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PRESS COMMUNIQUE M-NAC-2 (99)166

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15th December 1999

MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL  
HELD AT NATO HEADQUARTERS, BRUSSELS,  
ON 15 DECEMBER 1999

FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ

1. At our meeting today, we recalled NATO's major achievements in 1999:

- We set forth NATO's vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and approved an updated Strategic Concept at the Washington Summit, where we also celebrated the Alliance's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary;
- We admitted as new members the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland; and
- We contributed decisively, in particular through the conduct of our air campaign and the subsequent deployment of KFOR, to the international community's objective of creating the basis for long-term peace and stability in Kosovo.

We reviewed progress in implementing the Washington Summit decisions and took steps to further adapt the Alliance to the new security environment. We reaffirmed the Alliance's commitment to its fundamental security tasks, as set out in the Strategic Concept, and the importance of our individual and collective efforts to achieve our guiding objective of enhancing the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area.

2. Against the background of political developments in the Balkans, we reviewed the status of NATO's comprehensive approach and continuing commitment to the promotion of security, stability, peace and democracy, and the peaceful resolution of disputes in the region, including through the NATO-led operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo, and the implementation of NATO's South-East Europe Initiative. Through the Council in Permanent Session and the NATO Military Authorities, we continue to monitor closely the situation across the region.

3. We pay tribute to the service-men and women of all nations who are serving in the Balkans for their professionalism and dedication to the cause of peace and stability. We

express deep sympathy to the families of those who have lost their lives and to those who have been injured in the cause of peace.

4. The Kosovo air campaign, which demonstrated the cohesion and unity of the Alliance and its determination to act, reinforced the diplomatic efforts of the international community and achieved the key objectives of the NATO Allies and their Partners. The humanitarian catastrophe has ended; some 850,000 refugees have returned; a NATO-led international peace force (KFOR) has been successfully deployed; and the international community has assumed responsibility for the civil administration through the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

5. We are determined to play our part in meeting in full the aims of the international community as set out in UN Security Council Resolution 1244. We remain committed to a peaceful, multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo where all peoples can live in peace and security and enjoy universal human rights and freedoms on an equal basis, including through participation in democratic institutions.

We noted the progress made in restoring peace and stability since the deployment of KFOR in Kosovo in accordance with UNSCR 1244, in particular the reduction in violence and the re-establishment of civil institutions. We commend the work undertaken by UNMIK and are pleased with the excellent level of co-ordination and co-operation established between KFOR and UNMIK. Close civil-military relations are essential for the success of our common goals and of our peace-building efforts in the region. In this respect, we have invited the UN Secretary General's Special Representative, Dr. Kouchner, to tomorrow's meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.

6. While progress has been achieved, much remains to be done, in particular the continued protection of all ethnic groups and minorities. We condemn all acts of violence and intimidation from whatever quarter. We underline KFOR's determination to put an end to ethnically motivated violence and to act swiftly and decisively against all perpetrators, including through maintaining an effective military presence in Serb minority areas. We strongly commend KFOR's determination to combat arms trafficking, illegal possession of weapons, the development of parallel structures that threaten KFOR or UNMIK objectives or the rule of law, to monitor and provide security at the borders and boundaries of Kosovo and to work with UNMIK to avoid cantonisation.

The achievement of the de-militarisation and the dissolution of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) under the supervision of KFOR was an important step in establishing an environment for post-conflict reconciliation. We welcome the establishment of a civilian, multi-ethnic Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) as another important step in the development of a civil society for the benefit of all communities. Close control of the KPC by UNMIK and KFOR is essential. We underscore KFOR's determination to continue to provide day-to-day operational direction and tasking, under the overall authority of the United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative.

KFOR will continue to co-operate closely with UNMIK, providing support to its efforts towards establishing a fully functioning administration and democratic institutions, promoting the rule of law and respect for human rights, and assuring the safe return of all

refugees and displaced persons to their homes. It will be vital that UNMIK is adequately funded and staffed to fulfil its mission, particularly in the area of local administration and civilian international police. We will continue to do our utmost to provide a secure environment and we will give appropriate support for the conduct of free and fair elections under the auspices of the OSCE, which are to be held next year. We will also continue to provide strong support for the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

7. We urge all community leaders in Kosovo, irrespective of their ethnic background, to work together and with the international community in the reconstruction of Kosovo and the establishment of a democratic society founded on the rule of law, tolerance and respect for human rights. We call in particular on the leadership of the Kosovar Albanian community to renounce violence, to demonstrate its commitment to a tolerant, democratic, multi-ethnic Kosovo, and to co-operate with UNMIK and KFOR against those who advocate and practice violence. In this context we welcome the creation by UNMIK of a Joint Interim Administrative Structure, and in particular the establishment of an Interim Administrative Council. We are encouraged by Kosovar Albanian agreement to participate in these structures, and underline the importance of early participation by representatives of all Kosovar peoples, including the Serb community. We expect all parties to co-operate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, including by facilitating the conduct of its investigations. The continuing support of the international community will depend upon an adequate response to these requirements.

