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Ministerial Communiqués

Nuclear
Planning
Group

Final Communiqué

Chairman: Mr. J. Luns.

Gleneagles
20th-21th
October, 1981

Synopsis

Nuclear weapons and arms control - Status of nuclear forces - Implementation of the December 1979 two-track decision - Strategic nuclear forces - Commitment to arms control efforts to achieve substantial, balanced and verifiable reductions in strategic weapons - Soviet nuclear power - Publication of US report on Soviet Military Power - Comparison of NATO and Warsaw Pact forces - Imbalance in long-range theatre nuclear forces - Fundamental deterrent role of NATO's nuclear weapons - High Level Group - Geneva negotiations - Special Consultative Group - Possible zero option on basis of reciprocity.

The NATO Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) held its thirtieth Ministerial meeting at Gleneagles in Scotland on 20th and 21st October, 1981. Ministers discussed a wide range of security matters involving nuclear weapons and arms control, including the status of nuclear forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, NATO's theatre nuclear force posture and progress in the implementation of the December 1979 two-track decision on long-range theatre nuclear force modernization and arms control.

Ministers affirmed that the strategy of deterrence is the surest way of preserving peace. This strategy is working today as it has worked for the last thirty-six years. Ministers recalled that this strategy is based on maintaining adequate forces to convince any potential adversary that the risks involved in initiating aggression against NATO would be out of all proportion to any conceivable gains. To be effective a deterrent must be credible; thus NATO must be seen to have both the capability to respond effectively and the will to use that capability. In view of the existing Soviet threat and the need to avoid the danger of Soviet miscalculation, a credible range of forces - conventional, theatre nuclear and strategic - is required for deterrence. Theatre nuclear forces in NATO Europe provide the crucial link between the conventional defence of NATO Europe and the United States' strategic nuclear forces, the ultimate guarantee of Western security.

Ministers welcomed a briefing by the United States Secretary of Defense on the recent United States decisions to modernize, to strengthen, and to improve the survivability of its strategic nuclear forces. They expressed their support for the determination of the United States to ensure the deterrent capability of its strategic forces, whose importance to the overall defence of the Alliance is crucial since the full spectrum of the military power of the United States is committed to it.

Ministers supported the commitment of the United States to arms control efforts to achieve substantial, balanced and verifiable reductions in strategic weapons. In that connection, they also noted that these United States efforts are intended to maintain an adequate and stable balance of forces at the lowest possible level and do not represent an attempt to achieve strategic superiority.

Ministers examined the continuing development of Soviet nuclear power across the spectrum of weapon systems - from strategic missiles to nuclear artillery. They expressed particular concern about the rapid rate with which Soviet nuclear forces are being deployed. In particular, the deployment of the modern SS-20 missile has upset the overall military situation in Europe and has created a potential source of instability and political pressure. Ministers noted that the Soviets have currently deployed more than 250 SS-20 missiles, carrying more than 750 warheads, along with about 350 SS-4 and SS-5 missiles, for a total of more than 1,100 missile warheads altogether. They have also begun to introduce into their operational forces new generations of short- and medium-range nuclear missiles such as the SS-21 and SS-22, and large numbers of improved nuclear-capable aircraft. In stark contrast to the overall qualitative and quantitative increase of the Soviet theatre nuclear forces, NATO has not increased the numbers of its warheads; indeed, the United States unilaterally withdrew 1,000 warheads from Europe as an integral part of the 1979 decision.

Ministers agreed that recent claims by the Soviet Union that there is currently parity in long-range theatre nuclear forces had no basis in fact. Such figures and ratios as have been quoted by the Soviet Union to back up these claims have been achieved by a process of selective inclusion and exclusion. Regardless of the criteria chosen, any objective comparison between systems of similar operational capabilities reveals a wide and growing disparity of nuclear systems in the European theatre in favour of the Soviet Union.

Ministers noted that the trends in Soviet armaments are discussed in a comprehensive public report on "*Soviet Military Power*" published recently by the United States. They welcomed this report, prepared in response to Ministers' requests at the [April 1981 NPG meeting](#) for more information to be made publicly available. This is a useful contribution towards informing the public about the realities of Soviet nuclear and conventional capabilities. Ministers therefore also welcomed the fact that a report will be prepared within the Alliance as soon as possible, which would compare, for the information of the public, NATO and Warsaw Pact forces.

Ministers noted with concern that the imbalance in long-range theatre nuclear forces has not only continued but has worsened. Against this background they emphasized that NATO will continue to move ahead with the December 1979 two-track decision on long-range theatre nuclear force modernization and arms control and took stock of progress on the implementation of both aspects.

With regard to the modernization aspects, Ministers noted the significant progress both in the development of Pershing II and Ground-

Launched Cruise Missiles and in preparations for basing them in Europe. They stressed that these deployments were intended to retain a credible NATO capability in this essential area of its deterrent strategy against the background of the large-scale deployments of new mobile, longer range and more accurate Soviet theatre nuclear forces. Ministers reiterated that NATO's planned deployments (which will not begin until the end of 1983 and which are not intended to match the Soviet Union weapon-for-weapon) will not increase the Alliance's reliance upon nuclear weapons nor change NATO's strategy. Ministers continued by stating that NATO does not seek military superiority, but that, for deterrence to be maintained, NATO must have credible and effective nuclear capabilities. NATO's deployment of modernized long-range theatre nuclear forces is meant to ensure that the Soviet Union cannot assume that it could regionalize a conflict in Europe to exclude its territory or impair the strategic unity of the Alliance. Ministers concluded by re-emphasizing that the fundamental role of NATO's nuclear weapons is and will remain deterrence.

Ministers re-affirmed the importance of continuing High Level Group work examining the precise nature, scope and basis of the adjustments which would be required by long-range theatre nuclear force deployments as well as possible implications of these deployments for the balance of roles and systems in NATO's nuclear armoury as a whole.

With regard to arms control, Ministers welcomed the recent announcement by the United States Secretary of State and Soviet Foreign Minister on the opening of theatre nuclear force arms control negotiations in Geneva on November 30th. They noted that the firmness and determination maintained by Allied Governments in implementing both tracks of [NATO's 12th December, 1979](#) decision have been key factors in convincing the Soviet Union to negotiate and will remain essential in reaching concrete results. They noted the substantial progress made by the United States in preparation of these negotiations and fully endorsed the closed consultations that are taking place in NATO including NATO's Special Consultative Group. In this connection, Ministers discussed two reports produced by the NPG High Level Group, as had been requested by NATO Foreign and Defence Ministers at their Spring 1981 meetings, which present an updated assessment of the threat facing NATO and discuss the functional requirements for NATO's theatre nuclear forces. Ministers agreed that these papers meet the requirements set by NATO Ministers at their May meetings and expressed their view that the United States can rely on these papers as an important and essential contribution to the basis for the forthcoming negotiations on theatre nuclear force arms control with the Soviet Union.

Ministers fully supported the United States commitment to achieve equitable and verifiable agreements, within the SALT framework, on theatre nuclear forces at the lowest attainable levels. On the basis of reciprocity, the zero-level remains a possible option under ideal circumstances. They called on the Soviet Union to live up to the pledge "*to spare no effort to reach an appropriate agreement*". Ministers welcomed the United States dedication to negotiate and achieve