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NATO NUCLEAR PLANNING GROUP

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The 23rd Ministerial Meeting of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) was held in Frederikshavn, Denmark, on 18th and 19th April, 1978. Ministers of Defence participating in this meeting were Mr. Poul Søgaard, Denmark; Dr. Hans Apel, Federal Republic of Germany; Mr. Attilio Ruffini, Italy; Mr. Hasan Esat Isik, Turkey; Mr. Fred Mulley, United Kingdom; and Dr. Harold Brown, United States. Ambassador Constant Schuurmans represented Belgium. Dr. Joseph M.A.H. Luns, Secretary General of NATO, chaired the meeting. The NATO military authorities were represented by the Chairman of the Military Committee and the three major NATO commanders, SACLANT, SACEUR and CINCHAN.

2. N.P.G. meetings at ministerial level are the principal forum for the discussion of NATO-nuclear defence matters. The N.P.G. has a consultative and advisory function in developing policy guidance in this field and for establishing procedures for nuclear consultation during crises and guidelines for the possible defensive use of nuclear weapons by NATO. It also considers modernisation requirements for NATO's nuclear forces as they are dictated by changing circumstances.

3. With these objectives in mind, Ministers received and welcomed a comprehensive briefing by the United States Secretary of Defence on recent developments and trends in the overall balance of nuclear forces and had a wide ranging discussion of their implications for NATO security. In this context Ministers noted with concern the continuing build-up of Soviet military forces and in particular the increased Soviet capability in longer range theatre nuclear forces including the deployment of the SS-20 mobile intermediate range missile with multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles.

4. Ministers reaffirmed that deterrence continues to be the central objective of the Alliance and that the triad of strategic, theatre nuclear and conventional forces which support NATO's strategy of forward defence and flexibility in response should be maintained and modernized in light of the evolving Warsaw Pact capabilities. In furtherance of the decision taken at the Summit conference in London, Ministers discussed suggestions

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forwarded by the NATO military authorities on short-term improvements and by the N.P.G. high level group on long-term improvements to the theatre nuclear force posture in Europe. They endorsed the importance of the modernization of NATO's theatre nuclear forces, including the steps underway in the United States to modernize the Lance and 8-inch artillery systems, and recognised that the option of introducing enhanced radiation capability in these systems would be influenced by the degree to which the Soviet Union shows restraint in its conventional and theatre nuclear arms programmes and force deployments affecting the security of NATO. They therefore emphasized the importance of a positive Soviet response to President Carter's decision. Ministers concurred that equitable and verifiable measures of arms control must remain an important feature of NATO's overall security policy and would contribute to efforts for furthering the process of detente. They agreed to continue close and detailed consultation.

5. They accepted with pleasure the invitation of the Belgian government to hold their next meeting in Belgium in Autumn 1978.