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Final Communiqué

**Ministerial Meeting Of The Defence Planning Committee
And The Nuclear Planning Group
Held In Brussels On Thursday, 9 June 2005**

9 June 2005

1. The Defence Planning Committee and Nuclear Planning Group met in Ministerial Session on 9 June 2005.
2. Our discussions centred on the outcome of the 2004/5 review of nations' defence plans and the extent to which nations will meet our collectively agreed force goals. We also issued guidance for an update of NATO force goals next year and looked forward to receiving these for approval in our meeting in June 2006.
3. Collectively, nations continue to improve the forces and capabilities necessary to fulfil the full range of Alliance missions and NATO's current level of ambition. However, these forces and capabilities are disproportionately distributed between Allies, and there are significant national variations in their quality: some are not well suited or structured for the full range of Alliance missions. Furthermore, many key enabling and support capabilities are in short supply and/or reside in only a few nations. We therefore need to increase our individual and collective efforts to ensure that the forces needed by the Alliance are available at the required readiness, in sufficient numbers and with the necessary capabilities to be able to carry out agreed tasks, wherever needed.
4. Allied forces remain heavily engaged in operations to ensure security and stability in many different theatres. At the same time we are working to establish Full Operational Capability of the NATO Response Force (NRF). The demands on our forces are increasing rather than diminishing. We must therefore endeavour to ensure that the forces required for operations and the NRF are available for, and capable of, meeting the tasks which they may be called upon to undertake. This remains the underlying theme of the ongoing transformation of the Alliance's capabilities, and underpins the continuing focus of our force planning on the quality and quantity of deployable and sustainable joint expeditionary capabilities. We reaffirm our collective and individual determination to overcome remaining shortfalls in critical capability areas.
5. Most Allies are now in the process of developing smaller, but more capable and usable forces. For the first time in recent years, over half of our nations are also projecting increases in defence funding, and most of the remainder expect at least to maintain current levels of expenditure, in real terms. However, in the face of increasing operational costs, defence budgets are still in many cases inadequate to meet the needs of the essential restructuring and modernisation. Most Allies have made progress in realigning force structures for modern requirements, but significant potential remains for restructuring and for reinvestment of defence funds in robust, usable expeditionary capabilities.
6. Despite the progress that is being made, shortages in key enabling capabilities and an imbalance between deployable combat and support forces continue to limit many nations' ability to deploy and sustain units in demanding operations

far beyond NATO territory. We encouraged all nations to renew their commitment to developing the forces and capabilities needed to fulfil our operational and transformational objectives.

7. At our first Nuclear Planning Group meeting with new members, we reviewed the status of NATO's nuclear forces and the work of the High Level Group and reaffirmed the continued validity of the fundamental principles governing NATO's nuclear policy and force posture as set out in the Strategic Concept, which affirms the fundamental political purpose of NATO's nuclear forces: to preserve peace and prevent coercion. Within this context, the Alliance is committed to its long-standing goal to enhance security and stability at the lowest possible level of forces consistent with its requirements for collective defence and deterrence.

8. The nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO continue to provide an essential political and military link between the European and North American members of the Alliance. We noted with appreciation the continuing contribution made by the United Kingdom's independent nuclear forces to deterrence and the overall security of the Allies, and reaffirmed the value of this capability.

9. NATO Allies have maintained a long-term commitment to nuclear arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation as an integral part of their security policy. We stressed the importance of abiding by and strengthening existing multilateral non-proliferation and export control regimes and international arms control and disarmament accords.

10. At our Nuclear Planning Group meeting, we focussed on the key matters addressed at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in New York. We reaffirmed our full commitment to the NPT and to the goal of universal adherence to it. We reiterated our continuing commitment to all our obligations under this Treaty. We underlined further our commitment to reinforcing the Treaty and to ensuring full compliance by all states Parties.

11. We welcomed the decision by Libya in December 2003 and the progress since made in renouncing its clandestine nuclear weapons programme and to comply with its obligations under the NPT. We discussed the dangers inherent in the proliferation of nuclear weapons and expressed our serious concern over recent serious challenges to the NPT due to instances of non-compliance by some states, which may have negative consequences for regional stability and security. We urge all nations to work together to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

12. We reaffirmed the importance of substantial and productive exchanges by nuclear experts under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council with a view to gaining better mutual understanding, more confidence and thereby increased security. We are encouraged by the progress in these consultations and look forward to active co-operation to achieve further progress in confidence building. As part of this aim, we look forward to exchanges in future conferences as well as the programme of field demonstrations on nuclear weapon safety and security issues.

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