8. Our common efforts in Kosovo demonstrate the value of the concept of mutually reinforcing institutions, a concept long championed by the Alliance. In this respect, our individual bilateral efforts, the substantial role of the EU and that of other international bodies, are making a decisive contribution to the economic reconstruction of Kosovo. We also commend the UNHCR for organising relief efforts and resettlement, the UN Mine Action Centre for its role in co-ordinating the removal of mines, and the OSCE for its institution-building, human rights work and training of Kosovar police. We also express our appreciation for the significant role played by the many non-governmental organisations.

9. We express our deep appreciation for the robust practical and political support provided by Partner countries of the region throughout the air campaign and thereafter. This support was and remains critical to success. In particular, we reiterate our appreciation for the ongoing efforts of Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup> in supporting KFOR.

We are grateful to NATO's Partners and other nations for the substantial contributions they are making to efforts to bring peace and stability to the Balkans, which are the practical expressions of these countries' commitment to our shared values.

10. The crisis in Kosovo demonstrated the resilience of the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement. The Alliance remains committed to supporting a peaceful future for Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single democratic state composed of two multi-ethnic Entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. We are encouraged by the

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<sup>1</sup> Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

continuing progress in the full implementation of the Dayton Agreement. We welcome the appointment of Ambassador Petritsch as High Representative, whose vigorous approach to the implementation of the Dayton Agreement we strongly support. We note in particular the progress made in:

- the development of functioning civil institutions;
- increases in the level of refugee returns, especially to areas in which returnees are in the minority;
- civil reconstruction;
- reduction in arms holdings; and
- the development of the role of the Standing Committee on Military Matters.

We also welcome the progress made in the ongoing arms control and confidence building negotiations in the framework of the Dayton Agreement with the goal of establishing a regional balance in and around the former Yugoslavia. We urge all parties to demonstrate fully their commitment to the Dayton process and their co-operation with the High Representative, as the basis for further progress in transferring administrative responsibility to local authorities.

11. SFOR has helped to secure a more stable and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result, it has been able to undertake significant restructuring. Early next year a smaller, more flexible force will be in place and will remain fully capable of carrying out its mandate. SFOR will continue to contribute to the maintenance of a secure environment and to give targeted and focused support to civilian implementation. In this respect, we fully endorse SFOR's close working relationship with the High Representative and other civil agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in particular SFOR's continuing strong support for the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in bringing indicted war criminals to justice.

12. Despite this encouraging progress, important challenges remain, such as:

- the return of displaced persons to minority areas;
- further reduction of both Entities' armed forces;
- further progress in humanitarian de-mining;
- improving the effectiveness of all common institutions, notably the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and co-operation between Entities;
- transferring to the ICTY persons indicted for war crimes;
- the fight against corruption, organised crime and illegal secret services;
- judicial and police reform; and
- the establishment of a state border service.

Accordingly, we expect the Entities to work together fully in co-ordination with the Presidency, the Council of Ministers and on all other levels. We applaud the spirit of co-operation exhibited among the common institutions and between authorities of both Entities during preparations for hosting the Stability Pact Summit. We call upon the Presidency to implement in full the commitments made in the New York Declaration of 15 November, and to support the work of the Standing Committee on Military Matters. We also demand that all parties fully co-operate with the ICTY, in particular by surrendering indictees

within their territory. Only on the basis of justice can a lasting peace be established. We emphasise the fundamental significance of implementing market oriented economic reforms.

Taken together, these steps will reinforce the efforts of the High Representative to make the leaders and authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina the "owners" of the process of peace implementation and open the way to the integration of their country into Euro-Atlantic institutions. As Co-chair of the Stability Pact Working Table on Security Issues, Bosnia and Herzegovina can play an important role in promoting stability in the region.

