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MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE DEFENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE  
AND THE NUCLEAR PLANNING GROUP ON 11th JUNE 1998

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The Defence Planning Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization met in Ministerial Session in Brussels on 11th June.

2. We attach great importance to the Alliance's enduring commitment to the core function of collective defence and the indispensable transatlantic link. Defence planning, which underpins collective defence, is a major contributor to the political cohesion and the military effectiveness of the Alliance. It also gives practical effect to the commitment to ensure that our individual and collective defence capabilities enable us to carry out the full range of the Alliance's missions. Our operations in Bosnia have confirmed the value of the long-standing and close cooperation between Allies and of our integrated military structure.

3. Against this background we underlined the importance of the Alliance's military effectiveness for security and stability throughout the Euro-Atlantic area. We confirmed that our defence planning system continues to fulfil a central role in ensuring the effectiveness and coherence of our individual and collective military capabilities. As part of the regular process of reviewing our defence plans, we approved a new set of Force Goals which are designed to ensure that our collective defence arrangements continue to provide for the full range of Alliance missions. The Force Goals address requirements for collective defence and deterrence, and capabilities required for crisis management, including peace support operations. They also address requirements for the support of WEU-led operations. Within the adjusted overall forces and readiness levels which reflect the new strategic environment, the 1998 Force Goals continue to emphasise the need for deployable, readily available

assets; enhanced command and control capabilities to support CJTF operations; and capabilities to deal with the risks arising from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their means of delivery. The development of these capabilities and the maintenance and enhancement of interoperability are key elements in the transformation of NATO's force structure and of the Alliance itself as it prepares to meet future challenges. We shall continue to ensure that high priority is given to these planning targets in our national force plans.

4. We recognise that the forces needed in the new strategic environment, while smaller than in the past, still require significant funding levels. We also recognise the importance of common efforts and common funding, which contribute to enhanced Alliance cohesion and emphasize solidarity. We are committed, therefore, to ensuring that sufficient resources are made available to handle the risks and challenges facing the Alliance and in particular to address NATO Force Goals and the requirements of NATO's common funded programmes.

5. The defence planning system has confirmed its key role in preparing the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland for the military responsibilities and obligations of Alliance membership. We noted a report describing Target Force Goals developed for the three invited countries. The Target Force Goals address NATO's priority military requirements for an effective enlarged Alliance. These include ensuring appropriate future force contributions from the three invited countries to the Alliance military structure. The Target Force Goals also address the priority areas of air defence, command and control, doctrine and training, host nation support and some aspects of force modernisation. Overall these planning targets will play a major role in guiding the development of the armed forces of the invited countries in a number of important areas, particularly in accelerating the interoperability of their armed forces with those of the Alliance. Following their accession to the Alliance, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland will play a full role in Alliance force planning and more comprehensive targets will be set for them in the NATO Force Goals in 2000.

6. We welcomed the Spanish decision for full integration into the Alliance's military structure, which will enhance the Spanish contribution to NATO's military tasks and strengthen overall Alliance capabilities. In this respect, we note that Spain is now participating in NATO defence planning on the same basis as the other Allies.

7. We received with appreciation a presentation by the U.S. Secretary of Defense on the status of START II and planning for START III. We continue to urge the Russian government to obtain early ratification of START II.

8. We welcomed the initiation of consultations between NATO and Russia on nuclear weapons issues under the auspices of the Permanent Joint Council and look forward to a more in-depth exchange. We recalled the Russian announcements from 1991 and 1992 regarding unilateral reductions of their tactical nuclear weapons and urge Russia to bring these to completion. We call upon Russia to further review its tactical nuclear weapons stockpile with a view toward making additional significant reductions.

9. We confirmed that NATO's nuclear forces, while much reduced in size and readiness, continue to play a unique and essential role in Alliance strategy. Their fundamental purpose is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war. They will continue to fulfil an essential role by ensuring uncertainty in the mind of any aggressor about the nature of the Allies' response to military aggression. They demonstrate that aggression of any kind is not a rational option.