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PRESS COMMUNIQUE M-2(89)46

For Immediate Release
15th December 1989

NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL MINISTERIAL COMMUNIQUE
DECEMBER 1989

For the past two days, we have met for an intensive review of the accelerating political change in Central and Eastern Europe that is evidence of a profound transformation underway in the nature of post-war Europe. We stand at the threshold of a new era in which the democratic values which are at the heart of our Alliance and part of the European heritage are increasingly shared throughout the continent. Our task is to help advance and consolidate that welcome movement towards greater freedom within conditions of peace and strengthened stability. We have discussed ways to seize new opportunities to bring our vision of an undivided Europe of the future to reality.

I

A Period of Historic Change

1. Since our meeting of Heads of State and Government in May, there have been increasingly dramatic advances towards greater democracy and freedom in most Eastern European countries. Through the long dreamt-of opening of borders, the free flow of people and ideas between the countries of East and West has accelerated. There has been widening recognition of the need for reform towards more market-oriented economies and individual choice.

2. These changes testify to the indomitable spirit of the people in each of these countries. They confirm our long-held conviction that the aspirations common to all people to fundamental rights and freedoms will ultimately prevail in the whole of Europe.

3. Positive change amongst Soviet allies in Europe has been given impetus and unprecedented margin for action by the reforms the Soviet Union has undertaken in the domestic, political and economic spheres and in a reorientation of its foreign policy that breaks with the past in a number of fundamental respects. As the Soviet Union continues to translate such policies into consistent and credible action, the possibilities for increased mutually beneficial co-operation between the countries of the East and the West will substantially increase.

4. There has been significant progress in expanding constructive dialogue and co-operative action into a broader range of fields. Contacts and exchanges, including in the military domain, have multiplied. There is progress and hope in the ongoing arms control negotiations. Our countries have recently intensified high-level dialogue with the Soviet Union and other countries of the East. In this regard, we have especially welcomed the meetings of Presidents Bush and Mitterrand, Chancellor Kohl, and Prime Ministers Thatcher, Andreotti and Mulroney with Soviet President Gorbachev, and we have noted the bilateral declarations issued.

5. We are aware that the current processes of change underway are still at an early stage and the progress achieved must be consolidated. Many problems remain. The rule of law and democratic government through free elections have yet to be fully institutionalised. In many instances, basic rights are still denied and the pace towards genuine democracy is uneven. Furthermore, we cannot ignore the military realities that our Alliance continues to face and which lie at the heart of Europe's security problems. Important differences remain with the Soviet Union over various regional conflicts, affecting opportunities for overall progress in East-West relations.

Overcoming the Division of Europe

6. We have called for these far-ranging changes since the inception of our Alliance. We have long sought a just and lasting order of peace in Europe, based on full respect for the human rights and political freedoms of all individuals, and on the security of all states from threats of aggression or intimidation. Building upon our dual approach to East-West relations contained in the Harmel Report, the NATO Summit Declaration of this past May reaffirmed our continuing support for the development of these freedoms. At the meeting of the Alliance Heads of State and Government in Brussels on 4th December, we agreed to intensify the implementation of this concerted approach.

7. We want the reforms in Central and Eastern Europe to succeed peacefully and democratically. We are determined to facilitate and promote them without seeking one-sided advantage. We will scrupulously respect all the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, as we expect all other signatories to do. We do not seek to impair the legitimate security interests of any state.

8. We are aware that each country within Europe is unique and that this diversity must be respected and allowed to express itself. As regards Eastern Europe, it is up to each country there to solve its own problems through reforms from within. But we think we also can play a constructive rôle both within the framework of our Alliance and in our respective bilateral relations and regional co-operation efforts.

9. We are witnessing rapid progress towards democracy and freedom in the GDR and the Eastern sector of Berlin. The restoration of freedom of movement was a particularly moving event. The Wall, which has divided Berlin for nearly three decades, has been breached.

Fresh opportunities exist to overcome the division of Europe and thereby of Germany and in particular of Berlin. This new situation opens the way to increasingly close co-operation between the two German States.

