

NATO nuclear planning statements

December 1980

Following a briefing by the United States on the status of nuclear forces, Ministers again voiced their concern with the continuing developments and deployments of new Soviet nuclear systems. Against this background, Ministers noted the continuing importance of improving the effectiveness of the full spectrum of Alliance forces, i.e., conventional, theatre nuclear and strategic, and of maintaining the essential linkage between these elements of the NATO Triad. Ministers emphasized their concern that the Soviet Union, in addition to its SS-4 and SS-5 ballistic missiles, has continued to deploy SS-20 ballistic missiles and Backfire bombers, thus increasing the already existing Long-Range Theatre Nuclear Force (LRTNF) disparity in favour of the Soviet Union.

Ministers discussed strategic policy and the planning for strategic and theatre nuclear forces in support of the Alliance. Recent force modernization programmes and evolutionary refinements in the United States employment policy, referred to as the countervailing strategy, enhance NATO's strategy of deterrence by adding to the credibility and flexibility of its forces. Ministers reaffirmed that United States strategic policy in the context of NATO's strategy, remains the centre of an adequate deterrent to the threat posed by Soviet nuclear forces against the background of their nuclear doctrine and policy.

Ministers reiterated the importance of strategic arms limitations for improving NATO's security and expressed support for further negotiations covering both strategic as well as long-range theatre nuclear forces.

Ministers received a briefing by the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Defence on United Kingdom nuclear forces and on the decision to replace, in close co-operation with the United States, the existing Polaris nuclear-force with the Trident submarine-launched ballistic missile system in the early 1990s. The Trident system will make a significant contribution to enhancing the effectiveness of the NATO Triad. Recalling the [Ottawa Declaration](#) by Heads of Government in 1974, which recognized the contribution which United Kingdom nuclear forces capable of playing a deterrent role of their own make to overall strengthening of deterrence, Ministers welcomed the United Kingdom Government's intention to assign the new Trident force to NATO, as the Polaris force is now.

October 1986

We reviewed the status of nuclear forces and discussed related issues, including arms control. We expressed our continued support for the efforts of the United States and the United Kingdom to maintain the effectiveness and credibility of their nuclear deterrent capabilities. We also received comprehensive briefings by the United States Secretary of Defense on the Soviet nuclear threat, United States' strategic forces and the requirement for nuclear testing.

We reviewed a number of issues and nuclear related programmes and reconfirmed our policy and planning related to NATO's nuclear forces. We agreed that both the force structure itself and the conceptual planning underpinning it are essential components for maintaining a credible deterrent posture.

In contrast to the growth of Soviet nuclear forces at all levels, it is NATO's policy to maintain only the minimum number of nuclear weapons necessary for deterrence. At this meeting SACEUR reported on the status of the implementation of the [Montebello Decision](#). We noted the reductions and improvement measures which are currently being undertaken by the nations concerned. We shall continue to review the progress of further implementation.

We noted the progress made on longer-range INF (LRINF) deployments by the NATO nations concerned including the completion on schedule of Pershing II deployment at the end of last year

and the continuing deployment of ground-launched cruise missiles as planned. In the absence of a concrete INF arms control agreement with the Soviet Union obviating the need for deployment, we emphasized NATO's determination to continue the deployment of LRINF missiles as scheduled. We reiterated our willingness to reverse, halt, or modify the LRINF deployment - including the removal or dismantling of missiles already deployed - upon achievement of a balanced, equitable and effectively verifiable agreement calling for such action. We emphasized that the United States' proposal in the INF negotiations, developed in close consultation with the Allies, calls for the global elimination of United States and Soviet longer-range INF (LRINF) missiles, accompanied by other appropriate provisions concerning rights and constraints on Shorter-Range INF (SRINF) missiles.

April 1989

For the foreseeable future, our strategy of deterrence will continue to require both conventional and nuclear forces. At this meeting we again expressed our determination to ensure that NATO possesses diversified, survivable and operationally flexible nuclear forces across the entire spectrum. These forces must be kept up-to-date where necessary. We noted that nuclear forces in Europe will continue to play an essential role in Alliance strategy. We re-emphasized our commitment to maintaining no more than the minimum number of nuclear weapons necessary for our security, taking into account the scale and quality of the threat.

