



Defence Ministers Meetings 8 June 2006

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Ministerial meeting of the Defence Planning Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group held in Brussels on Thursday, 8 June 2006

1. The Defence Planning Committee and Nuclear Planning Group met in Ministerial Session on 8 June 2006.
2. As we look forward to the Riga Summit, we re-affirmed our determination to employ the disciplines of defence planning to help ensure that the Alliance and our national forces continue to pursue transformation with the aim of further developing the capabilities needed to deal with the challenges we will face in the future. Against this background, and based on the agreed Comprehensive Political Guidance which sets out the priorities for NATO's continuing transformation, we approved a new Ministerial Guidance to provide a framework for Alliance and nations' defence planning for the next decade.
3. This guidance examined the capabilities and forces needed to support the full range of missions that Alliance forces are likely to be called on to undertake and reaffirms our commitment to collective defence. In the new security environment, taking particular account of the risks arising from terrorism and the need to be able to deploy forces over long distances and operate in austere conditions, we recognise a need for a shift in emphasis towards an ability to conduct a greater number of smaller, but demanding and different, operations than we had planned for in the past. In doing so, we shall also retain our ability to carry out larger operations, including high intensity operations.
4. The new security environment also calls for the ability and flexibility to conduct operations in circumstances where the efforts of several authorities, institutions and nations need to be coordinated to achieve the desired results and to carry out, among others, stabilisation operations and provide military support to reconstruction efforts. The Alliance and our nations need to improve their abilities in these and other areas. We shall work to adapt our forces to make them increasingly usable. Recognising that this will constitute a considerable challenge, we shall also work to ensure that sufficient resources are provided to meet the needs of transformation and that those resources are used effectively.
5. We also adopted updates of the force goals that we approved at Istanbul in 2004. We look forward to the development of a comprehensive package of new force goals, based on our Ministerial Guidance, in 2008.
6. At our Nuclear Planning Group meeting, we reviewed the status of NATO's nuclear forces and other related issues and activities. We re-affirmed that the fundamental purpose of the nuclear forces of the Allies is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war. In keeping with this goal, we continue to place great value on the nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO, which provide an essential political and military link between the European and North American members of the Alliance. We recalled that NATO's

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nuclear forces are maintained at the minimum level sufficient to preserve peace and stability. 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. The dangers inherent in the growing risk of nuclear proliferation underscore the importance of NATO maintaining a credible and flexible deterrent posture.

7. 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 full commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of global nuclear non-proliferation efforts and an essential basis for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. In this context, we expressed serious concern over the possible consequences for security and stability, resulting from instances of non-compliance with the Treaty. We call again on all countries to abide by their commitments in this domain.
8. We noted the importance of NATO's relationship with Russia on nuclear weapons issues and look forward to further consultation and cooperation under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council.

