

## Multinational Staff Officer Center – Training in accordance with NATO standards

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*Ukraine since its independence made considerable progress in finding its place in the international community. Ukraine's relations with NATO have been evolving with increasing intensity, expanding to new levels and fields of cooperation (Charter on a Distinctive Partnership, NATO Information and Documentation Center in Kyiv, Ukraine's Mission to NATO, NATO Liaison Office in Kyiv).*

*International cooperation on conflict management and peacekeeping contribution is one of the strongest commitments of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Expanding cooperation between NATO and Ukraine and the active participation of Ukrainian Armed Forces in international peace support operations necessitated the establishment of the Multinational Staff Officer Center (MSOC).*

*The Center's education and training increase the readiness of Ukrainian officers and improve Ukrainian units' performance, and enhance interoperability between Ukraine and NATO. The Center plays a major role in developing dedicated, intelligent and competent Ukrainian peacekeeping personnel. The qualified staff, supported by the Ukrainian military is capable of conducting training in accordance with NATO standards.*

### Introduction

Ukraine became an independent state at the end of 1991. The twin enlargements of NATO and the European Union in March and May 2004 reshaped Europe's security landscape and changed Ukraine's geostrategic position and role. With a total population of 48 million and directly bordering on the NATO and EU area, the country is of strategic importance. Ukraine now borders 4 NATO member states (Poland, Slovak Republic, Hungary and Romania). Ukraine's total boundaries are 4,663 km, the coastline itself is 2,782 km, and its borders with the above-mentioned countries total 1,257 km.<sup>1</sup> Ukraine shares the longest border in Europe (1,576 km) with NATO's other important strategic partner, Russia. It also has common borders with Belarus (891 km)

<sup>1</sup> Detailed information on Ukraine's geographical location and statistical data on its boundaries are available on the following website: <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/up.html>

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and Moldova (939 km). Since 1st May 2004 Ukraine has shared borders not only with NATO, but also with the European Union (Poland, Slovakia and Hungary).

Ukraine has made considerable progress in finding its place in the international community. Relations between NATO and Ukraine began to develop soon after the country became independent. Ukraine's relations with NATO have been evolving with increasing intensity, expanding to new levels and fields of cooperation. Ukraine immediately joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and has been its an active participant. In 1994, Ukraine joined the Partnership for Peace Programme. The Ukrainian Parliament ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in February 1994, clearing the way for closer ties with the West. Accordingly, in June 1996, Ukraine announced the removal from its territory of the last of the strategic nuclear warheads it had inherited from the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> Following independence, Ukraine maintained that it was a non-aligned, neutral state and was not seeking membership in NATO.

The year 1997 was marked by three memorable events: the signing of the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership at the NATO-Ukraine summit in Madrid in July; the establishment of the NATO Information and Documentation Center in Kyiv in May – the first ever in the history of the Alliance; and the opening among the first partner nations of Ukraine's Mission to NATO in October.

The Charter was designed to promote political dialogue and practical cooperation, through a more proactive NATO role in pursuing NATO-Ukraine cooperation.<sup>3</sup> In the Charter, the NATO Allies reaffirmed their support for Ukrainian sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity, democratic development and economic prosperity. NATO also welcomed Ukraine's decision to support the indefinite extension of the NPT and its contribution to the withdrawal and dismantlement of the nuclear weapons which were based on its territory. Areas of cooperation covered a broad range of issues, such as: civil emergency planning, disaster preparedness, civil-military relations and democratic control of the armed forces; Ukrainian defence reform, defence planning,

<sup>2</sup> Nuclear warheads located on Ukrainian territory formed an essential part of the country's strategic importance. 176 intercontinental ballistic missiles from the Soviet arsenal were stationed at the Pervomaisk and Dyerezhnaya bases. The Soviet strategic air force had 41 atomic bombers on the airfields of Poltava and Priluki, which were capable of targeting 600 nuclear devices. Nuclear warheads were a major issue for the Ukrainian political and military leadership. Their possession would have made Ukraine the third nuclear power in the world. In signing the Lisbon Protocol in May 1992, Ukraine became party to the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) as successor to the former USSR, and committed itself in that Protocol to adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon state "in the shortest possible time."

<sup>3</sup> See Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine Madrid, 9 July 1997 <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/ukrchrt.htm>

budgeting, policy, strategy and national security concepts; and NATO-Ukraine military cooperation and interoperability.