We reviewed information on the continuing Warsaw Pact efforts to modernize and restructure their nuclear forces. We welcomed the recent announcements of intended unilateral force reductions by the Soviet Union and some of its allies. However, their implementation would have little effect on Warsaw Pact nuclear forces or on the massive and unacceptable Warsaw Pact superiority in European-based short-range nuclear systems. The size of these forces is inconsistent with their recently announced doctrine of '*reasonable sufficiency*'. In contrast, over the past decade, NATO has unilaterally reduced its own nuclear weapons inventory in Europe by over one third to its lowest level in over 20 years.

In line with our step-by-step approach, under which decisions will be taken when necessary, we reviewed the programme of work which will ensure that NATO's nuclear forces across the spectrum of capabilities continue to provide an effective contribution to the Alliance's deterrent strategy. We also expressed continued support for the efforts of member countries to meet requirements stemming from Montebello to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent posture. We also received a number of reports from NATO's military authorities and NPG working groups on matters related to the continued effectiveness of NATO's nuclear forces.

In this context, we welcomed the submission of SACEUR's recent Nuclear Weapons Requirements Study. SACEUR's Study concludes that, as a consequence of measures to update and restructure NATO's nuclear forces which would maintain the credibility of deterrence, further significant reductions could be made in NATO's total requirements for nuclear weapons in Europe. It further concludes that such measures would allow a shift in emphasis towards relatively longer ranges across the entire spectrum including both ground-launched and air-delivered capabilities, in view of their greater flexibility and the contribution this makes to deterrence. We agreed that the Study, which is currently under consideration by Governments, together with further advice from the High Level Group and NATO military authorities, will be important contributions to future decisions relating to individual nuclear systems. These decisions will be taken in a wider political context, including the Alliance's comprehensive concept of arms control and disarmament.

May 1990

We have reviewed the work programmes which we set in hand at our last NPG Ministerial meeting. While the principal elements of NATO's nuclear policy remain valid, we will continue to adapt it and will reassess the future qualitative and quantitative requirements for NATO's sub-strategic nuclear forces. In this context, and also bearing in mind the continuing need for widespread Alliance participation, we noted that sub-strategic nuclear systems offering both flexibility and

longer range will assume relatively greater importance. We therefore directed that our examination of the implications for NATO's nuclear forces of a CFE agreement be intensified, taking into account the changed politico-military environment. This comprehensive review of the rôles, missions, desired characteristics and composition of NATO's future nuclear force posture will provide guidance for the NATO Military Authorities in their further work on future nuclear requirements.

London Declaration 1990

The significant presence of North American conventional and US nuclear forces in Europe demonstrates the underlying political compact that binds North America's fate to Europe's democracies. But, as Europe changes, we must profoundly alter the way we think about defence.

To keep the peace, the Alliance must maintain for the foreseeable future an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces, based in Europe, and kept up to date where necessary. But, as a defensive Alliance, NATO has always stressed that none of its weapons will ever be used except in self-defence and that we seek the lowest and most stable level of nuclear forces needed

The political and military changes in Europe, and the prospects of further changes, now allow the Allies concerned to go further. They will thus modify the size and adapt the tasks of their nuclear deterrent forces. They have concluded that, as a result of the new political and military conditions in Europe, there will be a significantly reduced role for sub-strategic nuclear systems of the shortest range. They have decided specifically that, once negotiations begin on short-range nuclear forces, the Alliance will propose, in return for reciprocal action by the Soviet Union, the elimination of all its nuclear artillery shells from Europe. to secure the prevention of war.

Finally, with the total withdrawal of Soviet stationed forces and the implementation of a CFE agreement, the Allies concerned can reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons. These will continue to fulfil an essential role in the overall strategy of the Alliance to prevent war by ensuring that there are no circumstances in which nuclear retaliation in response to military action might be discounted. However, in the transformed Europe, they will be able to adopt a new NATO strategy making nuclear forces truly weapons of last resort.

