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Deterrence and Defence Posture Review

I. Introduction / Context

1. At the Lisbon Summit, the Heads of State and Government mandated a review of NATO's overall posture in deterring and defending against the full range of threats to the Alliance, taking into account the changes in the evolving international security environment. Over the past year, NATO has undertaken a rigorous analysis of its deterrence and defence posture. The results of this review are set out below.
2. The greatest responsibility of the Alliance is to protect and defend our territory and our populations against attack, as set out in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The Alliance does not consider any country to be its adversary. However, no one should doubt NATO's resolve if the security of any of its members were to be threatened. NATO will ensure that it maintains the full range of capabilities necessary to deter and defend against any threat to the safety and security of our populations, wherever it should arise. Allies' goal is to bolster deterrence as a core element of our collective defence and contribute to the indivisible security of the Alliance.
3. The review has reinforced Alliance cohesion and the continuing credibility of its posture. The review has also demonstrated anew the value of the Alliance's efforts to influence the international security environment in positive ways through cooperative security and the contribution that arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation can play in achieving its security objectives, objectives that are fully in accord with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and the North Atlantic Treaty. NATO will continue to seek security at the lowest possible level of forces.
4. NATO's Strategic Concept describes a security environment that contains a broad and evolving set of opportunities and challenges to the security of NATO territory and populations. While the threat of conventional attack against NATO is low, the conventional threat cannot be ignored. The persistence of regional conflicts continues to be a matter of great concern for the Alliance as are increasing defence spending in other parts of the world and the acquisition of increasingly advanced capabilities by some emerging powers. Globalisation, emerging security challenges, such as cyber threats, key environmental and resource constraints, including the risk of disruption to energy supplies, and the emergence of new technologies will continue shaping the future security environment in areas of interest to NATO. A number of vulnerable, weak and failed or failing states, together with the growing capabilities of non-state actors, will continue to be a source of instability and potential conflict. These factors, alongside existing threats and challenges such as the proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction, piracy, and terrorism, will continue to contribute to an unpredictable security environment.
5. The current economic environment is a challenging one, as evidenced by recent reductions in many Allies' defence budgets and the probability of further cuts. In particular, Allies recognise that the challenge of maintaining modern, effective conventional forces is especially acute in an era of limited budgets. Allies are committed to the maintenance of the full range of capabilities necessary to meet the Alliance's level of ambition despite these financial difficulties, and are developing innovative approaches to cooperating in the development of our capabilities to help achieve this goal.
6. Developments in the strategic environment since the Lisbon Summit and the review itself have confirmed the validity of the three essential core tasks identified in the Strategic Concept. We reaffirm our commitment to collective defence, which remains the cornerstone of our Alliance, to crisis management, and to cooperative security.
7. A robust deterrence and defence posture strengthens Alliance cohesion, including the transatlantic link, through an equitable and sustainable distribution of roles, responsibilities, and burdens.

II. The Contribution of Nuclear Forces

8. Nuclear weapons are a core component of NATO's overall capabilities for deterrence and defence alongside conventional and missile defence forces. The review has shown that the Alliance's nuclear force posture currently meets the criteria for an effective deterrence and defence posture.
9. The circumstances in which any use of nuclear weapons might have to be contemplated are extremely remote. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. The supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States; the independent strategic nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France, which have a deterrent role of their own, contribute to the overall deterrence and security of the Allies.

10. Allies acknowledge the importance of the independent and unilateral negative security assurances offered by the United States, the United Kingdom and France. Those assurances guarantee, without prejudice to the separate conditions each State has attached to those assurances, including the inherent right to self-defence as recognised under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, that nuclear weapons will not be used or threatened to be used against Non-Nuclear Weapon States that are party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Allies further recognise the value that these statements can have in seeking to discourage nuclear proliferation. Allies note that the states that have assigned nuclear weapons to NATO apply to these weapons the assurances they have each offered on a national basis, including the separate conditions each state has attached to these assurances.

11. While seeking to create the conditions and considering options for further reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons assigned to NATO, Allies concerned¹ will ensure that all components of NATO's nuclear deterrent remain safe, secure, and effective for as long as NATO remains a nuclear alliance. That requires sustained leadership focus and institutional excellence for the nuclear deterrence mission and planning guidance aligned with 21st century requirements.

12. Consistent with our commitment to remain a nuclear alliance for as long as nuclear weapons exist, Allies agree that the NAC will task the appropriate committees to develop concepts for how to ensure the broadest possible participation of Allies concerned¹ in their nuclear sharing arrangements, including in case NATO were to decide to reduce its reliance on non-strategic nuclear weapons based in Europe.