One of the many results of this cooperation was the creation in Kyiv of the NATO Information and Documentation Center, under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in May 1997, the first of its kind within any Partner country. The inauguration of the NATO Liaison Office in Kyiv in April 1999 was another positive step in the Ukraine-NATO partnership towards practical cooperation.

A visit to Ukraine by the North Atlantic Council in March 2000 injected new momentum into the Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine established in Madrid. The NATO-Ukraine Commission's meeting in Kyiv – the first time this body met in Ukraine – was an occasion for NATO allies and Ukraine to review the full range of their cooperation. Other positive developments included the ratification by the Ukraine Parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, on 2 March 2000, of the Partnership for Peace Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and its Additional Protocol, and the Open Skies Treaty. In May 2002 Ukraine officially declared that it aspired to join NATO. The adoption of the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan and the NATO-Ukraine Target plan for 2003 at the Prague Summit marked a new stage in the implementation of plans for Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine. The NATO-Ukraine Action Plan is basically a long-term programme with the aim of meeting European standards not only in defence but also in political, economic and legal spheres and security issues. The document outlines strategic and medium-term objectives and Ukraine's priorities on its way to Euro-Atlantic integration.

In April 2005 the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) Foreign Ministers launched the Intensified Dialogue Initiative on Ukraine's Membership Aspirations and Related Reforms, which was the first recognition by the Alliance of Ukraine's membership prospects, and introduced a package of short-term actions<sup>4</sup> designed to enhance cooperation in dealing with Ukraine's most urgent reform needs (strengthening of democratic institutions, renewing political dialogue, cooperation in defence and security sector reform, enhancing and targeting public diplomacy efforts, and managing the social and economic consequences of reform).

At the NATO – Ukraine Commission in Sofia on April 28th 2006 Ukraine declared to remain committed to its goal of becoming a NATO member in 2008, and hoped that by the end of this year the country was to receive the invitation to join MAP. Ukraine has to achieve a lot in order for this to happen, primarily in changing the country's present public opinion on NATO.

<sup>4</sup> See Enhancing NATO-Ukraine Cooperation Short-term Actions  
<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2005/p050421e.htm>

### **Ukraine's peacekeeping activities**

Ukraine began participating in Peacekeeping in 1992. Over the past few years about 28,000 Ukrainian peacekeepers have taken part in various peacekeeping activities all over the world. International cooperation on conflict management and peacekeeping contribution is one of the strongest commitments of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Ukraine contributed significantly to NATO peacekeeping activities in the Balkans in the framework of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR), and later contributed to the Stabilization Force (SFOR). Ukraine also made significant contributions to international peacekeeping activities by providing forces for the NATO-led force in Kosovo (KFOR). A Ukrainian unit was deployed in Iraq, as part of the Multinational Force in Iraq under Polish command.

Ukraine has been playing an increasing role in peacekeeping operations. NATO and Ukraine actively cooperate in maintaining security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. Today the Ukrainian Armed Forces are taking part in 10 peacekeeping missions in 9 countries (the UN Missions in Lebanon, in Liberia and in Sierra Leone; the NATO-led operation KFOR in Kosovo; there are Ukrainian military observers and staff officers with the OSCE in Georgia; the CPKF in Moldova, the MNF in Iraq etc.) Total Ukrainian military deployment around the world is 849 troops (February 2006). Ukraine actively supports NATO's operations and missions, including ISAF in Afghanistan, KFOR in Kosovo, and Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean. At the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the NATO-Ukraine Commission in December 2005, Ukrainian contributions to the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) and the Alliance's logistic support for the African Union in Darfur were discussed.<sup>5</sup>

### **Multinational Staff Officer Centre**

The active participation of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in the Partnership for Peace programme and the goal of achieving interoperability of Ukrainian military units with NATO forces operating together in Peace Support Operations have necessitated appropriate training of participants. In July 2000 the Multinational Staff Officer Courses (MSOC) were established at the National Defense Academy of Ukraine (UNDA) in order to prepare officers to take part in International Peacekeeping Operations. Expanding cooperation between NATO and Ukraine and the active participation of Ukrainian Armed Forces in International Peace Support Operations indicated the need

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2005/p05-159e.htm>

to develop a programme for raising the level of officers' pre-deployment preparation and training.

On 18th November 2003 the number of Multinational Staff Officer Courses increased, and the Multinational Staff Officer Center (MSOC), which took on a broader range of capabilities and missions, was founded as the educational unit of the Ukrainian National Defense Academy.