December 1990

We reaffirmed that to keep the peace, the Alliance must maintain for the foreseeable future an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces, based in Europe, and kept up to date where necessary. Our nuclear policy will continue to be based on fundamental principles which remain valid: nuclear weapons, strategic and sub-strategic, play a key role in the prevention of war and the maintenance of stability; European-based nuclear forces provide the necessary linkage to NATO's strategic forces; and widespread participation in nuclear roles and policy formulation demonstrates Alliance cohesion and the sharing of responsibilities, and makes an important contribution to our nuclear posture

While these basic principles will endure, the new political and military situation has allowed us to begin developing substantial changes in the Alliance nuclear force levels and structures to reflect the reduced reliance on nuclear weapons foreseen in the London Declaration. We welcomed the work in progress to this end which will lead to further dramatic reductions in the number of NATO's nuclear weapons retained in Europe. The remaining nuclear forces, for which we seek the lowest and most stable level commensurate with our security requirements, must be sufficiently flexible, effective, survivable and broadly based if they are to make a credible contribution to NATO's overall strategy for the prevention of war. We will develop our future nuclear force posture in conjunction with the new Alliance strategic concept reflecting the principles and new directions for nuclear forces set out in the London Declaration.

May 1991

Last year we initiated a fundamental review of the size and tasks of the Alliance's nuclear forces. It looks forward to reduced reliance on and substantial reductions of nuclear weapons. It also recognizes that for the foreseeable future nuclear weapons have an essential role in a strategy designed to preserve peace; and, as part of this, that there remains a need for sub-strategic forces to be based in Europe, with widespread participation in nuclear roles and policy formulation, and kept up-to-date where necessary. The review is well advanced and will be completed in conjunction with the new Alliance Strategic Concept. While seeking the lowest level of nuclear forces commensurate with Alliance security requirements, we are also investigating the measures necessary to ensure that those forces that remain continue to be effective, flexible and survivable, with the requisite communications capability.

October 1991

These unilateral measures, which are additional to the substantial reductions already made in recent years, accord with our long-standing policy of maintaining only the minimum level of nuclear forces required to preserve peace and stability. Nuclear weapons will continue for the foreseeable future to fulfil their essential role in the Alliance's overall strategy, since conventional forces alone cannot ensure war prevention. We will therefore continue to base effective and up-to-date sub-strategic nuclear forces in Europe, but they will consist solely of dual-capable aircraft, with continued widespread participation in nuclear roles and peacetime basing by Allies. Sub-strategic nuclear forces committed to NATO continue to provide the necessary political and military link to NATO's strategic nuclear forces and an important demonstration of Alliance solidarity.

December 1993

We received with appreciation briefings by the United States and United Kingdom on the status of their nuclear forces, as well as an update from the United States on its Nuclear Posture Review. We also reviewed the process of adapting NATO's nuclear posture to the new security environment. With the reduction and restructuring of NATO's sub-strategic nuclear forces in Europe and the updating and adjustment of consultation and planning procedures, we are satisfied that the necessary elements are in place to support the nuclear posture required by the Alliance's Strategic Concept.

We expressed our concern at the growing risks to Alliance security interests posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery means and related technologies. Intensified efforts are essential to prevent such proliferation and to address and counter if necessary the associated risks to Alliance security. We underlined the importance of the existing system of nuclear non-proliferation based upon the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We shall strive to strengthen the regime of the NPT over the coming years, to expand its membership, and to achieve, in 1995, the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty. We expressed serious concern at the actions taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the possible consequences for regional security and stability, as well as the potential repercussions in other parts of the world. We call again on that country to abide by the provisions of the NPT.

December 1994

We noted the progress report of the Joint Committee on Proliferation on the work undertaken by the Senior Politico-Military Group on Proliferation and the Senior Defence Group on Proliferation following the Summit's decision to intensify and expand NATO's political and defence efforts against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems. We agreed on the importance of this work as part of NATO's continuing adaptation to the new security environment. Diplomatic efforts to prevent or reverse proliferation remain our top priority. In addition, NATO as a defensive Alliance must address the range of capabilities needed to discourage weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation and use and, if necessary, to counter this risk by improving the protection of NATO populations, territory and forces. Political-military uncertainties

and future technological trends related to WMD will affect NATO's collective defence planning. We noted the growing proliferation risks with regard to states on NATO's periphery, including the role of suppliers of WMD-related technology to them, and the continuing risks of illicit transfers of WMD and related materials. The DGP will next determine the range of capabilities needed on the basis of its work to date, and we look forward to receiving a report on its progress at our next meeting.

