

IMI-Analyse 2003/007, ISSN 1611-213X

Preemptive Wars

The summit in Prague as a milestone in NATO's history

by Tobias Pflüger

Hechingerstr. 203
72072 Tübingen
Tel 07071/ 49154
Fax 07071/ 49159
imi@imi-online.de
www.imi-online.de
20.01.03

Already in February 2002 NATO secretary-general George Robertson has declared the NATO summit in Prague as a "historic milestone". The head of NATO's military commission, the German General Harald Kujat, added in November 2002. "With these summit NATO is at the crossroads". What does this refer to? What happened on the NATO summit in Prague? Directly and indirectly no less than six central topics for the future of the NATO had been on the agenda: 1. Discussion of the (partial) adoption of the Bush-Doctrine as NATO strategy. 2. NATO east expansion. 3. New tasks and new aims for the NATO. 4. Binding program for the armament of all NATO states. 5. Deployment of a "NATO Response Force" consisting of 21,000 men and women. 6. The posture of the NATO and the governments of its member countries. Furthermore: examination of NATO's role in the Balkans and the relations to non-NATO states.

One issue is not to be found on the agenda, it has already been adopted through the backdoor ahead of the summit: the scope of deployment shall be global in the future and no longer be limited to NATO territory. "Die Welt" a leading German conservative newspaper reported: "NATO prepares for missions all over the world". And the military journal IAP was even more outspoken: The real issue is the "geopolitical orientation towards the south".

The most substantial point of the NATO summit in Prague and for NATO's future was the debate whether the US military strategy, the National Security Strategy, more widely known as Bush-Doctrine, should become in its basic elements part of the NATO strategy. Wolfgang Schäuble, the opposition's expert for foreign politics, has stipulated in the German parliament the adoption of the NSS and the acceptance of preemptive wars. What this really means isn't

clear for many people. This means that the two main elements of the BUSH-Doctrine will become a binding of NATO's strategy: The leading of the preemptive wars, if the governments feel that their hegemony is threatened and very low barriers regarding the use of atomic bombs.

NATO east expansion

After in a first round in 1999, Hungary, Czechia and Poland had been admitted to NATO - now in Prague, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia were invited. The Admission itself shall follow in May 2004. Albania, Macedonia and Croatia had participated in the "Membership Action Plan", too. This is primarily a program to test the NATO-compatibility of the armies. The assurance of the candidates to plan a significant rise in military expenditures and a review of too obvious human rights and democracy deficits - as far as possible. 'According to the former NATO-General Wesley Clark the new NATO candidates would also participate in the possible Iraq-war. He expects the beginning of this war by late January and the participation of Italy, Spain, the United States, Great Britain, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

After September 11 NATO had clearly lost relevance. The proclaimed permanent war of the western governments under US-leadership (officially called "war on terrorism") is executed by ad-hoc-coalitions. NATO wasn't needed for this with only a single exception: after 9/11 NATO proclaimed that whole association is now in a state of war because one of its members had been attacked. NATO general-secretary George Robertson therefore insisted - in accordance with the most important NATO-governments - that NATO should commit itself to new tasks and goals: The Alliance shall de-

velop into some sort of a "New Anti-Terror-Organisation" (NATO), with a worldwide scope. As a further central goal NATO shall stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in other states. Normally for such an enormous change in the tasks of the Alliance there had to be a new strategic concept, but because the latest one of 1999 is too fresh to produce a new one, the new tasks of the alliance are "adapted" to the new situation.

Armament programmes

The NATO-secretary general saw a widening gap between the military capabilities of the United States and the European NATO-states before the Prague summit. Therefore now in Prague a new armament programme was decided. "We have to develop more flexible and mobile forces. The rapid deployability of some parts of the troops to all parts of the world has to be improved", said Robertson to the German newspaper *die Welt*. The following areas shall be significantly upgraded in all states: "Defense against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks, maintenance of the superiority in the areas of command, control and intelligence capabilities, improvement of the interoperability of dislocated troops and central aspects of the performance in combat missions and assurance of the fast deployability and the longer term perseverance of the forces." In clear words this means an improved capability to fight wars and significant rise regarding the qualitative level of armament. NATO will pressure all member states to provide more combat troops with more equipment suitable for war-fighting.

This will go hand in hand with a significant boost of the military budgets and means for the Bundeswehr and other NATO armies an increased build up of troops capable for war-fighting (rapid reaction forces).

NATO-intervention troop

Ahead of the Prague summit the US-government had gained much attention as they demanded the build up of a NATO intervention troop (NATO-Response force NRF) with 21.000 men and women, which has been consensually accepted now. This troop shall be partially ready for combat in October 2004 and fully from 2006 on. It is to be composed of a NRF-pool of troops which are to be made available by the NATO-countries and shall be deployable within very short term, from about seven to thirty days, into war and crisis regions. The US-government and especially Donald Rumsfeld had declared the success of this stand by intervention troop

as some kind of test for the relevance of the alliance. For Germany there are special problems with such a short term notice because the Bundestag has (yet) to decide over every foreign deployment. The NATO-troop serves those who want to abolish this right of the parliament and suddenly the "Entsendegesetz" with which the Bundestag will be circumvented and which had been prevented in the coalition negotiations, is on the agenda again.

The central political problem for the chiefs of the EU-governments is the obvious competition of the NRF to the planned EU-intervention troop, consisting of 60.000 men. Just ahead of the NATO-summit EU had emphasised that operability of the EU-troop should be reached 2003. Germany is playing a quantitatively (a third from Germany) crucial role and has an important place within the command structure (the "Einsatzführungskommando" in Potsdam-Geltow is "the heart of a operational headquarter of the European Union.").

But there are significant problems: The EU-troop has to use NATO-equipment and NATO-troops. But within NATO Turkey blocks this and Greece doesn't want a Turkish right to a say in the EU-troop. That's not enough: From the 15. December the EU should for the first time take over a stationed NATO-troop in Macedonia. But this doesn't work because of the controversy between Greece and Turkey. The French government wanted to commission the EU-Macedonia mandate for a full year. But Germany, Great Britain and the other EU-NATO-states prevailed so that there is only a half-year NATO-mandate once again. One thing is obvious: The NRF is going ahead, while the EU-troop has significant problems.

Translation: Claudia Haydt

Tobias Pflüger is in the board of directors of the Informationsstelle Militarisierung

<p>IMI-Spendenkonto: Kreissparkasse Tübingen BLZ 641 500 20</p>
--