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**For immediate release
2 December 1999**

**MEETING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL
IN DEFENCE MINISTERS SESSION HELD IN BRUSSELS
ON 2 DECEMBER 1999**

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The North Atlantic Council met in Defence Ministers Session in Brussels on 2 December, 1999.
2. As this was our first formal meeting following the Washington Summit and Operation ALLIED FORCE, our discussions centred on assessing progress on the continuing adaptation of the Alliance as directed by the Heads of State and Government in the Summit Communiqué and in the new Strategic Concept, and on reviewing the situation in the Balkans.
3. Against the background of political developments in the region, we reviewed the status of NATO's comprehensive approach and continuing commitment to the promotion of security, stability, democracy, and the peaceful resolution of disputes in the Balkans, including the NATO-led operations for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, and the implementation of the South East Europe Initiative. As Defence Ministers, we welcome the fact that the NATO military authorities continue to monitor the situation across the region closely.
4. The conclusion of the Kosovo air campaign marked the achievement of the key objectives of the NATO Allies and their partners. The humanitarian catastrophe has ended; an international peace force (KFOR) has been successfully deployed; and the international community has assumed responsibility for the civil administration through UNMIK. The key to success was the cohesion of the Alliance. NATO has remained united and resolute throughout.
5. Considerable progress has been made since the completion of the air campaign. We are determined to play our part in meeting in full the aims of the international community as set out in UNSCR 1244.
6. Ethnically motivated violence must stop. While the security situation in Kosovo is relatively stable, continued diligence is required in an environment which is still tense and uncertain. We will not tolerate harassment against minorities or the

development of parallel structures that threaten UNMIK or KFOR objectives or the rule of law. We note with satisfaction that the ICTY prosecutor expressed appreciation for the support provided by KFOR. KFOR forces are now at full strength. We confirm that KFOR remains alert to, and capable of responding to, any external threat to the security of Kosovo, and strongly endorse KFOR's commitment to monitoring and providing security at borders and internal boundaries. KFOR will continue to provide a secure environment for all the inhabitants of Kosovo. We commend KFOR in particular for their work in protecting all minorities, including through maintaining an effective military presence in Serb minority areas. We welcome the successful completion of the demilitarisation of the KLA, and KFOR's efforts to combat illegal arms and intimidation from whatever quarter. We support KFOR's contribution to the establishment of the Kosovo Protection Corps, as a multi-ethnic and civil organisation. This was a vital step in giving to former combatants a perspective for integration into civilian life after the demilitarisation of the KLA.

7. We are pleased with the excellent co-operation between KFOR and UNMIK. We reaffirm our full support to UNMIK in its efforts to establish a fully functioning civil administration in Kosovo. We commend the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for his outstanding efforts to this end. It will be vital that UNMIK is adequately resourced if it is to complete its mission successfully.

8. The robust practical and political support which neighbouring countries provided throughout the air campaign, and which they continue to provide, was and remains critical to success. We noted our deep appreciation for this support and in particular welcome the ongoing efforts of Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ in supporting KFOR. NATO will continue to work closely with the countries of the region to build long-term and sustainable regional stability. In this context, we noted the Alliance's continuing work to develop the South East Europe Initiative to promote regional security and co-operation in the region, including through Partnership for Peace tools, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, and the Consultative Forum. The South East Europe Initiative supports and complements the objectives of the Stability Pact for South East Europe. Implementation of activities under the initiative has already begun, including efforts both at NATO Headquarters and in the countries themselves to harmonise assistance programmes. We look forward in this regard to the establishment by the countries concerned, with the support of Allies, of a Security Assistance Co-operation Group and speedy implementation of other measures to increase the effectiveness of such assistance and to promote regional co-operation and transparency on security issues. We welcome the ideas already put forward by countries in the region in this respect, and the existing co-operation mechanisms they have established, and encourage them to make progress on activities such as the proposed exchange of representatives among national military headquarters and government ministries. We directed the Council in Permanent Session to report progress in all these areas at our next meeting.