We reviewed the status of the Alliance nuclear forces and reaffirmed their fundamental contribution to preserving stability and security. We received a presentation by the United States on the results of its Nuclear Posture Review, which was conducted in consultation with the Alliance, and expressed our deep satisfaction for the reaffirmation of the United States' nuclear commitment to NATO. In this context, we reiterate the essential value of maintaining widespread deployment of NATO's sub-strategic nuclear forces by the United States and European Allies. These forces, which are an integral part of NATO's nuclear posture, represent an essential element of the trans-atlantic link and are visible evidence of NATO's cohesion, solidarity and burden-sharing.

We expressed our continued support for the role of the ABM Treaty in ensuring strategic stability. We discussed the latest developments in U.S.-Russian negotiations on the demarcation between strategic defences against intercontinental missiles, which are limited by the Treaty, and the permitted theatre defences against shorter-range threats. We were also informed about and welcomed the work done by U.S. and Russian bilateral working groups to reduce the danger of nuclear miscalculation and to promote stability and understanding.

We welcome the Agreed Framework between the United States and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK) as an important step towards bringing the DPRK into full compliance with its obligations under both the NPT and its Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to ensure that the Korean peninsula is free of nuclear weapons.

June 1995

We attach the utmost importance to preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and, where this has occurred, to reversing it through diplomatic means. As directed by NATO leaders at the January 1994 Summit, the Alliance is continuing to intensify and expand its political and defence efforts against proliferation as part of its adaptation to the new security environment. As a defensive alliance, NATO is addressing the range of capabilities needed to discourage WMD proliferation and use. It must also be prepared, if necessary, to counter this risk and thereby protect NATO's populations, territory, and forces. We noted with approval the report of the Joint Committee on Proliferation on the progress made in the activities of the two senior NATO groups on proliferation in the political and defence areas.

The United Kingdom briefed us on the implementation of its decision to utilize the flexibility of its submarine-launched Trident ballistic missiles to undertake sub-strategic as well as strategic roles and thereby progressively to replace the capability now provided by its air-delivered nuclear weapons.

We welcome the contribution that sub-strategic Trident will make to NATO's nuclear posture. We reaffirmed the essential role of dual-capable aircraft (DCA) as NATO's only land-based sub-strategic force and provided guidance to adapt our DCA force posture to the current security environment while preserving its flexibility, effectiveness and widespread basing. We judge that NATO's sub-strategic force posture will, for the foreseeable future, continue to meet the Alliance's requirements.

Nov 1995

We reaffirmed that Alliance nuclear forces continue to play a unique and essential role in the Alliance's strategy of war prevention, while recognizing that NATO has been able to reduce its

reliance on them in the new security environment. The supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance. In addition, Alliance solidarity, common commitment and strategic unity are demonstrated through the current basing of deployable sub-strategic forces in Europe.] l

In reviewing NATO's nuclear posture we received with appreciation a presentation by the United States on the status of US nuclear forces, including elimination of delivery systems under START I, prospects for Russian and United States ratification of START II, and plans to assure reliable nuclear forces at the highest standards of safety and security. Following our discussion at the last NPG meeting, we were briefed by the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe on the status of NATO's sub-strategic forces, including plans to adapt Dual-Capable Aircraft line with the current security environment and the steps being taken to integrate the readiness in sub-strategic capability of the United Kingdom's Trident submarines.) l

June 1996

We reaffirm that the fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear forces is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion. In the light of the changing security environment in Europe, NATO's nuclear forces have been substantially reduced, they are no longer targeted against anyone and the readiness of NATO's dual-capable aircraft has been recently adapted. We reiterate our judgement that NATO's current nuclear posture will, for the foreseeable future, continue to meet the requirements of the Alliance. In that regard, we reaffirm that nuclear forces continue to fulfill an indispensable and unique role in Alliance strategy and that the presence of US nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO provides an essential and enduring political and military link between the European and the North American members of the Alliance. *

December 1996

The nuclear forces of the Alliance continue to play a unique and essential role in Alliance strategy. Their fundamental purpose is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion. We welcome the reduced emphasis on nuclear weapons as reflected in the major reductions in the size of Alliance nuclear forces and the lower readiness states progressively implemented since 1991. Alliance nuclear forces are not targeted at any country. We reaffirm that the presence of U.S. nuclear forces in Europe and committed to the Alliance remains an essential and enduring political and military link between the European and North American members of the Alliance. We also express our determination to ensure that the Alliance's nuclear forces continue to meet the highest standards of safety and security.