We seek the strengthening of the state of peace in Europe in which the German people will regain its unity through free self-determination. This process should take place peacefully and democratically, in full respect of the relevant agreements and treaties and of all the principles defined by the Helsinki Final Act, in a context of dialogue and East-West co-operation. It also has to be placed in the perspective of European integration.

The Continued Importance of the Alliance

10. These events challenge us to look at our own responsibilities as Allies. The Atlantic Alliance serves as the essential basis for the security of our peoples. By keeping the peace for the past four decades it has enabled our peoples to prosper in freedom, and democratic values to serve as an inspiration for other societies. In the midst of change and uncertainty, the Alliance remains a reliable guarantor of peace. It will provide an indispensable foundation of stability, security and co-operation for the Europe of the future.

11. To that end, solidarity among the democracies of North America and Western Europe within the framework of the Alliance will continue to be essential. Our Alliance is based on the principle of the indivisibility of security for all member countries and its goal is that of war prevention. For the foreseeable future, there is no alternative to the Alliance strategy of deterrence for the prevention of war, based upon both nuclear and conventional forces. We shall ensure the viability and credibility of these forces, while maintaining them at the lowest possible level consistent with our security requirements. The presence of North American conventional and nuclear forces in Europe will remain vital.

12. We will continue to play a decisive rôle in the pursuit of timely and orderly progress of arms control and disarmament. We remain committed to the full and prompt achievement of the objectives set out in the Comprehensive Concept of Arms Control and Disarmament, adopted in May 1989.

13. At the same time, the Alliance will increasingly be called upon to carry out its political function. Recalling the origins of the North Atlantic Treaty as a political alliance built upon common fundamental values, our leaders affirmed at the May 1989 Summit that the Alliance must reintensify its own efforts to overcome the division of Europe. In doing so, it must take up new challenges. Our task therefore is to use actively and creatively the potential of our Alliance in the pursuit of political change within stability. Our political approach in support for positive change must be multifaceted and dynamic, seeking to encourage political pluralism, free flow of information, and co-operative action in dealing with common problems.

The Future of Europe

14. Our Alliance will make an essential contribution to the emergence of a Europe no longer divided. This most challenging of our common tasks transcends the resources of either Western Europe or North America alone. For that reason the Atlantic Alliance is unique in bringing together all our democracies in joint effort in support of our security and political objectives and providing a framework for broad co-operation among ourselves.

15. Looking to the future we recognise the outlines of the political architecture of a Europe made whole and free, in the emergence and shaping of which we are determined to play a full part. We will further work to strengthen Western political and economic structures. The process of European integration will be central to the future of Europe, and its institutions are already playing a significant rôle in encouraging the forces of reform forward in Central and Eastern Europe. This integration process must remain a point of reference and attraction for these forces. This represents a natural development that goes hand-in-hand with the continued close partnership between the North American and European members of the Alliance, the cohesion of which remains a critical stabilising factor. We value the rôle of EFTA in this emerging framework. We also recognise the growing rôle of the Council of Europe in the larger European perspective.

16. In this context, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) is destined to acquire a growing and central importance in all its aspects. It will continue to offer both an agreed set of principles for promoting peace, greater co-operation and democratic values and a means of giving these principles practical substance and effect.

II

Implementing our Approach

17. With a view to implementing the approach set out by Alliance Heads of State and Government at both their May 29th-30th and December 4th meetings in Brussels we have agreed on the following lines of action which are part of a continuing process:

18. We aspire to achieve the full promise of the CSCE process. Looking to the CSCE meetings scheduled over the next two years, we are determined to make full use of them as a means to promote peace and greater co-operation and to strengthen democratic institutions. The CSCE process in all of its aspects will bear fruit only if implemented in letter and spirit by all of the signatory countries, without exception. Thus, we are agreed on a renewed emphasis on full respect for the fundamental freedoms and rights within the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent commitments.

We are also committed to build upon the CSCE process. It has already brought encouraging results in the fields of confidence-building as an important element of security; human rights; economics; science and technology and environmental protection. We will pursue new opportunities in all of its fields. In particular, at the upcoming Copenhagen Conference on the Human Dimension we will explore ways to expand CSCE undertakings to include the explicit right to elections that are free and democratic. We will seek to energize the economic aspects of CSCE to focus on the practical questions involved in the transition to market-oriented economies. In this context, the Bonn Conference on Economic Co-operation could be an important step forward.

