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NATO NUCLEAR PLANNING GROUP

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The NATO Nuclear Planning Group met in ministerial session in Bodø (Norway) on 3rd and 4th June, 1980 for its twenty-seventh half yearly meeting. Ministers of Defence attending were : Mr. Charles Poswick, Belgium; Mr. J. Gilles Lamontagne, Canada; Mr. Poul Søggaard, Denmark; Dr. Hans Apel, Federal Republic of Germany; Mr. Lelio Lagorio, Italy; Mr. Willem Scholten, The Netherlands; Mr. Thorvald Stoltenberg, Norway; Mr. Adelino Amaro da Costa, Portugal; Mr. Ahmet Ihsan Birincioglu, Turkey; Mr. Francis Pym, the United Kingdom and Dr. Harold Brown, the United States. Greece was represented by the Permanent Representative to NATO, Mr. Nicolas Athanassiou. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Joseph M.A.H. Luns, Secretary General of NATO. Also present were the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee and the major NATO Commanders. A special welcome was extended to Portugal, attending the Nuclear Planning Group at the ministerial level for the first time.

Following a briefing by the United States Secretary of Defence, Ministers discussed strategic policy and planning concerning central strategic and theatre nuclear forces in support of the Alliance. 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 nuclear forces, and of maintaining the essential linkage between these elements of the NATO triad. Ministers concluded their discussion of policy and planning by reaffirming the NATO strategy of flexible response and forward defence.

Ministers took stock of the implementation of the integrated decision on long-range theatre nuclear force (LRTNF) modernization and arms control taken by Foreign and Defence Ministers on 12th December 1979. Ministers reemphasized, as was done at the recent Defence Planning Committee meeting, their concern that the Soviet Union's deployment of SS-20 missiles and Backfire was continued unabated, further increasing the already existing disparity in LRTNF in favour of the Soviet Union. Moreover, Ministers noted with concern the continued retention of Soviet SS-4 and SS-5 missile launchers.

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This coupled with the continuing deployment of SS-20 missiles might lead to an even larger Soviet superiority in LRTNF in the mid-1980s than previously anticipated. Ministers underlined that NATO's long-range theatre nuclear force modernization programme was a deliberately restrained one compared with the existing capability and continuing growth of Soviet nuclear forces facing the Alliance. Ministers noted that the implementation of the modernization decision is moving ahead, with an initial operational capability in Europe anticipated towards the end of 1983.

Ministers regretted that the Soviet Union had rejected two offers by the United States to conduct serious negotiations on arms control involving long-range theatre nuclear forces and was instead advancing unacceptable pre-conditions, which would perpetuate inequality, to any negotiations or even preliminary arms control exchanges. Ministers called on the Soviet Union to respond positively and accepted without delay the repeated offer by the United States, following consultations within the Alliance, to negotiate verifiable limitations on United States and Soviet long-range land-based theatre nuclear forces in accordance with the decision of Foreign and Defence Ministers on 12th December 1979.

In this connection, Ministers also noted a progress report on the work of the Special Consultative Group on Arms Control involving theatre nuclear forces which supports the United States negotiating effort. This group meets regularly within the Alliance. Ministers reiterated their support for early ratification of SALT II.

Ministers also noted that the withdrawal of 1,000 United States nuclear warheads from Europe as an integral part of the LRTNF modernization and arms control decision has begun : they recalled that the new LRTNF warheads decided upon on 12th December 1979 would be accommodated within the reduced level.

Ministers were informed of progress by the N.P.G.'s High Level Group on fulfilling its mandate to examine the precise nature, scope and basis of the adjustments resulting from the LRTNF deployment and their possible implications for the balance of roles and systems in NATO's nuclear armoury as a whole.

Ministers reviewed consultation procedures in NATO crisis management exercises. They reiterated the importance of continuing to practise such procedures and noted ways in which they might be further developed in future exercises.

Ministers also considered the future N.P.G. work programme as summarized by the Secretary General : they decided to hold their next meeting in Autumn 1980 at NATO Headquarters in Brussels.