December 1996

We reaffirm that the nuclear forces of the Allies continue to play a unique and essential role in the Alliance's strategy of war prevention. New members, who will be full members of the Alliance in all respects, will be expected to support the concept of deterrence and the essential role nuclear weapons play in the Alliance's strategy. Enlarging the Alliance will not require a change in NATO's current nuclear posture, and therefore, NATO countries have no intention, no plan, and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members nor any need to change any aspect of NATO's nuclear posture or nuclear policy -- and we do not foresee any future need to do so.

The Partnership for Peace continues to play a dynamic and important role in the development of a new European security architecture. We accordingly attach great importance to the enhancement of the Partnership and endorse the recommendations made in this regard by the Council in Permanent Session.

December 1998

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We reaffirmed the fundamentally political role of the Alliance's nuclear forces, as described in the Strategic Concept: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war. Nuclear forces play a unique and essential role in the Alliance strategy of war prevention. Their presence ensures uncertainty in the mind of any potential aggressor about the nature of the Allies' response to aggression. Thus, they contribute uniquely to demonstrating that aggression of any kind is not a rational option. We recognise that, in the current security environment, the circumstances in which any use of nuclear weapons might have to be contemplated are extremely remote. We confirmed that the Alliance's nuclear forces will be maintained at the minimum level sufficient to ensure achievement of Alliance political goals.

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We received with appreciation briefings by the United States and the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom reaffirmed its commitment to maintain a robust nuclear deterrent that would continue to operate in a NATO framework for the defence of the Alliance. The United States informed us on the status of bilateral negotiations with Russia on START II. In this regard, we continue to urge the Russian Federation to ratify START II so that the benefits of that treaty may be reaped and negotiations on a START III treaty can be set in train. We valued being briefed by the United States on the safety and security of the Russian nuclear stockpile and noted with appreciation efforts undertaken by various NATO members to assist Russia in improving the storage of its nuclear weapons. We renewed our call upon Russia to bring to completion the reductions in its tactical nuclear weapons announced in 1991 and 1992, and to further review its tactical nuclear weapons stockpile with a view towards making additional significant reductions.

We welcomed the inclusion of nuclear weapons issues into the 1999 work programme for consultations between NATO and Russia under the auspices of the Permanent Joint Council. We look forward to a fruitful and more in-depth exchange and reiterated our conviction that such exchanges have an important role in increasing transparency and supporting the further development of mutual confidence between NATO and Russia.

December 1999

In this, our first meeting as the Nuclear Planning Group since the Washington Summit, we confirmed the principles underpinning the nuclear forces of the Allies as set out in the new Strategic Concept. These forces continue to have a fundamental political purpose: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war. They play an essential role by ensuring uncertainty in the mind of any aggressor about the nature of the Allies' response to military aggression, and by providing an essential political and military link between the European and North American members of the Alliance. The Alliance will therefore maintain adequate nuclear forces in Europe, at the minimum level sufficient to preserve peace and stability. Taking account of the present security situation, we affirmed that the circumstances in which any use of nuclear weapons might have to be contemplated by Allies are extremely remote.

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We emphasized that since 1991, in the context of the improved security environment and in keeping with the Alliance's stated principle of keeping its forces at the minimum sufficient level, NATO has reduced the types and numbers of its sub-strategic nuclear forces by over 85 percent. These reductions included the complete elimination of all nuclear artillery and ground-launched missiles. Furthermore, NATO has significantly relaxed the readiness criteria for nuclear-rolled forces.