The Allies will be considering in the period ahead the usefulness and possible accomplishments of a CSCE meeting at a political level prior to the Helsinki Follow-up Meeting in 1992. A successful meeting would require careful preparation and clarity as to its intended purpose and goals.

19. Fundamental economic reform in Central and Eastern European countries will be necessary to strengthen and expand the basis for improved East-West economic relations. Consistent with our broad security concerns, we intend to encourage expanding economic and trade relations with the Eastern countries, in a differentiated approach, commensurate with the progress of their economic and political reforms and as a means of further strengthening these positive changes. Such relations - based on commercially sound terms, mutual interest and reciprocity - will pave the way to an increased integration of these countries into the international economic system, which we support. An important task of East-West economic co-operation will be to explore means to expand Western experience and know-how to Eastern countries, by establishing co-operative and training programmes and exchanges in technical and managerial fields. In this regard, we support the process of rationalising existing export controls through a co-ordinated approach that allows greater support for reform in the East and for Western investment in those countries while protecting our security interests.

We fully support the efforts of the 24 countries co-ordinated by the Commission of the European Community to provide economic assistance to Poland and Hungary and will continue to respond to the urgent needs of these countries. We welcome the December 13th Declaration of the Ministers of the Group of 24, in which we, in concert with our partners, have renewed our commitment to assistance for the restructuring of the Polish and Hungarian economies and expressed willingness to respond positively to other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and in particular the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, as well as Yugoslavia, at the time they put into place the necessary political and economic reforms.

20. Recent events have created new opportunities for the Allies to achieve the arms control objectives set out in the Alliance's Comprehensive Concept of Arms Control and Disarmament at the May Summit Meeting. This stressed the rôle of arms control as a vital and integral part of our security policy, and one which is embedded in our broader political agenda. We welcome recent high-level meetings which have helped to accelerate a range of arms control negotiations.

This is in particular true for the two distinct negotiations taking place within the framework of the CSCE process. Thus, the progress already achieved at the negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) in Vienna strengthens our belief that an agreement can be signed in 1990 that would represent an important step towards a stable military balance in Europe at lower levels of armaments. We will intensify our efforts within our High Level Task Force (HLTF) to achieve this agreement and will instruct our delegations in Vienna accordingly. Its entry into force, and the prompt completion thereafter of the agreed reductions and limitations, will be accompanied and supported by arrangements for effective verification. Bearing in mind that verification is a national responsibility, we will consider how the Allies can best organise themselves to contribute to this task.

The conclusion of the CFE agreement will bring us a dramatic step further towards our goal of providing security for all at greatly reduced levels of forces. Building upon this crucial agreement we will look beyond it to discuss among the Allies further steps in arms control as we have affirmed in our Comprehensive Concept of Arms Control and Disarmament.

At the same time we will also work to achieve results in the CSBM negotiations, given the importance of encouraging openness and predictability in military affairs and thereby reinforcing mutual confidence. Recognising the importance of expanded dialogue on military matters, we welcome the Seminar on Military Doctrine to be held in Vienna in January 1990 in the framework of the CSBM negotiations.

Our goals of confidence and security will be further enhanced by an agreement on an Open Skies regime, designed to encourage reciprocal openness on the part of the participating states and to allow the observation of military activities and installations on their territories. Today we have agreed on a common position for the Ottawa Conference to be held in February 1990. The basic elements of our approach are set out in an annex to this communiqué.

We welcome the intention of the United States and the Soviet Union to accelerate the START process to resolve all substantive issues and, if possible, to conclude a treaty by the June 1990 US/Soviet Summit.

Since the impetus given by the Paris Conference on chemical weapons, new encouraging developments, such as the Canberra Conference, have occurred. We view these events and the recent proposals by President Bush aiming at the accelerated destruction of chemical weapons as important contributions towards the earliest possible success of the Geneva negotiations on a comprehensive, effectively verifiable, worldwide chemical weapons ban.