9. We welcomed the progress that has been achieved in Bosnia-Herzegovina including the development of civil institutions; increases in the level of refugee returns, including to minority areas; progress in civil reconstruction; reductions in arms holdings; and the development of the role of the Standing Committee on

¹ Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Military Matters. We commended SFOR's role in this process, which has permitted a substantial restructuring of the force, including a reduction by about a third of the current strength which should be complete early next year. We are confident that it will result in a more flexible force capable of contributing fully to the maintenance of a secure environment in support of the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. We endorsed SFOR's close working relationship with the High Representative and other civil agencies in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in particular SFOR's continuing strong support for the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia, including through the continuing successful detention of persons indicted for war crimes. At the same time we realise that more needs to be done and we are committed to ensuring that progress continues, including through further detentions, and attach priority to the campaign against corruption, to continuing refugee returns, and to further reductions in arms, force levels and military budgets. We commend the High Representative's efforts and fully support his initiative gradually to shift responsibility to the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina for their own internal affairs. We support his recent decision to remove from office various public officials who have obstructed the implementation of the Dayton accords.

10. We are concerned about the lack of progress towards a democratic and peaceful FRY taking its place in the international community, which remains our goal. We are also concerned about the tensions between Serbia and Montenegro and urge all concerned to refrain from any destabilising measures.

11. We are grateful for the very substantial contribution that NATO's Partners, including Russia and Ukraine, and other nations are making to efforts to bring peace and stability to the Balkans. We expressed our deepest appreciation for the outstanding skill, courage and determination with which the service men and women of all nations are undertaking their duties in both SFOR and KFOR, as well as during the air campaign.

12. We are determined to draw on our experience during the Kosovo conflict to prepare ourselves better for any such contingencies in the future, and to continue building a more effective Alliance. The campaign underlined the importance of planning for a wide range of possible contingencies and the need for determination in the conduct of operations. It demonstrated the need to enhance the capabilities of Allies' military forces – and particularly the forces of European Allies – to engage more effectively in the most complex aspects of modern peace support operations, and to improve their readiness and availability to deploy forces at short notice.

13. We remain deeply concerned about the situation in the North Caucasus. Recognising Russia's territorial integrity and Russia's right to protect itself against terrorism, we urge Russia to exercise the fullest restraint, cease the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force which has given rise to severe hardship for the civilian population, and take urgent steps towards a political solution building on the commitments of Istanbul and the role of the OSCE. We call upon Russia to facilitate the provision of humanitarian relief to those in need and to work co-operatively with international organisations. Finally, we urge Russia to ensure that the conflict does not spread to other states, bearing in mind the importance of regional stability and security.

14. Responding to the new demands of the approach to Alliance security set out in the new Strategic Concept, the Defence Capabilities Initiative agreed in Washington will ensure that the Alliance's forces can deploy quickly, can be supplied, reinforced and sustained for an extended period away from their home bases, and can operate more effectively, be better protected, and be supported by effective command and control arrangements. Drawing on the lessons learned from Alliance operations in the Balkans, the Defence Capabilities Initiative will promote greater interoperability among Alliance forces and, where applicable, also between Alliance and Partner forces. The Initiative will also strengthen European capabilities and the European pillar of NATO. Implementing the Defence Capabilities Initiative will require a sustained effort by Allies as well as by NATO bodies to focus their efforts on the important capability areas identified by the Initiative, to ensure force structures are properly balanced to meet anticipated requirements, to pursue creative approaches to overcoming shortfalls in capabilities, and to provide sufficient resources to meet the challenges of the future. Implementation of DCI is first and foremost a national responsibility. However, co-operative and collective arrangements and mechanisms, including multi-national, joint and common funding, will also have to make an important contribution.