We affirmed that arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation -- with the stability, transparency, predictability, lower levels of armaments, and verification they can provide -- will continue to play

a major role in the achievement of NATO's security objectives. Alliance work in these areas is ongoing as a contribution to the Washington Summit remit. We reviewed evolving threats from proliferant states. We reaffirmed our belief that Alliance forces deter the use of weapons of mass destruction, thus contributing to the Alliance goal of preventing the proliferation of these weapons and their delivery means. All Allies support the central treaties related to disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and are committed to full implementation of these treaties. With a view to the upcoming Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in Spring 2000, we reaffirmed our full support of the Treaty and our continued commitment to efforts aimed at reducing nuclear weapons; we urged all countries which have not yet done so to accede to and fully implement the NPT. We continue to urge the Russian Federation to ratify START II so that the benefits of this treaty can be reaped and negotiations on a START III treaty can be set in train. We continue to support the ratification, early entry into force, and full implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Firmly committed to our partnership with Russia under the NATO-Russia Founding Act, we stand ready to resume reciprocal exchanges with Russia on nuclear weapons issues, and thus we reviewed possible next steps in such consultations. In this context, we note with concern that Russia appears to be moving towards a greater reliance on nuclear forces to ensure its security. We renew our call on Russia to review further its tactical nuclear weapons stockpile with a view toward making significant reductions. We look forward to further consultations on these issues. We welcomed plans by the United States to establish, in cooperation with Russia, a temporary joint Centre for Year 2000 Strategic Stability to deal with possible computer errors in either nation's missile attack warning systems. This is an important cooperative step towards ensuring overall nuclear safety and security.

We are pleased to note that Alliance nuclear forces, command and control systems and nuclear support infrastructure have been thoroughly reviewed and found to be fully compliant with the requirements of the changeover to the next millennium.

June 2000

At our Nuclear Planning Group meeting, we reviewed the status of NATO's nuclear forces and a number of related activities. We are satisfied that NATO's reduced nuclear force posture fully complies with the Alliance's Strategic Concept. NATO's nuclear forces are a credible and effective element of the Allies' strategy of preventing war, and they are maintained at the minimum level sufficient to preserve peace and stability. We are assured that the Allies' nuclear weapons and their storage continue to meet the highest standards of safety and security.

We welcome the positive outcome of the recent Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and affirm our commitments made at the Conference. NATO Allies are also committed to the immediate commencement and the rapid conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable and universal Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.

We welcome the ratification of the START II Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by Russia. Both are important steps towards even deeper reductions and, ultimately, the elimination of nuclear weapons on a global scale. We look forward to the implementation of START II and assure

the United States and the Russian Federation of our full support for their negotiations on the basis of an agreed START III framework which would cut the arsenals of deployed strategic nuclear warheads by 80 per cent from Cold War peaks. We renew our call upon Russia to bring to completion the reductions in its tactical nuclear weapons announced in 1991 and 1992, and to review further its much larger tactical nuclear weapons stockpile with a view towards making additional significant reductions.

June 2001

At our Nuclear Planning Group meeting, we reaffirmed the continuing validity of the fundamentally political purpose and the principles underpinning the nuclear forces of the Allies as set out in the Alliance's 1999 Strategic Concept. We emphasize again that 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.

Ten years ago, with the [1991 Strategic Concept](#), the Alliance embarked on a number of decisive strategy and policy changes to adapt to the Post-Cold War security situation. Looking back, we are satisfied that NATO's new strategy of reduced reliance on nuclear weapons, reaffirmed in the 1999 Strategic Concept, has been fully translated into NATO doctrine, and that NATO's drastically reduced nuclear force posture fully complies with Alliance key principles. Nuclear forces are a credible and effective element of the Alliance's strategy of preventing war; they are maintained at the minimum level sufficient to preserve peace and stability, under conditions that continue to meet the highest standards of safety and security.

December 2001

At our Nuclear Planning Group meeting, we reviewed the status of NATO's nuclear forces and addressed a number of related issues. Noting the fundamentally political purpose to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war, we reaffirmed the principles underpinning these forces as set out in the Alliance's Strategic Concept. Given new security challenges of an unprecedented nature, we have particular reason to reaffirm our complete trust in, and steadfast commitment to, the strength and validity of the transatlantic link in our Alliance, which guarantees equal security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. We emphasised again that 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.

