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AU BUREAU I.134 EXT. 4641**COMMUNIQUE
PR/CP (2002) 072**

**MEETING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL
IN DEFENCE MINISTERS SESSION HELD IN BRUSSELS
ON 6 JUNE 2002**

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The North Atlantic Council met in Defence Ministers Session in Brussels on 6 June 2002.
2. NATO remains a vital contributor to security in the Euro-Atlantic area. In the Balkans NATO is a guarantor of stability and a secure environment. We have given particular attention during today's meeting to the situation in the Balkans, and have issued a separate statement on this.
3. But events since 11 September have shown how the strategic environment is changing. The dangers from new and asymmetric threats have become clearer. The methods with which nations have chosen to combat them mark new advances in the conduct of operations and the promotion of security. We judge that NATO itself must continue to adapt accordingly, and to review its structures and procedures in the light of such changes. Above all, member nations must be ready to adapt their military capabilities to ensure that they can contribute to meeting the new demands, including those posed by terrorism. We have issued a separate statement on the development of capabilities and structures in the Alliance.
4. We warmly welcomed the establishment of the new NATO-Russia Council which met last week for the first time, at the level of Heads of State and Government, in Rome. The Council, in which we are deeply involved as Defence Ministers, is the expression of the determination of all its member states to cooperate ever more closely as equal partners in meeting the challenges and the threats they face in common. We are confident that, by establishing a new level of cooperation, the Allies and Russia acting together will decisively improve security in the Euro-Atlantic region. While preserving the Alliance's prerogative to act independently, we will play our full part in ensuring the success of the NATO-Russia Council. The work programme agreed in Reykjavik represents a solid basis for intensified cooperation. We look forward to the first Ministerial session of the Council later today, when we will meet with our Russian colleague, Sergey Ivanov. We welcome the treaty signed by the United States and Russia to reduce operationally deployed strategic warheads to between 1700-2200.

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5. We reviewed the Alliance's other cooperation activities, including through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Partnership for Peace, the Mediterranean Dialogue and our relationship with Ukraine. We look forward to a new, more substantive relationship with Partners, which intensifies our cooperation in responding to new security challenges, including terrorism. We note Ukraine's strong determination to pursue full Euro-Atlantic integration. We continue to encourage Ukraine to implement the reforms required to achieve this objective and stand ready to continue to assist it in this regard. In that context, we have decided to give new impetus and substance to our partnership with Ukraine.

6. We took stock, based on the Consolidated Progress Report which we received on the results of the third cycle of the Membership Action Plan (MAP), of preparations being made for further enlargement of the Alliance. We welcome Croatia into the MAP. We congratulate aspirants on the significant progress they have made thus far towards achieving their objectives in the MAP. Our Heads of State and Government, who will launch the next round of invitations at their Summit in Prague in November, will expect invitees to have demonstrated a commitment to the basic principles and values set out in the Washington Treaty, the capability to contribute to collective defence and the Alliance's full range of missions, a firm commitment to contribute to stability and security, especially in regions of crisis and conflict, and the willingness and ability to assume the responsibilities of membership. We encourage all aspirants to intensify their efforts in the coming months and to continue them not only up to Prague but also in the years ahead. We will remain engaged with their preparations through the MAP. As Defence Ministers, we will pay particular attention to progress on Partnership Goals, and, after Prague, on issues associated with military integration.

7. NATO is undertaking internal preparations to ensure its readiness to accept new members. The Council in Permanent Session will prepare a comprehensive report on the relevant factors associated with decisions on enlargement for consideration by Heads of State and Government in Prague, including on ensuring the Alliance's ability to perform the full range of its missions following enlargement. This work will be conducted in keeping with political guidance provided by the Council and will not create any preconditions or decisions on new members.

8. We also discussed the status of work on the European Security and Defence Identity and NATO-EU relations, and reaffirmed our commitment to achieving a close, transparent and coherent relationship between the two organizations. Our joint efforts in the Balkans have furthered the achievement of peace and stability in that region and shown that close cooperation brings considerable benefits. The events of 11 September have underlined the importance of enhanced cooperation between the two organizations on questions of common interest relating to security, defence, and crisis management, so that crises can be met with the most appropriate military response and effective crisis management can be ensured. Important work remains to be done on the arrangements for NATO support to EU-led operations, in accordance with the decisions taken at the 1999 NATO Washington Summit and subsequent Ministerial meetings. We remain

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determined to make progress on all the various aspects of our relationship, noting the need to find solutions satisfactory to all Allies on the issue of participation by non-EU European Allies.

9. We fully agree with the statements made on these and other matters by our Foreign Minister colleagues last month.

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