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FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The Defence Planning Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization met in Ministerial Session on Friday, 28th May, 1971, for its regular Spring meeting.

2. Ministers discussed the implications for Alliance Defence Policy of the current situation and in particular the latest developments in the East-West dialogue. They noted in this context the recent Soviet reaction to the long standing and repeated allied initiative on mutual and balanced force reductions, which will be the subject of consideration by the North Atlantic Council in Lisbon next week.

3. Ministers reaffirmed that NATO's approach to security will continue to be based on the twin concepts of defence and détente as stated in the 1967 report on the future tasks of the Alliance. They re-stated the vital rôle of a strong capability for the collective defence of the treaty area as a fundamental basis for a confident and successful policy of negotiation for the reinforcement of peace and security. They also confirmed again the principle that the overall military capability of NATO should not be reduced except as part of a pattern of mutual force reductions, balanced in scope and timing.

4. Ministers welcomed the substantial and concrete progress reported in the development and implementation of the European Defence Improvement Programme, which a number of European countries announced in December 1970. They noted that, with the help of the infrastructure element of this Programme, NATO would now be able to provide an integrated communications system (including space satellite elements) for the mid-1970s, and to execute a greatly-expanded programme of measures to protect their aircraft in case of attack on their bases; and that the European countries concerned had taken steps to secure the earliest possible start on this work. Ministers also welcomed the measures taken to implement the extensive national force improvements and intra-alliance aid which constituted further elements of the European Defence Improvement Programme. They also took note, with great satisfaction, of the reaffirmation by the United States Secretary of Defense of President Nixon's commitment of last December to the effect that, given a similar approach by the other allies, the United States would maintain and improve its own forces in Europe and would not reduce them except in the context of reciprocal East-West action.

5. In reviewing progress in following up the report on Alliance Defence Problems for the 1970s (AD 70 Study), Ministers noted that a starting point had already been established, in that certain measures to improve the defence posture of NATO countries were already in hand; some of these were specifically mentioned by Ministers during their meeting. Ministers agreed on the need for countries to begin implementation of further improvements in accordance with the report before them. A comprehensive report, which would also address further recommendations for specific measures and the question of relative priorities, was called for by Ministers for their meeting next December.

6. Ministers noted the continuing increase in real terms in the allocation of resources to military and military-related programmes by the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries. In light of this increased capability, Ministers agreed therefore that in order to continue providing modern and sufficient nuclear and conventional forces and to improve the situation in the important areas highlighted in the AD 70 Study, some overall increase in defence outlays was needed. In the light of these considerations, and in keeping with the agreed Conclusions and Recommendations of the AD 70 Report, Ministers provided the NATO Military Authorities with the guidance necessary to enable them to prepare proposals for the size and structure of NATO forces for the planning period 1973-1978.

7. Against the background of the continuing growth of the Soviet military presence in the Mediterranean, Ministers gave special consideration to a report on steps to improve the Alliance's defence posture in that area. They noted that a number of measures to this end had already been taken, particularly for surveillance, while others were in hand or under consideration; and that countries were working both on an individual and on a co-operative basis as well as with the NATO Military Authorities to produce the most effective and co-ordinated results. Ministers asked for a further report on the progress made to be submitted to them at their next meeting. In the same context they noted that the Defence Planning Committee in Permanent Session had approved a political directive for unscheduled activities of the Naval On-Call Force for the Mediterranean as an additional mode of activity to regular planned activities for that force, for which authority has existed for some time.

8. Ministers also noted the continuing build-up of Soviet forces in the North-East Atlantic and the need for further planning for external reinforcements and other measures to improve the situation on the Northern flank.

9. Ministers approved a report recommending ways to streamline and generally improve the NATO procedures for collective defence planning. The main aims were to adapt

these procedures to conform still more closely to, and thus to provide effective co-ordination with, national systems and timetables; while at the same time keeping them sufficiently flexible to respond to changing circumstances.

10. Finally, Ministers reviewed the status of various on-going Alliance defence planning studies.

11. The next Ministerial Meeting of the Defence Planning Committee will take place in Brussels in December 1971.