Deterrence and defence along with arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation will continue to play a major role in the achievement of the Alliance's security objectives. We welcomed President Bush's decision to reduce over the next decade the number of U.S. operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons to between 1,700-2,200 and President Putin's statement that Russia intended to reduce its strategic nuclear weapons "in kind". We reaffirmed our determination to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to contribute to the implementation of the conclusions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We continue to support the existing moratoria on nuclear testing.

In these times of heightened security awareness, we take pride in the outstanding safety and security record regarding NATO's nuclear weapons. We reaffirmed our standing commitment to the highest standards of safety and security of these weapons and emphasized, again, that NATO's nuclear weapons are safe and secure in every aspect.

June 2002

At our Nuclear Planning Group meeting, we reviewed the status of NATO's nuclear forces and addressed related issues and activities. We received with appreciation information by the United States Secretary of Defense on the results of the recent Summit meeting between Presidents Putin and Bush at Moscow and St. Petersburg, particularly with regard to the further development of the New Strategic Framework between the United States and Russia. We welcomed the results of the

Summit and expressed our full support for its agreement on a Treaty to reduce, over the next decade, U.S. operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to a level of between 1,700 and 2,200 and to reduce Russian strategic nuclear warheads to the same level.

We recalled that NATO's sub-strategic nuclear forces have been reduced by over 85 percent since 1991, and are maintained at the minimum level sufficient to preserve peace and stability. In this context, we provided guidance to further adapt NATO's dual-capable aircraft posture. We reaffirmed that the fundamental purpose of the nuclear forces of the Allies is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war. We continue to place great value on the nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO, which provide essential political and military linkage between the European and the North American members of the Alliance.

In this regard, we note that deterrence and defence, along with arms control and non-proliferation, will continue to play a major role in the achievement of the Alliance's security objectives. We reaffirmed our determination to contribute to the implementation of the conclusions of the 2000 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and welcomed the full discussion of issues at the Preparatory Conference for the 2005 Review Conference in April this year. We continue to support the existing moratoria on nuclear testing.

June 2003

At this, our first meeting as Nuclear Planning Group after the Prague Summit, we reviewed the status of NATO's nuclear forces and addressed related issues and activities. We reaffirmed the principles underpinning NATO's nuclear forces as set out in the Alliance's Strategic Concept. We continue to place great value on the nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO, which provide an essential political and military linkage between the European and the North American members of the Alliance.

The Alliance's goal to enhance global security will continue to be strengthened through our support for arms control and non-proliferation. In this regard, we expressed concern over violations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime and, in particular, over recent pronouncements by the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea that it had withdrawn from the Treaty and that it was in possession of nuclear weapons. We strongly urged it to dismantle immediately any nuclear weapons programme in a verifiable, transparent and irreversible manner. We urge all nations to continue to work together to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We reaffirmed our determination to contribute to the implementation of the conclusions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and welcomed the accession of Cuba and East Timor to the Treaty.

We welcome the invitation extended to Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia and look forward to meeting them in this forum as full Alliance members. We endorsed a time-phased programme to inform them about Alliance nuclear issues, designed specifically to prepare them to participate effectively in discussions of Alliance nuclear policy when they are members. Given their full support of NATO's Strategic Concept, including the essential role that nuclear forces play in the Alliance's strategy of preservation of peace and prevention of war or any kind of coercion, the new members will strengthen security for all in the Euro-Atlantic area.

We noted with satisfaction that, based on our guidance issued in June last year, NATO's dual-capable aircraft posture has been further adapted and readiness requirements for these aircraft have been further relaxed. We welcome the ongoing work of the High Level Group as it continues to discuss deterrence requirements in the new security environment and to provide advice to Ministers as appropriate.

1 December 2003

At our Nuclear Planning Group meeting, we reviewed the status of NATO's nuclear forces and the work of the High Level Group. It is a long-standing goal of the Alliance to enhance security and stability at the lowest possible level of forces consistent with its requirements for collective defence

and the full range of its missions. In keeping with this goal, we continue to consider deterrence requirements for the 21 st century. We reaffirmed the principles underpinning NATO's security objectives as set out in the Alliance's Strategic Concept.

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. They are maintained at readiness levels consistent with the prevailing security environment. 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.