III. The Contribution of Conventional Forces

13. The Allies' conventional forces, their effectiveness amplified by the Alliance structures and procedures that unite them, make indispensable contributions to deterrence of a broad range of threats and to defence. By their nature, they can be employed in a flexible fashion and can provide the Alliance with a range of options with which to respond to unforeseen contingencies. They also contribute to providing visible assurance of NATO's cohesion as well as the Alliance's ability and commitment to respond to the security concerns of each and every Ally.

14. Among their key characteristics, the Allies' forces must be modern, flexible, and interoperable, capable of meeting a wide range of circumstances, including if necessary high-intensity combat operations. Such forces must be able to successfully conduct and sustain a range of operations for collective defence and crisis response, including at strategic distance. They must be rapidly deployable and sustainable; able to operate alongside other nations and organisations; and be adaptable enough to respond to unforeseen developments. They must also contribute to meeting future security challenges such as cyber attacks, terrorism, the disruption of critical supply lines, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Allies are committed to increasing the opportunities for their conventional forces, especially those in the NATO Response Force, to train and exercise together and in that way, among others, to strengthen their ability to operate in concert anywhere on Alliance territory and beyond.

15. The bulk of the conventional capabilities that are available now and will be available in the future for Alliance operations are provided by the Allies individually; they must therefore provide adequate resources for their military forces so that they will have the required characteristics, notwithstanding current and probably continuing financial difficulties.

16. Nevertheless, fielding and maintaining the capabilities needed for the full range of Alliance missions in a period of severe budgetary restrictions requires a new conceptual approach, one that places a premium on the identification and pursuit of priorities, multinational cooperation, and specialisation as appropriate, and on increased efforts to ensure that the Allies' and, as appropriate, our partners forces are interoperable. The work underway to outline how the Alliance intends to meet its future capability requirements, referred to as NATO Forces 2020, will be key in this context. This package will continue the important work on transformation and reform of Alliance structures and procedures that are already underway, as part of an effective and financially responsible approach to the development of capabilities. This should include further developing cyber defence capacities and integrating them into Allied structures and procedures. As also stated in the Strategic Concept, it will be important for NATO and the European Union to cooperate more fully in capability development as agreed, to avoid unnecessary duplication and maximise cost-effectiveness.

17. Allies' conventional forces have important roles to play in fostering cooperative security, including through cooperation and contacts with the armed forces of partner countries. Such activities can have broader stabilising effects by helping to shape and improve the Alliance's security environment, project stability, and prevent conflicts.

IV. The Contribution of Missile Defence

18. The proliferation of ballistic missiles is a growing concern for the Alliance and constitutes an increasing threat to Alliance security. NATO's ballistic missile defence capacity will be an important addition to

the Alliance's capabilities for deterrence and defence. It will strengthen our collective defence commitment against 21st century threats. In Lisbon, Allies agreed on a missile defence capability that provides full coverage and protection for all NATO European populations, territory and forces, against the threat posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles, based on the principles of the indivisibility of Allied security and NATO solidarity, equitable sharing of risks and burdens, as well as reasonable challenge, taking into account the level of threat, affordability, and technical feasibility, and in accordance with the latest common threat assessments agreed by the Alliance. Missile defence will become an integral part of the Alliance's overall defence posture, further strengthen the transatlantic link, and contribute to the indivisible security of the Alliance.

19. In Chicago, Heads of State and Government announced that NATO has achieved an Interim Capability for its missile defence. The United States will contribute the European Phased Adaptive Approach to NATO missile defence. Alliance leaders also welcome decisions by individual Allies to contribute to the NATO missile defence mission, encourage calls for possible additional voluntary contributions by Allies, including through multinational cooperation, to provide relevant capabilities. The Alliance will continue to implement the commitment made in the Lisbon package of the Alliance's most pressing capability needs to build a truly interoperable NATO missile defence capability based on the Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence command and control network as the enabling backbone.

20. Missile defence can complement the role of nuclear weapons in deterrence; it cannot substitute for them. This capability is purely defensive and is being established in the light of threats from outside the Euro-Atlantic area. It is expected that NATO's missile defence capabilities would complicate an adversary's planning, and provide damage mitigation. Effective missile defence could also provide valuable decision space in times of crisis. Like other weapons systems, missile defence capabilities cannot promise complete and enduring effectiveness. NATO missile defence capability, along with effective nuclear and conventional forces, will signal our determination to deter and defend against any threat from outside the Euro-Atlantic area to the safety and security of our populations.

