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PRESS COMMUNIQUE M-2(85)31

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FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The North Atlantic Council met in Ministerial Session in Brussels on 12th and 13th December 1985. Ministers agreed as follows:

1. Encouraging developments have taken place in East-West relations since our meeting in Lisbon in June. They demonstrate the validity of our policy - reaffirmed in the Washington Statement - of preserving peace in freedom through adequate military strength and political solidarity and, on that basis, pursuing a more stable and co-operative relationship between the countries of East and West.

2. We welcome recent high level East-West contacts, notably the meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, which marks an important step in our efforts to develop a realistic and constructive dialogue with the countries of the East. We hope that this will lead to improved relations, more extensive contacts, including regular high level meetings, and broad co-operation on the full range of East-West questions. We shall all play our full part in making further progress. We call upon the Soviet Union and its allies to join us in this endeavour.

3. Meanwhile, the continuing build-up of Soviet nuclear and conventional arms remains a major Allied concern. We do not seek military superiority. But we are determined to safeguard our security by maintaining adequate conventional and nuclear forces. Our strategy of deterrence has proved its worth in preserving peace, and remains fully valid.

The close and permanent link between North American and European Allies, which has kept the peace for 36 years, remains the basis of our collective security. Alliance cohesion will continue to be ensured through close consultations on all matters affecting our common interests and security. The value of these consultations has again been clearly demonstrated in recent months.

4. We are committed to substantive progress in arms control. This must be based on the criteria of strengthened stability, equitable and significant reductions, and effective verification.

5. We have reviewed the US-Soviet negotiations in Geneva on their strategic and intermediate range nuclear weapons, and on defence and space systems. These aim to prevent an arms race in space and terminate it on earth, limit and reduce nuclear arms and strengthen strategic stability. We strongly support US efforts in all three areas of negotiation. We welcome the agreement between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev to accelerate work at Geneva, in particular in areas where there is common ground, including the principle of 50% reductions in US and Soviet nuclear arms, appropriately applied.

The Allies concerned endorse the constructive proposals on US and Soviet INF systems recently tabled in Geneva by the US, and support the idea of an interim agreement. They reiterate their willingness to modify, halt, reverse, or dispense with longer range INF (LRINF) deployment as part of an equitable and verifiable arms control agreement. In the absence of such an agreement, they will continue to deploy LRINF missiles on schedule(1).

6. The Allies participating in the Vienna MBFR negotiations proposed on 5th December 1985 a verifiable agreement for US-Soviet ground force reductions, followed by a collective

(1) Denmark and Greece reserve their positions on the INF part of this paragraph.

no-increase commitment of three years on US and Soviet and NATO and Warsaw Pact forces. The proposal embodies associated measures which open the way to the establishment of reliable force levels and which are essential to verify compliance with the Agreement's provisions. It responds to an earlier Eastern proposal and represents an imaginative attempt to break a long-standing dead-lock.

7. We remain deeply concerned about the proliferation and use of chemical weapons. At the Geneva Conference on Disarmament we seek an effective and verifiable convention on a general and complete prohibition of such weapons and on the destruction of existing stockpiles. We strongly support the agreement between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev to accelerate their efforts to this end.

8. We call upon the Soviet and East European governments to implement effectively all provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and the Madrid Concluding Document. We note with regret that the Ottawa meeting on Human Rights and the Budapest Cultural Forum, although useful in themselves, revealed persisting deficiencies in the implementation of these documents, and were unable to reach common conclusions.

At the Stockholm Conference (CDE), an integral part of the CSCE process, we are actively working for early agreement consistent with the Madrid Mandate. Such an agreement would embody a substantial set of militarily significant confidence and security building measures, covering the whole of Europe, and give concrete expression and effect to the existing duty of all participating states to refrain from the threat or use of force.

All participating states reaffirmed their commitment to the Helsinki Final Act on its 10th anniversary. We seek to promote genuine and balanced progress in all its aspects, including those concerned with respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms of the individual, and those relating to co-operation between states. We remain committed to meaningful results at the forthcoming Berne meeting on human contacts. The Vienna Follow-up meeting will review all aspects of the CSCE process.

9. The maintenance of a calm situation in and around Berlin, including freedom of access to the city, remains of fundamental importance for East-West relations. The strict observance and full implementation of the Quadripartite Agreement are essential to this end. In this connection, we support all efforts to promote the prosperity and viability of the city. We also support the efforts of the Federal Republic of Germany further to develop inner-German relations as a significant contribution to peace and to the well-being of the people of a divided Germany, particularly the Berliners.

10. We urge the Soviet Union to end the unacceptable military occupation of Afghanistan, now approaching its seventh year, to withdraw its troops, and agree to a political solution restoring Afghanistan's independence and non-aligned status.

We emphasise the continuing need in Poland for genuine dialogue between the various elements of society and for national reconciliation.

We, for our part, respect the sovereignty and independence of all states. We will remain vigilant and will consult on events outside the Treaty area which might threaten our common security.

11. We strongly condemn terrorism and will continue to work to eliminate this threat. We invite all states to join us in this resolve.

12. We have examined ways of enhancing armaments co-operation among all the countries of the Alliance. This co-operation reflects our continuing concern for effective defence, particularly in the conventional field. In the light of our examination, we have decided to implement a strategy aimed at improving co-operation. This should give a fresh boost to the work being done in this field within the Alliance and lead in a short time to specific co-operative programmes encompassing both its European and North American members.

13. In the spirit of Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty, we reaffirm the importance of special programmes for less favoured partners and remain committed to promoting the stability and well-being of our community of free nations.

14. The Spring 1986 meeting of the Council in Ministerial Session will be held in Halifax, Canada, in May.

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The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain reserves his Government's position on the present Communique.