21. We will seek to stimulate the free flow of information between the countries of East and West by fostering greater awareness of our democratic societies and institutions and through educational interchange and legislative exchanges with newly vitalised legislatures in reforming Eastern countries. In this spirit, and in keeping with the Declaration of May 1989, we have established the NATO Democratic Institutions Fellowships, the purpose of which is to promote the study of our democratic structures by individuals from both East and West.

22. We are aware that for our fellow citizens security is more than just the prevention of war and must be seen in a broader perspective. Our consultations within the Alliance will allow us to work together and with other countries in a number of fora to devise common responses to new threats. As part of our international efforts at various levels we are engaging in co-operative endeavours, including with countries of the East, in such areas of common interest as the spread of destabilising military technologies, the fight against environmental degradation, terrorism, drug trafficking and the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts. For example, we are encouraged by the results of the Sofia CSCE Conference on the Environment, which represents a useful step towards the comprehensive and continued attention that all states must devote to this serious problem of common concern.

23. Current developments in international relations will necessitate intensification of our process of consultation and, where appropriate, political coordination. This will demand optimum use of the procedures of the Alliance. The latter constitutes the only forum for permanent discussion between the Atlantic partners based on an integrated approach to political, economic and military elements of security. Consistent with the decision taken at the May 1989 Summit we have received from the Council in Permanent Session recommendations to this effect. As a result, we are determined to further strengthen our consultation process.

24. The Spring 1990 Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Ministerial Session will be held in the United Kingdom in June.

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ANNEX to
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OPEN SKIES

BASIC ELEMENTS

Agreed by the North Atlantic Council meeting
in Ministerial Session at NATO Headquarters, Brussels
on 14th and 15th December 1989

I. Introduction

1. On 12th May 1989, President Bush proposed the creation of a so-called "Open Skies" regime, in which the participants would voluntarily open their airspace on a reciprocal basis, permitting the overflight of their territory in order to strengthen confidence and transparency with respect to their military activities.

This proposal expanded on a concept that had already been proposed during the 1950s but had failed to reach fruition because of the unfavourable international political climate prevailing at the time.

Today, this new initiative has been made in a very different context as openness becomes a central theme of East-West relations and the past few years have been marked by important advances in the areas of confidence-building and arms control.

2. The provisions for notification and observation of military activities specified in the Helsinki Final Act were strengthened and made obligatory by the Stockholm Document concluded by the CDE in 1986.

With respect to arms control, in 1987, the INF Treaty, apart from its immediate goals, represented a very important precedent because of the extent of its verification provisions.

All this leads one to expect today that even more spectacular advances will be achieved in the near future. In particular, a two-pronged effort is under way in Vienna: on the one hand, to deepen the measures for confidence-building and transparency among the 35 countries of the CSCE, and on the other, to reach an unprecedented agreement between the countries of the Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Treaty Organization on the elimination of large numbers of conventional arms.

Furthermore, one awaits important developments in other sectors of disarmament such as chemical weapons and the Soviet-American strategic arms negotiations.

3. All of these agreements will naturally require their own verification regimes, often of a highly intrusive nature. Moreover, the specific provisions of each verification treaty will be supplemented by the habitual means by which countries verify compliance with agreements (national technical means).

It seems useful, however, particularly in the prevailing context of improved East-West relations, to reflect on other ways of creating a broadly favourable context for confidence-building and disarmament efforts.

In this context, the Open Skies concept has a very special value. The willingness of a country to be overflown is, in itself, a highly significant political act in that it demonstrates its availability to openness; aerial inspection also represents a particularly effective means of verification, along with the general transparency in military activities discussed above.

This double characteristic of an Open Skies regime would make it a valuable complement to current East-West endeavours, mainly in the context of the Vienna negotiations but also in relation to the other disarmament efforts (START, chemical weapons).

It would seem desirable to focus now on the European region, while also including the entire territories of the Soviet Union, the United States, and Canada. Accordingly, we will be ready to consider at an appropriate time the wish of any other European country to participate in the Open Skies regime. This element could be complementary to their efforts at confidence-building and conventional arms control and would conform to the objectives of those negotiations.

