

A U.S. Vision of Europe ¹

Lisa Bronson

Thank you very much for this kind introduction and welcome.

I want to begin by thanking the conference organizers for what has truly been a splendid effort. I'd like to thank the Ministry of Defense and the Government of Estonia for agreeing to host the Third Conference of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Consortium.

It has been a privilege to spend the last two days in your beautiful capital city. As I reflect upon the history of Tallinn, and Estonia as a whole, I am struck by how appropriate this site is for this conference. I think of the history of trade, invasion, and education. In the 15th and 16th centuries, Tallinn was a center of trade, salt and wine moving en route to Russia; bear hides, leather and linen moving from Russia to the west. This week Tallinn has reconnected with its rich history as a center of trade, but it has been a trade of ideas and techniques of teaching as seen in the working groups on Advanced Distributed Learning and Curriculum Development.

Estonia, like many other European countries, shares a history of invasion. This week representatives of Sweden, Denmark, Poland and Russia have returned to Estonia, but the invasion has not been an unwelcome one of force. Instead, it has been an invasion of shared values and a shared vision. A vision of a Europe that is whole and free. A vision of a "strategic community" built through education and research. As the working groups on Crisis Management in Southeastern Europe and European Security Defense Initiative (ESDI) wrestle with the creation of a more stable and integrated Europe, Estonia and the Baltic/Nordic region stand as shining examples that history does not have to repeat itself, if we are wise enough to accept its lessons and its counsel. Yesterday the European Union (EU) completed its summit in Feira. The US welcomes Europe's commitment to create, as has been described by the French Minister of Defense Richard, "the capability to develop the ability to put out fires in its own backyard." The Headline Goal, and now the new commitment to create a police force of over 5,000 officers for a range of international missions, will provide the capabilities Europe needs to secure a peaceful, stable, and prosperous future. The Consortium working group on this issue can provide an important forum for discussing how NATO and the EU can forge a co-operative partnership, in which NATO's Defense Capabilities Initiative and the EU's Headline Goal may reinforce one another, in pursuit of one single pool of more capable European forces.

In addition to a history of trade and invasion, Estonia has a historical commitment to education. I am reminded that Tartu University was founded in 1632 and included a teachers' seminar that helped to establish a national commitment to universal literacy

¹ The Consortium is delighted to publish in full, the text of the speech given on June 21, 2000 at its Third Annual Conference in Tallinn, Estonia, by Lisa Bronson, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs.

that became a standard for this region. Tomorrow that historical commitment to education will be renewed as the first class of the Baltic Defense College graduates.

I cannot think of a more fitting place than Tallinn, Estonia for the Third Conference of the Consortium. Last night as I watched the Estonian folk dancers and I was literally swept off my feet by my gallant and charming dance partner, I felt exhilarated and I felt a sense of celebration. Part of it is no doubt the power of the summer solstice. But there is a spiritual counterpart to the ever-present sunlight that we have experienced this week. The Consortium has evolved into a beacon of light that has the potential to illuminate the path to better understanding and cooperation between military and civil security experts in over 40 countries throughout the Euro-Atlantic Region.

You know the history of the Consortium. You've gone through it in the past few days here. In June 1998, a vision, a joint vision by my Secretary of Defense William Cohen and the German Defense Minister Volke Rühle, launched the idea of a three-part vision. It included: the Consortium; a PfP network of training centers; and a simulation network.

A number of countries have come together to make this a reality. Switzerland jumped right in, in October of 1998, and agreed with an enormous amount of flexibility and team spirit to modify its existing conference so that we could hold the first conference of the Consortium.

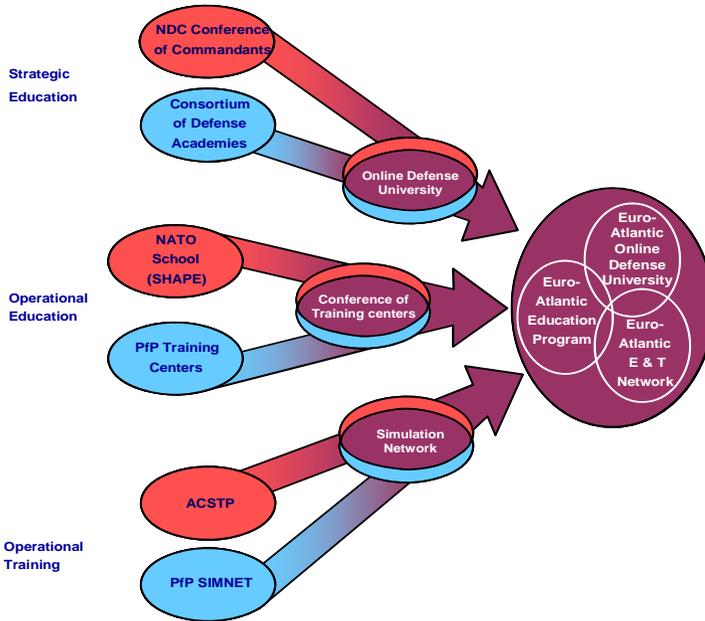
In April of 1999 at the Washington Summit, Sweden joined with Hungary and the Netherlands to create the first demonstration of a simulation network. It underscored the value of the ability to go ahead and train a large number of officers and staff, procedures at a distance, without having to leave their home stations.

