Eastern European countries.

Oct. 21 Willy Claes resigns as NATO Secretary General.

Nov. 21 Negotiations in Dayton, Ohio result in a peace agreement for Bosnia.

Nov. 28 NATO Defense Ministers and Russian Defense Minister, General Pavel Grachev, meeting in Brussels, agree on the arrangement providing for

Russian participation in the Implementation Force (IFOR) under U.S. as opposed to NATO command.

- Dec. 5 NATO Foreign and Defense Ministers, meeting in Brussels, approve the SACEUR's operational plan "Joint Endeavor" for the implementation of the Dayton peace agreement.

France returns to the non-integrated military bodies of the Alliance. France says it will take part regularly in NATO's Military Committee and in the other work of the Alliance except for the Nuclear Planning Group.

NATO foreign ministers appoint the former Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Javier Solana, as the ninth Secretary General of NATO.

- Dec. 14 Paris conference for signing the Dayton agreements on Bosnia. Presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia endorse the Dayton peace agreement for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Hungarian Parliament approves the temporary stationing of NATO troops in Hungary in support of the IFOR mission.

- Dec. 18 First American troops arrive in Bosnia. The transfer of command from UNPROFOR to IFOR is complete.

1996

- June 3 NATO Foreign Ministers, meeting in Berlin, Germany agree that a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) would be accommodated within NATO allowing European officers in the NATO structure to occupy command positions in a parallel Western European Union (WEU) structure. It is agreed that NATO structure and assets could be made available for future military operations of the WEU. French officials suggest that implementation of the Berlin reform package would lead to full French military participation in a "new NATO."

- Sept. 27 Defense Ministers of NATO countries, meeting in Bergen, Norway, agree that IFOR forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina should remain fully operational until the end of December after which a follow-up force with a new mandate would be necessary.

- Nov. 16 Spanish Parliament endorses the decision of the Government of Spain to take the steps necessary to integrate Spain into NATO's military structure.

- Dec. 4 The Heads of State and Government of the 55 members of the OSCE meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, sign the "Lisbon Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe."

- Dec. 10 In Brussels, NATO Foreign Ministers agree to convene a NATO summit in Madrid in July 1997 to invite "one or more" candidates to join NATO.

Dec.17-18 NATO Defense Ministers meet to review progress on reform of NATO command structures, creation of Combined Joint Task Force Headquarters, and plans for transition from the Implementation Force (IFOR) to the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia.

Dec. 20 SFOR, with an 18-month mandate, takes over from IFOR in Bosnia.

1997

Jan. 20 NATO Secretary General Javier Solana and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov open talks on NATO-Russia relations.

Feb. 18 U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, participating in a special meeting of the North Atlantic Council, proposes the creation of a NATO-Russia council and NATO-Russia peace-keeping brigade.

March 7 Secretary of Defense William Cohen, in consultations at NATO Headquarters, confirms US intention to withdraw US forces from Bosnia at the end of the SFOR mandate in June 1998.

March 20-21 Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin, meeting in Helsinki, Finland, make progress on Russia-NATO relationship issues.

May 27 “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between NATO and the Russian Federation” is signed in Paris by Russian President Yeltsin and NATO leaders, including US President Clinton.

May 28-30 NATO Foreign Ministers, meeting in Sintra, Portugal, announce creation of a “Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council” as a consultative framework to accompany an enhanced PfP program and replace the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC).

June 12-13 NATO Defense Ministers meet in Portugal but are unable to resolve differences over new command structure arrangements. Secretary of Defense Cohen announces that the United States has firmly decided to support just three candidates (Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary) for the first round of NATO enlargement.

June 16-17 European Union leaders conclude new treaty charting future of EU. Summit marked by serious disagreements and modest steps toward further integration. (Enlargement talks with candidates to begin in six months.)

June 20-22 Group of Eight (G-7 plus Russia) summit held in Denver.

July 8-9 NATO Heads of State and Government meeting in Madrid, Spain invite the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to begin accession talks, declare NATO enlargement a continuing process, note that Romania and Slovenia are well placed for the next round, and mark progress toward NATO internal reform. They fail to complete work on NATO command structure

reform. France decides reform of NATO to date is insufficient to warrant its full participation in NATO's integrated command structure.

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