21. NATO missile defence is not oriented against Russia nor does it have the capability to undermine Russia's strategic deterrent. The Alliance, in a spirit of reciprocity, maximum transparency and mutual confidence, will actively seek cooperation on missile defence with Russia and, in accordance with NATO's policy of engagement with third states on ballistic missile defence, engage with other relevant states, to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

V. The Contribution of Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-proliferation

22. Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation play an important role in the achievement of the Alliance's security objectives. Both the success and failure of these efforts can have a direct impact on the threat environment of NATO and therefore affect NATO's deterrence and defence posture. When successful, they have contributed to more secure, stable and predictable international relations at lower levels of military forces and armaments, through effective and verifiable arms control agreements, and in the case of disarmament, through the elimination or prohibition of whole categories of armaments. Existing agreements cut across almost all aspects of the Alliance's work. However, they have not yet fully achieved their objectives and the world continues to face proliferation crises, force concentration problems, and lack of transparency.

23. NATO has been involved in a variety of ways, such as the coordination of positions on some conventional arms control issues, and serving as a forum for consultations and exchange of information, including with partners, on disarmament and non-proliferation. In conventional arms control the Alliance has taken a direct coordinating role in both negotiations and implementation. In other instances regarding disarmament and non-proliferation, NATO has contributed to raising international awareness.

24. The Alliance is resolved to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, in a way that promotes international stability, and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

25. Allies look forward to continuing to develop and exchange transparency and confidence-building ideas with the Russian Federation in the NATO-Russia Council, with the goal of developing detailed proposals on and increasing mutual understanding of NATO's and Russia's non-strategic nuclear force postures in Europe.

26. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has dramatically reduced the number, types, and readiness of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe and its reliance on nuclear weapons in NATO strategy. Against this background and considering the broader security environment, NATO is prepared to consider further reducing its requirement for non-strategic nuclear weapons assigned to the Alliance in the context of reciprocal steps by Russia, taking into account the greater Russian stockpiles of non-strategic nuclear weapons stationed in the Euro-Atlantic area.

27. Allies agree that the NAC will task the appropriate committees to further consider, in the context of the broader security environment, what NATO would expect to see in the way of reciprocal Russian actions to allow for significant reductions in forward-based non-strategic nuclear weapons assigned to NATO.

28. In addition, Allies support and encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to continue their mutual efforts to promote strategic stability, enhance transparency, and further reduce their nuclear weapons.

29. Reaffirming the importance of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, Allies remain committed to conventional arms control and to preserving, strengthening and modernizing the conventional arms control regime in Europe, based on key principles and commitments.

30. Allies believe that the Weapons of Mass Destruction Control and Disarmament Committee has played a useful role in the review and agree to establish a committee as a consultative and advisory forum, with its mandate to be agreed by the NAC following the Summit.

VI. Conclusions – Maintaining the “Appropriate Mix” of Capabilities

31. The review of NATO’s deterrence and defence posture has confirmed that NATO must have the full range of capabilities necessary to deter and defend against threats to the safety of its populations and the security of its territory, which is the Alliance’s greatest responsibility. As outlined above, NATO has determined that, in the current circumstances, the existing mix of capabilities and the plans for their development are sound.

32. NATO is committed to maintaining an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defence capabilities for deterrence and defence to fulfil its commitments as set out in the Strategic Concept. These capabilities, underpinned by NATO’s integrated Command Structure, offer the strongest guarantee of the Alliance’s security and will ensure that it is able to respond to a variety of challenges and unpredictable contingencies in a highly complex and evolving international security environment. Allies are resolved to developing ways to make their forces more effective by working creatively and adaptively together and with partners as appropriate to maximise value and strengthen interoperability, so that their forces are better able to respond to the full range of 21st century security threats, achieving greater security than any one Ally could attain acting alone.

33. Allies are committed to providing the resources needed to ensure that NATO’s overall deterrence and defence posture remains credible, flexible, resilient, and adaptable, and to implementing the forward-looking package of defence capabilities, which will also be agreed in Chicago. In the course of normal Alliance processes, we will revise relevant Alliance policies and strategies to take into account the principles and judgements in this posture review.

34. NATO will continue to adjust its strategy, including with respect to the capabilities and other measures required for deterrence and defence, in line with trends in the security environment. In this context, Allies will keep under review the consequences for international stability and Euro-Atlantic security of the acquisition of modern military capabilities in the regions and countries beyond NATO’s borders. This posture review confirms that the Alliance is committed to maintaining the deterrence and defence capabilities necessary to ensure its security in an unpredictable world.

1. i.e. all members of the Nuclear Planning Group