4. To this end, the Open Skies Regime should be based on the following guidelines:

- The commitment of the parties to greater transparency through aerial overflights of their entire national territory, in principle without other limitations than those imposed by flight safety or rules of international law.
- The possibility for the participants to carry out such observation flights on a national basis or jointly with their allies.
- The commitment of all parties to conduct and to receive such observation flights on the basis of national quotas.
- The establishment of agreed procedures designed to ensure both transparency and flight safety.

- The possibility for the parties to employ the result of such overflights to improve openness and transparency of military activities as well as ensuring compliance with current or future arms control measures.

II. Purpose

The basic purpose of Open Skies is to encourage reciprocal openness on the part of the participating states and to allow the observation of military activities and installations on their territories, thus enhancing confidence and security. Open Skies can serve these ends as a complement both to national technical means of data collection and to information exchange and verification arrangements established by current and future arms control agreements.

III. Participation and Scope

Participation in Open Skies is initially open to all members of the Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Treaty Organization. All territories of the participants in North America and Asia, as well as in Europe, will be included.

IV. Quotas

1. Open Skies "accounting" will be based on quotas which limit the number of overflights. The quotas will be derived from the geographic size of the participating countries. The duration of flights can also be limited in relation to geographic size. For larger countries, the quota should permit several flights a month over their territory. All of the parties will be entitled to participate in such observation flights on a national basis, either individually or jointly in co-operation with their allies.

2. Effective implementation of a quota system requires agreement that a country will not undertake flights over the territory of any other country belonging to the same alliance.

3. Quota totals for participating states should be established in such a manner that there is a rough correspondence between totals for NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization and, within that total, for the USSR and the North American members of NATO.

4. Every participant, regardless of size, would be obligated to accept a quota of at least one overflight per quarter.

5. Smaller nations, that is, those subject to the minimum quota, may group themselves into one unit for the purposes of hosting Open Skies overflights and jointly accept the quota that would apply to the total land mass of the larger unit.

V. Aircraft

The country or countries conducting an observation flight would use unarmed, fixed-wing civilian or military aircraft capable of carrying host country observers.

VI. Sensors

A wide variety of sensors would be allowed, with one significant limitation - devices used for the collection and recording of signals intelligence would be prohibited. A list of prohibited categories and types of sensors will be agreed among the participating states which will be updated every year.

VII. Technical Co-operation among Allies

Multilateral or bilateral arrangements concerning the sharing of aircraft or sensors, as well as the conduct of joint overflights, will be possible among members of the same alliance.

VIII. Mission Operation

1. Aircraft will begin observation flights from agreed, pre-designated points of entry and terminate at pre-designated points of exit; such entry and exit points for each participating state will be designated by that state and listed in an annex to the agreement.

2. The host country will make available the kind of support equipment, servicing and facilities normally provided to commercial air carriers. Provision will be made for refuelling stops during the overflight.

3. An observing state will provide 16 hours notification of arrival at a point of entry. However, if the point of entry is on a coast or at a border and no territory of the receiving state will be overflown prior to arrival at the point of entry, this pre-arrival period could be abbreviated.

4. The crew of the observation aircraft shall file a flight plan within six hours of its arrival at the point of entry.

5. After arrival and the filing of a flight plan, a 24 hour pre-flight period will begin. This period is to allow time to determine that there are no flight safety problems associated with the planned flight route and to provide necessary servicing for the aircraft. During this pre-flight period the aircraft will also be subject to intrusive but non-destructive inspection for prohibited sensors and recorders.

6. Prior to the flight, host-country monitors will be able to board the observation aircraft. During the flight they would ensure that the aircraft is operated in accordance with the flight plan and would monitor operation of the sensors. There would be no restrictions on the movement of the monitors within the aircraft during flight.

7. The flight will be from the agreed point of entry to an agreed point of exit, where the host country observers would depart the aircraft. The points of entry and exit could be the same. Loitering over a single location will not be permitted. Aircraft will not be limited to commercial air corridors. Observation aircraft may in principle only be prohibited from flying through airspace that is publicly announced as closed to other aircraft for valid air safety

reasons. Such reasons would include specific hazards posing extreme danger to the aircraft and its occupants. Each country will make arrangements to ensure that public announcements of such hazardous airspace are widely and promptly disseminated; each country will produce for an annex to the agreement a list of where these public announcements can be found. The minimum altitudes for such flights may vary depending upon air safety considerations. The extent of ground control over aircraft will be determined in advance by agreement among the parties on compatible rules such as those recognized by ICAO. In the application of these considerations and procedures, the presumption shall be on behalf of encouraging the greatest degree of openness consistent with air safety.

