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NATO NUCLEAR PLANNING GROUP
FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The NATO Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) held its regular spring ministerial meeting at Colorado Springs in the United States on 23rd and 24th March 1982. Ministers addressed a wide range of security issues involving nuclear weapons and arms control, including developments in the nuclear forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and the importance of keeping the public clearly aware of the basic principles of NATO nuclear policies.

The principles on which the Western Alliance was founded remain as valid today as they were three decades ago when the Alliance was established. NATO has never and will never initiate the use of force. Its defensive posture is designed solely to protect the territorial integrity and independence of Alliance member countries, thus preserving the values and liberties which are fundamental to democratic societies.

NATO's strategy is one of deterrence and defence. This strategy is based on a triad : strategic nuclear forces, intermediate- and short-range nuclear forces (previously covered under the term theatre nuclear forces), and conventional forces. The purpose of this range of forces is to preserve peace and freedom by denying to a potential adversary any realistic prospect of securing advantage through intimidation or military action at any level. Ministers reaffirmed their determination to maintain forces adequate to secure this purpose.

Ministers discussed trends in the strategic capabilities of the Soviet Union and the United States. They noted the continuing build-up by the Soviet Union of its strategic forces and, in that connection, supported the determination of the United States and the United Kingdom to ensure deterrent capabilities of their strategic nuclear forces which are of fundamental importance to the Alliance's strategy. Strategic nuclear forces remain the ultimate guarantee of NATO's security.

Ministers emphasized that balanced, effective and verifiable arms control agreements, based on equality of rights and limitations leading to substantially reduced levels of conventional and nuclear forces, would play an important role in enhancing security and in achieving a stable relationship between East and West. Ministers

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reiterated that thorough consultations within the Alliance on all aspects of arms control remain essential.

Accordingly, Ministers discussed the status of preparations for the strategic arms reduction talks (START) and expressed their strong support for the United States commitment to negotiate an equitable and verifiable agreement on strategic nuclear weapons with the Soviet Union resulting in substantial reductions.

Ministers examined the substantial progress made in implementing both parts of NATO's dual-track decision of 12 December 1979.

In this context, Ministers discussed the most recent developments in the negotiations in Geneva on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) arms control. They reiterated their full support for the United States negotiating position, developed as a result of the close consultations within the Alliance and as expressed by President Reagan, to cancel the deployment of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles if the Soviet Union eliminated its SS-20, SS-4 and SS-5 missiles worldwide. Ministers noted that NATO's resolve in implementing its 12 December, 1979 decision was the key factor in persuading the Soviet Union to enter into arms control negotiations in Geneva and would continue to be crucial to achieving concrete results. They called again on the Soviet Union to match the United States negotiating in good faith. Ministers emphasized that concrete progress can be made most quickly by focusing in a first step on the systems acknowledged to be of the most concern to both sides, that is, longer-range land-based INF missiles.

Ministers noted with concern that SS-20 operational deployments have now reached about 300 launchers worldwide, comprising about 900 nuclear warheads, with more bases under construction. This is roughly 200 SS-20 missiles more than were deployed at the time when NATO took its double-track decision. In the light of this, the various Soviet proposals for a freeze would have precisely the same effect : perpetuation of the Soviet monopoly in longer-range land-based INF missiles because not a single SS-20 would have to be destroyed, while NATO would be prevented from deploying any such missiles. It is well known that these Soviet missiles, given their range and the ease with which they can be relocated, are a threat to NATO wherever they are located. These proposals would, therefore, leave the Soviet Union free to continue its build-up East of the Urals, well within the range of NATO Europe. (*)

Ministers noted that in addition to continuing their deployment of SS-20s, the Soviets are replacing older shorter-range Scale-board missiles with SS-22s, and are developing the new SS-23 as a follow-on to the existing Scud missiles. The SS-22 missile has the range to cover a substantial portion of NATO Europe even from its deployment areas within the Soviet Union, and this would also be the case with the SS-23 if it were to be deployed in forward areas.

(*) Denmark reserves its position because the subject is considered to be the province of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

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Against this background, Ministers reiterated the importance they attach to the continuation of preparations for deployment of ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing II missiles. They noted the continuing progress in the development of these systems as well as in preparations for basing them in Europe.

Ministers stressed that the planned deployment of 108 Pershing II ballistic missiles and 464 ground-launched cruise missiles was not intended to match the Warsaw Pact capability in INF missiles weapon for weapon. It was rather designed to reinforce the NATO strategy of flexible response by linking even more closely the United States strategic deterrent to the defence of NATO Europe, thus reflecting the fundamental premise that the security of the United States is inseparable from that of its Allies. This inseparability enhances deterrence, reduces the risk of miscalculation by the Soviet Union and excludes the possibility of a nuclear threat confined to Europe. In the light of the existing imbalance in the INF notably caused by the deployment of the SS-20, the deployment of United States ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing II missiles in Europe, which can clearly cover targets in the Soviet homeland, has to go on in the absence of a full INF agreement.

Ministers noted the importance of the High Level Group's work in examining the precise nature, scope and basis of the adjustments which would be required by longer-range INF deployments as well as possible implications of these deployments for the balance of roles and systems in NATO's nuclear armoury as a whole.

With regard to the Polish situation, Ministers referred to the strong declaration of Alliance Foreign Ministers of 11th January, 1982. They pointed out that the persistence of repression in Poland is eroding the political foundation for progress on the full agenda of issues which divide East and West.

Greece has expressed its views on the issues discussed in a statement included in the minutes.