15. We have reviewed the state of implementation of DCI. We are encouraged by the useful initial results achieved to date, both within NATO and in national programmes. We are pleased with the progress in implementing the Multi-national Joint Logistic Centre Concept including in the staffing of the MJLC positions and the refinement of its new operational doctrine. We also noted ongoing work to develop clearinghouse mechanisms on multi-national formations on which a first conference will take place later this month, and the acceleration of work to develop a system architecture for NATO Consultation, Command and Control. In order to continue this initial progress, we directed that further vigorous efforts to implement DCI be undertaken and have asked for a progress report at our next meeting.

16. Work on the development of the European Security and Defence Identity within the Alliance continues as set out in the Washington Summit Communiqué and the Strategic Concept. In this context, an initial exchange of views has taken place on the question of relations with the European Union, on the practical arrangements for supporting EU-led operations, and on the participation issue.

17. We applaud the determination of all European Allies to take the necessary steps to strengthen European military capabilities. These improvements will both strengthen the ability of Allies to contribute to Alliance missions, and will also contribute to strengthening the capability for EU-led operations. We are following closely ongoing work in the EU and are looking forward to EU initiatives which may emerge from the Helsinki Summit, notably in relation to the development of defence capabilities avoiding unnecessary duplication, expecting that these initiatives and those arising from NATO's DCI will be mutually reinforcing, and in the confidence that a stronger Europe means a stronger Alliance. On this basis, we look forward to building a close relationship between NATO and the European Union.

18. Meanwhile, the Alliance continues to work with the WEU to complete and implement arrangements to facilitate co-operation between the two organisations in the event of a WEU-led military operation using NATO assets and capabilities. We look forward to exercising these arrangements in a crisis management exercise between NATO and the WEU scheduled for February 2000. We appreciate the

information we have received on the outcome of the WEU Audit of assets and capabilities available for Petersberg tasks as approved by WEU Ministers at their Luxembourg meeting.

19. We underline the risk to international and regional stability posed by the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The principal non-proliferation goal of the Alliance and its members is to prevent proliferation from occurring, or, should it occur, to reverse it through diplomatic means. We urge all countries to accede to and fully implement the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. We are determined to achieve progress on a legally binding protocol including effective verification measures to enhance compliance and promote transparency that strengthens the implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We emphasise the importance of universal accession and adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

20. The Alliance is making progress in implementing the Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative (WMDI). The new Weapons of Mass Destruction Centre will improve co-ordination of all WMD-related activities at NATO Headquarters, as well as strengthen non-proliferation related political consultations and defence efforts to improve the preparedness of the Alliance. We look forward to establishing the WMD Centre in early 2000. Significant progress has been made in defining the tasks of the WMD Centre. The specifications of a WMD intelligence and information database are under active consideration, with the aim of improving the quality and increasing the quantity of intelligence and information-sharing among Allies. Finally, we are continuing to prepare for renewed consultations with Russia under the Permanent Joint Council on these matters, and we welcome the initiation of proliferation-related discussions with Ukraine in the NATO-Ukraine Commission. We are determined to improve our capabilities to address appropriately and effectively the risks associated with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means, which also pose a potential threat to the Allies' populations, territory and forces.

21. Work also continued on other aspects of NATO's internal adaptation. The activation of the headquarters of the new command structure began on 1 September. The new command structure will provide the Alliance with the capacity to command and control the full range of the Alliance's military missions, including through the use of deployable combined and joint headquarters, in particular CJTF headquarters. The final phase of the implementation of the Combined Joint Task Force Concept, which has begun, will provide the Alliance with an important new tool for crisis management in the next century. In addition, NATO's military authorities are preparing guidance on the military implementation of the Strategic Concept. It will be followed by a review of the force structure which will lead to a more effective response to future risks and threats. In parallel, NATO's military authorities are updating NATO's operational planning procedures, adapting them in order to take into account the lessons learned from the recent operations and more generally to respond to operational requirements.