13. We remain concerned about continued tensions between Belgrade and the democratically elected government of Montenegro. We are therefore paying close attention to developments there. We call on both sides to resolve their differences in a peaceful and pragmatic way and refrain from any destabilising measures. We express our support for the objective of a peaceful and democratic FRY, which protects the rights of all minorities, including those in Vojvodina and Sandjak. This would open the way for the eventual return of the FRY to the Euro-Atlantic family of nations.

14. The forthcoming parliamentary and presidential elections in Croatia will be crucial for its future. We hope that the entire Croatian leadership will seize the chance to revitalise implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords, and demonstrate their commitment to democratic elections and due constitutional process. There is an opportunity for the next Croatian government to move towards a closer relationship with Euro-Atlantic institutions.

15. Our goal remains the integration of all the countries of South-East Europe into the Euro-Atlantic Community. To this end, we are building on the Alliance's already extensive co-operation in the region as evidenced by NATO's leadership of the SFOR and KFOR operations. The South-East Europe Initiative, launched at our Washington Summit, is also working to achieve this goal, including through PfP tools, the EAPC and the Consultative Forum, which all play valuable roles in our post-conflict efforts to win permanent peace in the region. Today we received a consolidated progress report on the South-East Europe Initiative and we note with satisfaction the range of activities already undertaken, by the countries in the region and by Allies, with the aim of harmonising assistance programmes for the states of the region, as appropriate.

NATO's South-East Europe Initiative promotes regional security and co-operation; it supports and complements the objectives of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, adopted by Ministers in Cologne in June and endorsed by Heads of State and Government at the Sarajevo Summit in July. NATO is participating fully in the work of the Regional Table and the Working Tables established to implement the Stability Pact. The Alliance will continue to contribute to the success of the Stability Pact by making available its wealth of experience and expertise in practical military and defence-related co-operation and by ensuring that our efforts complement and contribute to the goals of the Pact.

We welcome the constructive contribution of Partners and other nations of South-East Europe to the stabilisation of that region. We applaud the engagement of Montenegro in the Stability Pact and look forward to the time when the FRY will be able to play its rightful part in this endeavour.

We direct the Council in Permanent session to pursue vigorously the various efforts under the South-East Europe Initiative and the Alliance's contribution to the objectives of the Stability Pact, and to report on progress by the time of our next meeting.

16. In its Strategic Concept, NATO has committed itself to contribute to effective conflict prevention. Our common efforts to build peace and security in Kosovo, to support a peaceful future for Bosnia and Herzegovina and to enhance co-operation, including security co-operation, in South-Eastern Europe, are examples of such contributions by the Alliance, as are the recent initiatives to promote practical regional co-operation in the EAPC/PfP framework. We direct the Council in Permanent Session to continue to consider means to ensure an effective and coherent Alliance contribution to the efforts of the international community to prevent and defuse conflicts, and to make recommendations where and if appropriate.

17. Our experience in Kosovo has confirmed that NATO must continue to adapt and improve its defence capabilities to ensure the effectiveness of future multinational operations across the full range of Alliance missions. Implementation of the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI), agreed in Washington, will ensure that NATO's forces can meet the challenges of mobility, deployability, sustainability, effective engagement, survivability and interoperable and effective command, control and communications systems. The DCI will also promote greater interoperability among Alliance forces and, where applicable, between Allied and Partner forces. The DCI is essential to strengthening European defence capabilities and the European pillar of NATO, so that European Allies will be able to make a stronger and more coherent contribution to NATO. It will also improve their capability to undertake EU-led operations where the Alliance as a whole is not engaged. We are encouraged by the useful initial results achieved to date in implementing the DCI and look forward to further essential improvements in Alliance defence capabilities. Though the implementation of DCI is first and foremost a national responsibility, the provision of adequate resources, including multinational, joint and common funding arrangements, will be a critical factor.

18. The development of an effective ESDI will strengthen the Alliance, through which we remain ready to pursue common security objectives wherever possible. We are committed to reinforcing the Alliance's European pillar. Building on existing arrangements between NATO and the WEU as agreed in Berlin, and reaffirmed at our Washington Summit, we support the development within NATO of separable but not separate capabilities which could respond to European requirements and contribute to Alliance security. These developments will also result in a stronger and more balanced transatlantic relationship.

19. We have set in train work on the development of the European Security and Defence Identity within the Alliance as set out in the Washington Summit Communiqué and the Strategic Concept. In this context, we have initiated discussions in the Alliance to address means to ensure the development of effective mutual consultation, co-operation and transparency, building on the mechanisms existing between NATO and the WEU; participation of non-EU European Allies; as well as practical arrangements for assured EU access to NATO planning capabilities and for ready EU access to NATO collective assets and capabilities on a case-by-case basis and by consensus as set out at Washington.

