

CHAPTER 6

THE ALLIANCE'S ROLE IN ARMS CONTROL

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THE ALLIANCE'S ROLE IN ARMS CONTROL

NATO's policy of support for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation plays a major role in the achievement of the Alliance's security objectives. NATO has a longstanding commitment in this area and continues to ensure that its overall objectives of defence, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation remain in harmony.

At their Summit Meeting in Washington in April 1999, NATO leaders decided to increase Alliance efforts to counter the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery. The WMD Initiative has initiated a more vigorous and structured debate on WMD issues. The principal goal of the Alliance and its members remains to prevent proliferation from occurring or, should it occur, to reverse it through diplomatic means.

As stated in the Strategic Concept of 1999, the Alliance is committed to contribute actively to the development of arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation agreements as well as to Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs). Member countries consider confidence building, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation as important components of conflict prevention and recognise that the Alliance can play a vital role in this field by promoting a broader, more comprehensive and more verifiable international arms control and disarmament process. NATO's partnership, cooperation and dialogue programmes offer a unique opportunity to promote these objectives and contribute to the overall goal of increasing confidence and security and developing a cooperative approach to international security.

At the Washington Summit NATO Allies agreed, in the light of overall strategic developments and the reduced salience of nuclear weapons, to consider options for confidence and security building measures, verification, non-proliferation and arms control and disarmament. Since the Summit, the responsible NATO bodies have undertaken an extensive and comprehensive evaluation of overall developments and have examined a number of options for the future.

A summary of the principal developments in this field is given below.

DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS

The proliferation of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) weapons and their means of delivery are a matter of serious concern for the Alliance. In spite of welcome progress in strengthening international non-proliferation regimes,

major challenges with respect to proliferation remain. The Alliance recognises that proliferation can occur despite efforts to prevent it and can pose a direct military threat to the Allies' populations, territory, and forces.

Some states, including some on NATO's periphery and in other regions, sell or acquire or try to acquire NBC weapons and delivery means. Other, non-state actors have also shown the potential to create and use some of these weapons.

NATO has greatly reduced its reliance on nuclear forces in the last decade and major reductions have been made in the forces themselves by the three member countries of the Alliance which maintain nuclear forces, namely the United States, France and the United Kingdom. However, the existence of powerful nuclear forces outside the Alliance constitutes a significant factor which the Alliance has to take into account if security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area are to be maintained. Russia still retains a large number of nuclear weapons of all types. China has continued to modernise its nuclear forces over the last decade. In addition, in 1998, India and Pakistan both carried out nuclear tests, posing a serious challenge to nuclear non-proliferation agreements and increasing dangers associated with regional conflict.

In June 1999, the United States and Russia affirmed their existing obligations under the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty to consider possible changes in the strategic situation that have a bearing on the Treaty and possible proposals for further increasing its viability. The United States has subsequently proposed changes to the Treaty in order to permit deployment of a limited missile defence system. Bilateral discussions and multilateral consultations, both on the ABM Treaty and on a third round of Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START III), are taking place.

In September 2000, the United States and Russia also agreed on a Strategic Stability Cooperation Initiative as a constructive basis for strengthening trust between them and for developing measures to enhance strategic stability and to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, missiles and missile technologies world-wide.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

For many years, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has been the cornerstone of international agreements on global non-proliferation and of the process of bringing about nuclear disarmament. The Treaty was extended indefinitely at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. It was also decided to strengthen the review process and to adopt a set of "Principles and

Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament” in order to promote effective implementation of the Treaty.

At the 2000 NPT Review Conference held in New York between 24 April and 19 May 2000, a comprehensive, substantive final document was adopted. Its conclusions reflect continued support for universal NPT adherence, strict compliance with the NPT’s provisions, strengthened International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, and future steps toward nuclear disarmament.

One of the most significant practical achievements of the Review Conference was agreement on the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as soon as the required ratifications have been completed. NATO member countries are committed to working to secure the necessary signatures and ratification in order to achieve an early entry into force of the Treaty. The Review Conference also emphasised the importance of making progress towards a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and called for negotiations on this subject in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament to be resumed.

Biological and Chemical Weapons

The proliferation of biological and chemical weapons is widely recognised as a growing international security problem, both for interstate conflict and as a potential dimension of terrorism.

The 1925 Geneva Protocol bans the use of chemical and biological weapons. States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), which entered into force in 1975, agree not to develop, produce, stockpile or acquire biological agents and related equipment used for hostile purposes. In 1994 a Special Conference established an Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Convention to examine possible verification measures and proposals to strengthen the Convention. The fourth Review Conference in 1996 agreed that a Protocol should be completed as soon as possible before the commencement of the fifth Review Conference in 2001. During their meeting held in Florence on 24 May 2000, NATO Ministers reiterated their commitment to this objective.

A Chemical Weapons Convention banning chemical weapons, negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament between 1980 and 1992, entered into force in 1997. Each party to the Convention agrees not to develop, produce, acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons, not to use or prepare to use chemical weapons and not to assist others in acting against the provisions of the Convention. The Convention also requires States Parties to destroy any chem-

ical weapons in their possession, and to destroy their chemical weapon production facilities.

Missiles and other means of delivery

The proliferation of missile technology is another issue of significant concern. Established in 1987, the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) brings together 32 states (including all 19 NATO members) that seek to limit the proliferation of missiles and missile technology. The MTCR partners control exports of a common list of controlled items in accordance with a common export control policy.

DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

Over the course of the last several years, there have been a number of promising developments in the area of conventional arms control and related confidence and security building measures. These include:

The Adaptation of the CFE Treaty

The Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty of 19 November 1990 imposed legally-binding limits on five categories of treaty limited equipment and included provisions for exceptionally comprehensive information exchange and notifications, as well as intrusive on-site inspection and verification arrangements. More than 3 000 inspections have taken place. This transparency in arms holdings is a unique feature in an arms control treaty. The Treaty brought about dramatic reductions in treaty limited equipment within Europe. More than 50 000 pieces of equipment have been destroyed or removed. During the Treaty Review Conference in 1996, the States Parties recognised the need to adapt the CFE Treaty in order to allow it to continue to sustain its key role in European security arrangements.

Adaptation negotiations began in May 1996, reflecting the fact that fundamental changes had occurred since 1990 such as the reunification of Germany, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the USSR, the emergence of new successor states which raised the Treaty's membership from 22 to 30 states, the process of democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe, and the end of the Cold War.

The adaptation process was completed with the signing of a legally-binding “Agreement on Adaptation” of the CFE Treaty at the Istanbul OSCE Summit in November 1999. In Istanbul, a “Final Act” was also adopted. This politically-binding text contains all of the undertakings relating to restraint and progressive reductions towards equipment entitlements which States Parties have offered additionally, in the context of the Treaty adaptation. The Agreement will enter into force following ratification by States Parties. Pending the completion of the ratification process, the full and continued implementation of the Treaty and its associated documents remains crucial.

The Vienna Document

At the Istanbul Summit in November 1999, the member states of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also adopted the 1999 Vienna Document, which enhances the Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) introduced by the Vienna Documents of 1990, 1992 and 1994. The 1999 Vienna Document improves the current CSBMs and emphasises the importance of regional cooperation.

Open Skies

Another important element in creating greater openness in the military field is the March 1992 “Open Skies” Treaty, permitting overflights of national territory on a reciprocal basis.

The Treaty on Open Skies is intended to enhance confidence building, facilitate the monitoring of compliance with existing or future arms control agreements, and strengthen the capacity for the early recognition and subsequent management of crises by permitting reciprocal overflights of national territory.

A number of trial flights have subsequently taken place, but the complete regime of observation flights as set forth in the Treaty has not yet entered into force. Allies continue to support ratification of this Treaty, and have urged the remaining signatories, Russia and Belarus, to ratify so that the Treaty can enter into force as soon as possible.

Small Arms and Light Weapons

There has been an increasing international awareness over the last decade of the need to prevent and reduce destabilising accumulations and flows of small arms and light weapons, particularly through illicit and irrespon-

sible transfers. A number of initiatives have been undertaken at the global, regional and local levels. Since January 1999, practical work on this issue has been undertaken by the member states of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). The UN General Assembly has agreed to convene an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects in the year 2001.

Anti-Personnel Mines

Over the last decade, the international community has become increasingly active in efforts to counter the humanitarian problems and suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. NATO nations have demonstrated their commitment to tackling this issue.

In 1998, a new protocol to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons was signed. Entitled "Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices", it entered into force in December 1998. A Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction was signed in Ottawa on 3 December 1997. It came into force on 1 March 1999 and has been ratified by over 100 states.

ALLIANCE POLICY ON WMD PROLIFERATION

Recognising that proliferation of weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international security, NATO Heads of State and Government directed the Alliance in 1994 to intensify and expand its efforts against proliferation. In June 1994 NATO Foreign Ministers issued the 'Alliance Policy Framework on Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction', a public document stating that the principal goal of the Alliance and its member states is to prevent proliferation from occurring or, should it occur, to reverse it through diplomatic means. The document also noted that proliferation might nevertheless occur despite international non-proliferation norms and agreements, and that weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means can pose a direct military threat to NATO territory, populations and forces. Since 1994, the Alliance has increasingly focused on the range of defence capabilities needed to devalue WMD proliferation and use. Efforts are continuing to improve NATO's defence posture against WMD risks, in order to reduce the operational vulnerabilities of NATO military forces, while maintaining their flexibility and effectiveness in situations involving the presence, threat or use of NBC weapons.

The Alliance's WMD Initiative

In order to respond to the risks to Alliance security posed by the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means, the Alliance launched an Initiative in 1999, building upon previous work, to improve overall Alliance political and military efforts in this area. This WMD Initiative is helping to promote a more vigorous, structured debate, leading to better understanding among NATO countries of WMD issues and how to respond to them: for example by improving the quality and quantity of intelligence and information-sharing. In May 2000, a WMD Centre was established at NATO to support these efforts.

In addition, there are three senior NATO groups dealing with the Alliance's political and defence efforts against WMD proliferation, namely the Senior Politico-Military Group on Proliferation (SGP) and the Senior Defence Group on Proliferation (DGP), which deal respectively with the political and defence dimensions of NATO's response; and the Joint Committee on Proliferation (JCP), which coordinates and brings together the work on both aspects. The SGP considers a range of factors in the political, security and economic fields that may cause or influence proliferation and discusses political and economic means to prevent or respond to proliferation. The DGP addresses the military capabilities needed to discourage WMD proliferation, to deter threats and use of such weapons, and to protect NATO populations, territory and forces.