22. We reaffirm that NATO remains open to new members under Article 10 of the Washington Treaty. The Alliance expects to extend further invitations in coming years to nations willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and as NATO determines that the inclusion of these nations would serve the overall political and strategic interests of the Alliance and the inclusion

would enhance overall European security and stability. We welcome the considerable interest and active participation by aspirant countries in the Membership Action Plan, including its defence and military aspects. They have submitted Annual National Programmes, which establish a basis for taking the MAP process forward, including through Alliance assessment and feedback on their progress towards strengthening their ability to meet the requirements and obligations of membership. Preparation for possible future membership is supported by Partnership for Peace activities. Tailored Individual Partnership Programmes and Partnership Goals for aspirants will be of key importance in support of improving the effectiveness and interoperability of their armed forces. We will consider progress by each aspirant in the defence and military field at our next Ministerial meeting.

23. We welcomed the decision of Ireland to become, as of 1 December 1999, the newest member of the Partnership for Peace. This testifies to the central role PfP has come to play in Euro-Atlantic security and stability.

24. We appreciate the progress being made in implementing the Enhanced and more Operational Partnership, which was launched at the Washington Summit to reinforce the operational capability of Partnership for Peace. We look forward to the approval tomorrow of the first Ministerial Guidance of the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) and the development of Partnership Goals as a substantial step forward in bringing the force planning process for Partners closer to that of the Alliance and achieving enhanced capabilities.

25. We welcome the progress that has been made in involving Partners as troop contributing nations in consultations, planning, conduct and political oversight of the present operations in the Balkans, in accordance with the Political-Military Framework (PMF) for NATO-led PfP operations. We endorse the Operational Capabilities Concept which will reinforce PfP's operational capabilities and improve the capability and interoperability of Partner forces, as well as enhance the Alliance's overall ability to put together tailored force packages to mount and sustain future NATO-led PfP operations along the lines of SFOR and KFOR. The Operational Capabilities Concept will evolve to reflect further development and implementation of the concept in light of new challenges to multinational operations involving both Allies and Partners. We appreciate the substantial progress achieved so far on the Training and Education Enhancement Programme and look forward to the submission of the fully developed programme at our next meeting in Spring 2000. We have tasked the Council in Permanent Session to report progress on these important initiatives at our Spring 2000 meeting.

26. We continue to attach great importance to a close relationship with Russia as envisaged in the NATO-Russia Founding Act. In addition to our joint efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there has been excellent co-operation between NATO and Russian forces in Kosovo, and we have continued to consult regarding Kosovo in the Permanent Joint Council. We regret that Russia has not yet been willing to resume the full spectrum of co-operation agreed in the Founding Act. We urge Russia to reconsider her policy in this respect and look forward to expanding our consultations and co-operation in the future, including in the framework of the EAPC and the Partnership for Peace.

27. We attach great importance to the further development of our distinctive partnership with Ukraine. We pledge our continued support for the Joint Working

Group on Defence Reform and note the valuable work of the NATO Liaison Office and of the Documentation and Information Centre in Kyiv. We look forward to the meeting tomorrow of the NATO-Ukraine Commission.

28. The Mediterranean is an area of special interest to the Alliance. We are pleased with the progress achieved in enhancing the Mediterranean Dialogue as part of the Alliance's co-operative approach to security. We welcome the fact that the 2000 Work Programme will include a substantial number of military activities. We also emphasise the importance of tailored defence-related activities, and, in this context, of military contacts through visits to Mediterranean Dialogue countries. To this end we direct the Council in Permanent Session to submit a progress report to us on these issues at our next meeting.

29. The Agreement on the Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, signed at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul on 19 November, will ensure the continuing viability of the CFE Treaty as a cornerstone of European security and stability. The Allies made comprehensive proposals which served as an important basis for the negotiations, in particular for the introduction of a system of nationally based equipment limits and improvements to the Treaty provisions concerning stability, transparency and predictability. The Adapted Treaty will enhance security throughout Europe, not least as it introduces a more constraining structure of National and Territorial Ceilings, while permitting sufficient deployment flexibility for routine training purposes and effective crisis management, thereby ensuring NATO's ability to fulfil its responsibilities. We are pleased that the Adapted Treaty will permit accession by new States Parties and strengthen Treaty requirements concerning host nation consent to the presence of foreign forces.