8. The operation of the Open Skies regime will be without prejudice to states not participating in it.

IX. Mission Results

The members of the same alliance will determine among themselves how information acquired through Open Skies is to be shared. Each party may decide how it wishes to use this information.

X. Transits

A transit flight over a participating state on the way to the participating state over which an observation flight is to be conducted shall not be counted against the quota of the transitted state, provided the transit flight is conducted exclusively within civilian flight corridors.

XI. Type of Agreement

The Open Skies regime will be established through a multilateral treaty among the parties.

XII. Open Skies Consultative Body

To promote the objectives and implementation of the Open Skies regime, the participating states will establish a body to resolve questions of compliance with the terms of the treaty and to agree upon such measures as may be necessary to improve the effectiveness of the regime.

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EXTRACTS FOR PUBLICATION FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

In addition to the Communiqué Foreign Ministers decided to publish the following extracts from the Minutes of their Meeting in Brussels on 14th and 15th December 1989.

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND ASSISTANCE WITHIN THE ALLIANCE

The Ministers noted a personal report by the Secretary General which examined the conditions in the economically less favoured members of the Alliance and outlined Western efforts in economic assistance to and co-operation with these countries. A mixed picture of good intentions and encouraging developments in some areas, and slow progress in others, has emerged.

The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of continued assistance and co-operation at increasing levels. It was particularly noted that efforts to help the emerging democracies in the Warsaw Treaty Organization should not be at the expense of our own Allies.

The Secretary General's report also underlined the unsatisfactory level of military assistance.

THE SITUATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Ministers noted the report on the Situation in the Mediterranean. In view of the actual and potential impact on Alliance security of events in the area, they requested the Council in Permanent Session to continue to consult on the question and to submit further reports at their future meetings.

ARMAMENTS CO-OPERATION AND PLANNING

Ministers examined the report by the Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD). They noted with particular satisfaction that the trial of a NATO Conventional Armaments Planning System (CAPS) has now been completed and is being implemented on the basis of comprehensive armaments goals. The situation will have to be reviewed after the next two cycles to determine whether to continue the system. Ministers reaffirmed the importance they attach to this major Alliance initiative.

Ministers reviewed CNAD progress in a range of co-operative armaments projects, including those being pursued as a result of United States legislation, and welcomed the positive contribution made by these co-operative projects to the maintenance of a credible conventional defence posture.

Ministers noted with interest the CNAD's adoption of a mechanism to facilitate the practical involvement of countries with developing defence industries in selected co-operative armaments projects.

Ministers also noted with interest that the CNAD planned, in the course of 1990, to examine the impact of CFE on defence procurement, and issues stemming from the opening of the defence equipment market within NATO. They looked forward to receiving the results of these reviews.

SCIENCE COMMITTEE

Ministers took note of the Secretary General's Report on the activities of the Science Committee.

They praised the high level of the programme, now in existence for more than 30 years. They expressed satisfaction over the agreement on redistribution in the fellowship programme and over the recently launched special programme on global climate change.

They noted that the Science for Stability Programme continues to prove effective in developing the technological capabilities of Greece, Portugal and Turkey.

COMMITTEE ON THE CHALLENGES OF MODERN SOCIETY

Ministers took note of the Secretary General's Annual Report on the work of the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society and expressed satisfaction over the maintenance of its activities at a high level. They noted the completion, during the current year, of the studies on the noise produced by jet aircraft and on educational training in the environmental field.

Pilot studies on the desertification of developed areas and the passive use of the electromagnetic spectrum have been launched, while other equally significant studies are still in progress.

A report of the new initiatives launched to develop the activities of the CCMS, as mandated by the NATO Summit of May 1989, will be presented to the Atlantic Council by 15th March, 1990.