In April of last year, the EAPC Ministers approved the PfP education and training program that includes the three initiatives that you see in blue: Consortium; PfP training; simulation (see illustration on the next page).

Last year, Bulgaria carried on the tradition by hosting the Second Conference, and I am pleased, as my Russian colleague has just announced, that Moscow will pick up the standard and carry on the tradition next year.

But you know the Consortium. You know what it has done. You've been an integral part of its working groups, of its web page, of its bulletin. But it's important to have a sense of the larger whole. And what I'd like to try to do in the next couple of moments is give you a sense of a vision for the larger whole, where the Consortium might fit in to a larger network of training and education institutions.

So how are the other pieces doing that were laid out in Volker Rühle and William Cohen's vision of two years ago? There are lots of different ways to describe what we do as we educate and train our military officers and our civilian defense officials. One way to look at it is to think in terms of three specific areas as laid out in this slide: strategic education; operational education; and operational training. There's overlap between the categories, but for the sake of developing categories this is a useful way, perhaps, to divide the areas of education and training. The Consortium has a counterpart in NATO, the NATO Defense College, which has recently become part of the creation of an online defense university, an online defense university that some day can come together and unite both the PfP Consortium and the NATO Defense College.



Each organization should continue in its individuality, but each can also contribute to what you see in the center as a larger Euro-Atlantic Defense University. Again the idea is one of integration, not the absorption of the various pieces, but the integration of the pieces to create a larger and more integrated co-operative whole.

In the area of operational education, the PfP training centers have simply flourished with partners like Sweden and allies like Turkey, countries like Bulgaria, the Ukraine, and many others, hosting PfP centers. These centers have helped to develop important skills in peace keeping, humanitarian assistance, and civil emergency planning. There is a NATO counterpart, as depicted in the middle of the slide, for operational education, and that is the NATO School at Oberammergau, where NATO staff procedures and multi-national joint logistics have most recently been taught, along with a whole range of other important staff skills. Recently the NATO military committee has called for the creation of an annual conference of PfP training centers. And we envision that this conference of training centers could be a way, for the training that takes place at the PfP training centers and the training that takes place at the NATO School at Oberammergau, to share experiences and to become a force multiplier for one another as they share their experiences and integrate their collective ways of approaching operational education.

Operational training is probably best illustrated by the PfP simulation network. NATO has its own work that has been done in parallel, the Allied Command Europe, Command and Staff Training Program, also organized along the principles of using

computer simulation and distributed learning as a way to go ahead and improve overall staff skills. One day we can envision the combination of these two efforts, so that you could have a high band width network to support the education, training and exercise needs of the Euro-Atlantic region. And a common thread for this effort would be the concept of Advanced Distributed Learning, which ties together lots of different forms of education and is the subject of one of your working groups here today.

Why the integration? And why the need to have a combination of integration but yet a preservation of some of the separateness? This is to allow the umbrella that covers a great variety of countries, to continue to be an all-encompassing umbrella. One of the benefits of Partnership for Peace, and one of the benefits of the Consortium, has been that you can accommodate many different nations with many different security needs. This includes: nations who are in the alliance; nations who want to come into the alliance; nations who have no desire to ever come into the alliance but, nonetheless, want to work together in a co-operative security network. Because while there are important differences, the umbrella under which they work, covers a common set of values, covers a common set of goals, a goal of a Europe that is free, that is prosperous and that is stable. These different pieces can come together to reinforce that goal.

Why integration? Why not leave them as separate entities? There are some very pragmatic reasons. First, for military effectiveness. This is good for academic learning, but it is also very effective when we have to work together in an operation like Kosovo Force (KFOR). Our shared values, and shared military understanding, combined with an ability to do simple things like speak English together, and use the same staff procedures at company and battalion levels, have allowed us to undertake KFOR, one of the best examples of co-operation between allies and partners. In fact, I will go so far as to say I cannot imagine another operation in the future, in Europe, that does not involve partners and that is not a combination of allies and partners. Because I believe that this is the way in the future that we will come to deal with crises and crises management, this network becomes even more important. Because this network becomes, and my Russian colleague used a very apt term, “the capillaries” or “the veins,” through which the blood of a common collective view of security and a common collective way of doing business, can flow, and thereby be shared.

In closing, this is a time of celebration. This is a time of reflection. But this is also a time to, once again, lift our eyes up towards the horizon, and on the longest day of the year, when we can see most clearly, begin to see a vision of an integrated education and network which can secure the peace, stability and prosperity of the entire Euro-Atlantic Region.

Thank you very much.