30. We welcome the important political commitments contained in the CFE Final Act, in particular the bilateral agreements reached by Russia and Georgia, and Russia and Moldova, on withdrawal of Russian Forces. But it is essential that the CFE Treaty remains effective and credible. NATO countries are concerned about continued Russian non-compliance with the Treaty's Article V ("flank") limits. We note Russia's commitment to comply with all the Treaty's provisions and limitations. We also note Russia's assurances that its exceeding of CFE limits will be of a temporary nature. NATO Allies expect Russia to honour its pledge to comply with CFE limits as soon as possible and, in the meantime, to provide maximum transparency regarding its forces and weapons deployed in the North Caucasus, in accordance with the CFE Treaty and the Vienna Document. Entry into force of the Adapted Treaty can only be envisaged in the context of compliance by all States Parties with the Treaty's limitations. It is on this basis that we will work towards bringing the Adapted Treaty into force. Pending the completion of this process, the continued implementation of the existing Treaty and its associated documents remains crucial.

31. The Alliance attaches importance to preserving strategic stability. In this respect, we call on Russia to ratify the START II Treaty without delay. This would pave the way for considerable reductions of nuclear arsenals and would allow negotiations on a START III Treaty aiming at further far-reaching reductions on nuclear weapons stockpiles. We remain committed to an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and call upon all countries to accede to and implement the Treaty as soon as possible. We support the early conclusion of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty.

32. We welcomed the completion of the NATO Armaments Review conducted under the auspices of the Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD). The Review sets out new arrangements for the harmonisation of armaments-related requirements to meet Alliance defence capability needs, the standardisation of materiel in pursuit of broad-based interoperability, co-operative equipment procurement and a more effective use of defence research and technology resources. A key result of the Review will be to enhance co-ordination particularly through the NATO Committee for Armaments Co-ordination of materiel-oriented matters among all NATO bodies concerned and thereby contribute directly to the implementation of the Defence Capabilities Initiative. A NATO Research and Technology Strategy has been developed to guide the work of the Alliance in this field. Both the Review and the Strategy will help sustain NATO's distinct role in the field of armaments in the years ahead. We welcome the developments within the European defence industry and their contribution to the strengthening of the European capabilities. Viable defence industries on both sides of the Atlantic are critical to the efficient functioning of NATO military forces. To that end, we welcome continued transatlantic defence industrial co-operation to help ensure interoperability, economies of scale, competition and innovation. In this context, we look forward to an increase in transatlantic co-operation in the field of research, development and production of armaments in a spirit of balance and partnership as an important factor of the cohesion of the Alliance.

33. In order to enhance the effectiveness of Civil-Military Co-operation, confirmed in the Strategic Concept as essential to the Alliance's operational capability, a fundamental review of civil emergency planning in NATO is nearing completion. This review will result in a closer working relationship between the civil and military communities and will permit a more effective use of civil resources in such Alliance activities as peace support operations. The important contribution of Partners to joint operations will also benefit from the outcome of the review as they become more and more involved in civil-military planning activity. In this regard, Partners' growing involvement in CEP activities which, in addition to their interoperability in disaster response through the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Relief Co-ordination Centre, now also includes arrangements for civil support to the military, is proving highly useful.

34. NATO common funding plays a significant role in support of the NATO command structure in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. As part of the continued adaptation of the common funded programmes to Alliance security requirements as set out in the new Strategic Concept, steps have been taken to improve their transparency and the focusing of the common-funded resource allocation process. We welcome the initiatives set out to further improve this process.

35. Terrorism in all its forms constitutes a serious threat to peace, security and stability that can threaten the territorial integrity of states. We reiterate our condemnation of terrorism and reaffirm our determination to combat it in accordance with our international commitments and national legislation. The terrorist threat against deployed NATO forces and NATO installations requires the consideration and development of appropriate measures for their continued protection, taking full account of host nation responsibilities.