The MSOC mission is to provide relevant education and training support to national and partner military and civilian personnel in order to achieve endorsed PfP interoperability goals. The Center's goals are: to provide peacekeeping training to Ukrainian and foreign officers; to conduct pre-deployment training of key personnel, who in turn train other officers and soldiers; to train selected officers as staff officers and military observers; to provide methodological guidance, expertise and coordinated training activities.

The MSOC works in close cooperation with many international organizations and educational institutions in NATO countries.<sup>6</sup> These contacts provide an opportunity to invite the most experienced foreign instructors to teach MSOC instructors and allow them to exchange teaching materials with many institutions. The MSOC is very ably assisted by the NATO Liaison Office, the US Office of Defense Cooperation and the British Council in Ukraine. Representatives from international organizations such as the UN, the OSCE, the EU, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the NATO Defense College in Rome, the NATO School in Oberammergau (Germany), the Canadian International Peacekeeping Center of L. Pierson, the British Council in Kyiv, and the Military–Civil Relations Office of the US Navy Junior Scientific Assistant Office in Monterey (USA) participate in the MSOC educational processes.

In order to improve interoperability with NATO Forces in PSOs, MSOC instructors use NATO curricula, teaching materials and staff procedures. All classes are presented in English. All instructors have received education and training abroad and have experience in participation in different PSOs. Every year instructors visit similar foreign educational establishments, attend scientific conferences and seminars and take part in international exercises.

There are two conference rooms with a capacity of 40 seats per room in the MSOC. The PSO Gaming Facility includes a system of Brigade and Battalion CPs, supports the

<sup>6</sup> The MSOC maintains international relations with other institutions, just to name a few: Lester B. Pearson Peacekeeping Training Centre, Canada, <http://www.cdnpeacekeeping.ns.ca>; Air War College gateway to the Internet <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc-thry.htm>; The Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS) – US <http://nrdiils501.tripod.com/>; Royal Military College of Canada, Center for Civil-Military Relations Naval Postgraduate School – USA

staff and students with videoconference equipment and a computer network during computer training at all levels. This system also supports Command Post Exercises (CPEX). There are also 4 Computer-based classrooms, which are used as syndicate rooms, and 3 so-called “smart” classrooms for practical training of students, with a capacity of 10–15 seats for each classroom.

The courses, which range in length from 2 to 5 weeks, are: the Orientation Course, the Multinational Staff Officers Course, the Staff Officers and UN Liaison Officers Course, the United Nations Military Observer Course, the Logistics Course, the Peacekeeping Unit Interpreter Course, and the On-Board Interpreter Course. Each course is conducted in English and based on 3 main fields: English refreshment in close relation to the topic of the course, specific knowledge, and practical exercises and evaluations. For 2006 13 courses are planned, with the attendance of over 300 officers to be trained.

In December 2005 the Ukrainian Armed Forces and MSOC personnel participated for the first time in the multinational computer-assisted exercise VIKING 05. One of the remote sites of the multinational brigade was located in the Center. The aim of the exercise was to provide training to military commanders and their staffs to enable them to perform their duties while participating in PSO. During this exercise an advanced communications network was used which connected all participants situated in eight countries. The advanced simulation system provided a realistic scenario with real life events for all those taking part.

### **The way ahead**

The Center’s activities increase the readiness of Ukrainian officers and improve Ukrainian units’ performance, and enhance interoperability between Ukraine and NATO. Today it plays a major role in developing dedicated, intelligent and competent men and women who will go on to serve the Ukrainian nation in positions of greater responsibility. Military, civilian, and international officers from all military services and several government agencies come here to “study and confer” on the practical application of peacekeeping. Since 2000 the instructors of the MSOC have trained more than 1300 officers for participation in peace-support operations.

To achieve goals and objectives the MSOC is committed to becoming a NATO-recognized PFP Training Centre, conducting CPEXs using the Joint Conflict and Tactical Simulation (JCATS) programme during the training process, extending the number of courses according to the requirements of the Ukrainian Armed Forces General Staff and the Services, and training all categories of Ukrainian peacekeeping

personnel for their future assignments. The Center has also started to develop a Peacekeeping Distance Learning Course. This will provide effective training for units in their home garrisons and thus save resources.

The vision of the Center is to be a modern regional PfP Training Center with highly qualified professional staff, supported by the Ukrainian military and fully capable of accomplishing its assigned training and education missions.