20. Alliance work will proceed on the Washington Summit agenda, on an ongoing basis, taking into account the evolution of relevant arrangements in the EU. In this regard, we note the results of the European Council meeting in Helsinki on the strengthening of the common European policy on security and defence and on the development of modalities for EU/NATO relations, which represent a major contribution to the process of reinforcing our Alliance and its European pillar. We acknowledge the resolve of the European Union to have the capacity for autonomous action so that it can take decisions and approve military action where the Alliance as a whole is not engaged. We note that this process will avoid unnecessary duplication and does not imply the creation of a European army. In this regard:

- a) We note the European Union's decision to set a common European headline goal and to develop collective capability goals to improve European military capabilities. The contribution of the non-EU European Allies to this process is and will be important. We applaud the determination of all European Allies to take the necessary steps to strengthen their defence capabilities. The EU's headline and capability goals and the objectives arising from NATO's DCI will be mutually reinforcing, using – subject to the necessary decisions - existing defence planning procedures including, as appropriate, those available in NATO and the Planning and Review Process of the PFP, noting that in addition EU Ministers will develop a method of consultation and a regular review of progress made.
- b) We reiterate our readiness to define and adopt, in accordance with our decisions taken in Washington, the necessary arrangements for European Union ready access to separable but not separate NATO collective assets and capabilities, for operations in which the Alliance as a whole is not engaged militarily as an Alliance, respecting the requirements of NATO operations and the coherence of its command structure.
- c) We note the decision of the EU to set up, in future, appropriate structures to ensure the necessary dialogue, consultation and co-operation with European NATO members which are not members of the EU on issues related to European security and defence policy and crisis management. In this respect, we underline, as we did at the Washington Summit, the importance of finding solutions satisfactory to all Allies, for the necessary involvement of non-EU European Allies in these structures.

We note that the non-EU European NATO members will participate, if they so wish, in the event of an operation involving the use of NATO assets and capabilities, and that they will be invited, upon decision by the EU, to take part in other EU-led operations. We see these EU decisions as important steps to achieve the goals envisaged by our Heads of State and Government at the Washington Summit. Participation of non-EU European Allies will enhance the effectiveness of EU-led military operations and will contribute directly to the effectiveness and vitality of the European pillar of NATO.

- d) We recognise the European Union's decision to establish permanent political and military structures and interim bodies, and its commitment to develop, under the Portuguese Presidency, modalities for full consultation, co-operation and transparency between NATO and the EU. We note that this, as with all the tasks entrusted to the

Portuguese Presidency, is to be carried forward as a matter of priority. We reciprocate the EU's intention to develop appropriate modalities for a close and confident relationship between the two organisations. We welcome as a first step the informal contacts between the NATO Secretary General and the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy.

21. We welcome the participation in our discussions of Dr. Javier Solana. As Secretary General of the Western European Union, his presence symbolises the close relationship that has developed between NATO and the WEU. 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.

22. We direct the Council in Permanent Session to proceed with its work as set out at the Washington Summit, taking into account the developments described above, and report to us at our next meeting.

23. The Alliance reaffirms its commitment to remain open to new members. 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. The three new members will not be the last.

At the Washington Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government approved a Membership Action Plan (MAP) to reinforce NATO's commitment to the openness of the Alliance. We have received today a report on the implementation of the MAP to date. We are pleased that the MAP process has made an effective start and met with a positive response of the nine aspiring countries. Aspirants have submitted annual national programmes which enable the Alliance to provide them with direct advice, feedback and assistance on their preparations for possible future membership.

24. We encourage all aspirants to set themselves realistic, prioritised goals and timelines and to allocate the necessary resources to them. We stand ready to assist the aspirants in their efforts to meet the goals they have set. To this end, we will develop with them Planning Targets in the defence/military field and tailored PfP Individual Partnership Programmes. Meetings of the Council will take place next Spring with each aspirant to examine progress made. We will keep the enlargement process, including implementation of the MAP, under continual review. We expect the annual consolidated progress report on activities under the MAP at our next Ministerial.

25. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council remains the key forum for regular consultation on security and defence related issues between the Alliance and its Partners. We welcome the expansion of activities within the EAPC/PfP framework to promote practical co-operation, including regional co-operation notably in South-East Europe, as well as in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Enhanced co-operation in support of, *inter alia*, peacekeeping, global humanitarian mine action and addressing the challenges of small arms and light

weapons underline the role of the EAPC as a vital and dynamic institution in enhancing security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

26. We are pleased with the progress made in implementing the Washington Summit decision to further enhance the Partnership for Peace and make it more operational. We welcome the approval 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 processes of Partners closer to those of Allies. We also 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 Concept will continue to evolve. We appreciate the substantial progress achieved so far on the Training and Education Enhancement Programme. We look forward to a report by the Council in Permanent Session on progress made on these important initiatives at our Spring 2000 meeting.

27. We welcome the recent signing by Ireland of the PfP Framework Document and we look forward to close co-operation with Ireland in the PfP and EAPC.

28. We continue to attach importance to consultations and practical co-operation with Russia. Our aim remains to establish a strong, stable and enduring partnership within the framework of the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

29. We note the progress made in recent consultations in the PJC framework on issues relating to the operation in Kosovo. We note with satisfaction the valuable experience of practical co-operation between NATO and Russian forces both in SFOR and KFOR.

30. We encourage Russia to resume co-operation on the broad range of issues foreseen in the Founding Act and to engage actively in the EAPC and the Partnership for Peace. At the same time, we emphasise that the further development of our co-operation depends on Russia's respect for international norms and obligations.

31. We are deeply concerned about the conflict in Chechnya, continuing reports of civilian casualties there and the plight of displaced persons. We condemn, in particular, Russian threats against unarmed civilians, such as those in Grozny. We acknowledge the right of Russia to preserve its territorial integrity and to protect its citizens against terrorism and lawlessness. We condemn terrorism in all its manifestations but believe that Russia's pursuit of a purely military solution to the conflict is undermining its legitimate objectives. The continuing disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force against the civilian population is incompatible with the commitments Russia has undertaken within the OSCE and its obligations as a member of the United Nations and the Council of Europe. In this context, we also recall the principles enshrined in the NATO-Russia Founding Act. We therefore urge Russia to exercise the fullest restraint, to refrain from the use of force against civilians and protect their human rights, to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid to

those in need, and to co-operate fully with international relief agencies and to ensure security for their operations. Bearing in mind the importance of regional stability and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of neighbouring states, we are deeply concerned about the impact of the crisis of the entire Caucasus region and stress the need to avoid steps that would further undermine regional security.

We urge Russia to open all avenues for a political solution to the conflict. To this end, it is essential that the Russian government and Chechen representatives take meaningful steps toward a renewed dialogue. We also urge the Chechen authorities to condemn terrorism and to take action against it. We expect Russia to respect the commitments made in Istanbul and to make good use of today's visit by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to the region in order to facilitate a political process to end the conflict.

32. We welcome the progressive development of the NATO-Ukraine distinctive partnership in accordance with the Charter signed in Madrid in 1997. We are pleased that this partnership is providing a framework for co-operative initiatives such as the NATO Information and Documentation Centre in Kyiv, which is actively engaged with Ukrainian media, universities and think-tanks. We also note that a NATO Liaison Office has been operational in Kyiv since April, and is providing a valuable contribution to facilitating Ukraine's full participation in the Partnership for Peace programme and more generally, to enhancing co-operation between NATO and Ukrainian authorities.

33. We continue to support the efforts of the Joint Working Group on Defence Reform and remain prepared to provide advice, as appropriate, to assist Ukraine with the transformation of its defence establishment. In the economic area, we welcome the initiation of a programme for the retraining of retired military officers. Co-operation is also developing in the fields of civil emergency planning, air-traffic management, armaments-related partnership activities, defence research and technology, and science. We reiterate our view that a speedy ratification of the Status of Forces Agreement by Ukraine will further the goals of our co-operation.

34. We encourage Ukraine to move forward with its democratic and economic reforms, and reaffirm NATO's support for Ukraine's efforts to this end. In this context, we welcome Ukraine's commitment to exploit the full potential of the NATO-Ukraine Charter and express our appreciation for Ukraine's concrete contribution to peace and stability in the Balkans, in particular through its participation in KFOR. We look forward to today's meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission in Foreign Ministers' session.

35. The Mediterranean Dialogue is an integral part of the Alliance's co-operative approach to security since security in the whole of Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean. We are pleased with the progress achieved in strengthening the Mediterranean Dialogue as agreed at the Washington Summit. The last round of political consultations with the six Mediterranean Dialogue countries held in October and November, offered an opportunity for sharing views on the implementation and future development of the Dialogue, including the Work Programme for 2000. We recognise the interest of our Mediterranean partners in developing the Dialogue, including through a strengthened co-operation in areas where NATO can bring added value.

36. We acknowledge the role played by the recently-designated Contact Point Embassies and we encourage the Mediterranean Co-operation Group to continue its efforts to progressively develop the Dialogue. Visits by NATO representatives have improved the prospects for closer contacts and co-operation. We welcome and encourage Allied nations and Mediterranean Dialogue countries to organise events such as the Rome Conference in 1997 and the Valencia Conference in 1999, as positive steps to strengthen mutual regional understanding. We direct the Council in Permanent Session to report at our next meeting on the political and practical co-operation in the Dialogue agreed in Washington.

37. We welcome the adoption of the OSCE Istanbul Charter on European Security, in particular the emphasis in the Charter on closer co-operation among international organisations. We also welcome the adoption of the Platform for Co-operative Security. The adoption of the Vienna Document 1999 on Confidence and Security Building Measures constitutes an important step towards increased transparency in military matters among OSCE participating states. We look forward to further intensifying co-operation between NATO and OSCE, notably in the areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

38. We reaffirm that arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation will continue to play an important role in the achievement of NATO's security objectives.

39. 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.

40. 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.

41. 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 underscore the importance of achieving a successful conclusion to the upcoming Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in Spring 2000. In this context, we reiterate our full support of all efforts towards universal adherence, full implementation and further strengthening the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. We reaffirm our commitment to efforts aimed at reducing nuclear weapons.

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 call for the early start of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty.

42. The prevention of the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery remains our primary aim. We remain committed to preventing proliferation and reversing it where it has occurred through diplomatic means. We recognise that proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons and their means of delivery, which pose a potential threat to the Allies' populations, territory and forces, can continue to occur despite our preventive efforts and can pose a direct military threat to those populations, territories and forces.

We continue to attach the utmost importance to full implementation and rigorous verification of international disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. We note with satisfaction that the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is proceeding well and welcome the progress made in the negotiations in Geneva on a legally binding Protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention by ensuring effective verification measures to enhance compliance and promote transparency. We urge that additional efforts be made to complete the remaining work as soon as possible before the Fifth Review Conference of the BWC in 2001.

43. We welcome the progress made by the Alliance in implementing the Initiative on Weapons of Mass Destruction. NATO's new WMD Centre, which we expect to be operational in early 2000, will provide an effective additional means to address both the political and defence challenges of the proliferation of NBC weapons and their means of delivery, and will promote more active and regular intra-Alliance consultations and co-operation on this important issue. Significant progress has been made in setting in place an enhanced WMD intelligence database and information repository, which will aim at improving the quality and increasing the quantity of intelligence and information sharing among Allies to support efforts by NATO members to address proliferation issues. We support deepening consultations with Russia in these areas within the Permanent Joint Council, as well as with Ukraine in the NATO-Ukraine Commission and with other Partners in the EAPC, as well as with the Mediterranean Dialogue countries.

44. At the Washington Summit, our leaders committed the Alliance to consider options for confidence and security building measures, verification, non-proliferation and

arms control and disarmament, in the light of overall strategic developments and the reduced salience of nuclear weapons. We have decided to set in train this process and have instructed the Council in Permanent Session to task the Senior Political Committee, reinforced by political and defence experts as appropriate, to review Alliance policy options in support of confidence and security building measures, verification, non-proliferation, and arms control and disarmament, so that a comprehensive and integrated approach to the accomplishment of the remit agreed at the Washington Summit is ensured. The responsible NATO bodies will contribute to this review. We have directed the Council in Permanent Session to submit a report to Ministers for their consideration in December 2000. We believe that this process will reinforce the Allies' contribution in advancing confidence and security building measures, verification, non-proliferation and arms control and disarmament.

45. 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. We welcome the progress made. A close working relationship between the civil and military communities will contribute to a more effective use of Allied and Partner civilian resources in Alliance activities such as peace support operations. We look forward to the completion of this review at an early date. We will continue and consolidate the excellent co-operation with Partners in this field, including through the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Co-ordination Centre, which played an important role in contributing to the relief of the humanitarian crisis in and around Kosovo, and in supporting Allied national authorities following recent natural disasters.

46. Terrorism 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.

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47. At the Washington Summit our leaders took the steps to ensure that our Alliance will remain the bedrock of our collective defence, and continue to play a key role in the development of a secure and stable peace in the Euro-Atlantic area. Today, as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we can state with confidence that NATO is ready to face the challenges of the future.