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04 Dec. 2009

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Final Statement

Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Foreign Ministers held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of the member countries of the Alliance, recalled the historic events that took place in Europe in 1989 and the tremendous progress made since then towards a Europe united, peaceful and free. The Alliance's broad agenda contributes in many significant ways to defending and promoting security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond. Having reconfirmed our previous decisions and positions on the full range of Alliance issues, we have on this occasion focused on Afghanistan, Open Door issues, NATO's relations with Russia, missile defence, and our new Strategic Concept.
2. We pay tribute to the professionalism and dedication of the men and women from Allied and other nations who are serving in NATO's missions and operations. We extend our deepest sympathies to the families and loved ones of the fallen and the injured.
3. Our UN-mandated Afghanistan mission (ISAF) remains NATO's key priority, and we have issued with our ISAF partners a separate statement reinforcing our commitment to it. Our KFOR mission in Kosovo, on the basis of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, is making a gradual, conditions-based transition to a deterrent posture, which we will keep under political review.
4. In accordance with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, NATO's door will remain open to all European democracies which share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and whose inclusion can contribute to common security and stability.
5. We believe that Euro-Atlantic integration remains the most effective way to bring lasting stability and prosperity to the strategically important Western Balkans.
6. We remain committed to seeing the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ seated at our table as a member of the Alliance. An invitation to start accession talks will be extended as soon as a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue has been reached.
7. Montenegro has made substantial progress in reform, and continues to contribute actively to security in the region. On that basis, we are pleased today to invite Montenegro to move towards NATO membership by joining the Membership Action Plan (MAP). We will continue, through the MAP, to support Montenegro's reforms.

8. Bosnia and Herzegovina has made substantial progress in cooperation with NATO and we welcome its MAP application and the broad national consensus behind it. We urge Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders to continue to work together to pursue national integration and improve the efficiency and self-reliance of state-level institutions. We also urge Bosnia and Herzegovina to take full advantage of ongoing cooperation with NATO including through its Intensified Dialogue and its current Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) cycle, in the areas of political, defence, security, military, public information and resource issues. We affirm our support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's participation in MAP and its aspiration for NATO membership. We have decided that Bosnia and Herzegovina will join MAP once it achieves the necessary progress in its reform efforts. We task the Council in Permanent Session to keep Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress on reform under active review. Allies will continue to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's reforms.
9. We welcome recent steps by Serbia to enhance its cooperation with the Alliance. In accordance with our vision for the region, the Alliance will continue to be open to the fullest possible political dialogue and practical cooperation with Serbia. We acknowledge significant progress in Serbia's cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). We expect Serbia to maintain its efforts in cooperating with ICTY in order to achieve additional positive results, the most critical issue being the apprehension of the remaining fugitives.
10. At their Summit in Strasbourg/Kehl, our Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their decision that Georgia and Ukraine will become members of NATO; that commitment remains firm. They also noted that, without prejudice to further decisions that must be taken about MAP, the development of Annual National Programmes will help Georgia and Ukraine in advancing their reforms. We commend both countries on the finalisation of their first Annual National Programmes and the start of their implementation, recognising their efforts in this regard. We are maximising our advice, assistance and support for their reform efforts in the framework of the NATO-Ukraine Commission and NATO-Georgia Commission, which play a central role in supervising the process set in hand at the Bucharest Summit.
11. We reaffirm that NATO's partnerships are an essential part of the Alliance's purposes and tasks, and are of key value to strengthen our joint commitment to cooperative security. In preparing for the Lisbon Summit, Allies intend, in consultation with partners, to work towards enhancing our partnership policy, while preserving the specificity of each partnership².
12. The NATO-Russia partnership has the potential to contribute strategically to security in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond. Allies welcome today's formal resumption, at Ministerial level, of dialogue and cooperation with Russia. We remain committed to taking the NATO-Russia Council forward to make it a more efficient and valuable instrument for political dialogue on all issues of common interest and concern, including those where NATO and Russia disagree, and for improved practical cooperation. There are many priority areas for enhancing our practical cooperation, including Afghanistan, counter-narcotics, the fight against terrorism, counter-piracy, missile defence, and non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. We have agreed to conduct with Russia a joint review of NATO and Russia's 21st century common security challenges. We recall the commitment of NATO and Allies at the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit to be open to dialogue on a broad, cooperative approach to Euro-Atlantic security. We welcome, in this context, the decision taken at the December 2009 OSCE Ministerial meeting in Athens to continue work in the Corfu Process. Allies are prepared to engage actively in this process in the OSCE.

13. NATO-Russia relations depend on trust and fulfilment of commitments. In contributing to building that trust we will continue to be transparent about our military training and exercises and look to Russia to reciprocate. We reaffirm the OSCE principles on which the security of Europe is based, and reiterate our continued support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders. We continue to call on Russia to reverse its recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia as “independent states”. We encourage all participants in the Geneva talks to play a constructive role as well as to continue working closely with the OSCE, the United Nations and the European Union to pursue peaceful conflict resolution on Georgia’s territory. We urge Russia to meet its commitments with respect to Georgia, as mediated by the European Union on 12 August³ and 8 September 2008. The Alliance will continue to assess developments in relations with Russia. We reaffirm the Alliance’s continued commitment as contained in the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration to the CFE Treaty Regime with all its elements. We are prepared for intensified efforts in cooperation with Russia in 2010 to find a way forward on the basis of the Parallel Actions Package. NATO CFE Allies will continue to provide their annual information exchange this year, and we call upon Russia to do the same. However, not taking this opportunity could make it difficult for us to provide information to Russia in the future.
14. The proliferation of ballistic missiles poses an increasing threat to Allies’ populations, territory and forces. Given the central importance of the Alliance’s collective defence mission to ensure our security and protect our populations, territory and forces against the threat of armed attack, including from ballistic missiles, missile defence plays an important role for the Alliance as part of a broader response to counter ballistic missile threats. We welcome the new phased adaptive approach of the United States to missile defence, which further reinforces NATO’s central role in missile defence in Europe. This approach would further anchor European missile defence work in NATO, which continues to bear in mind the principle of the indivisibility of Alliance security as well as NATO solidarity.
15. NATO’s current Theatre Missile Defence programme (ALTBMD) will facilitate the integration of missile defence elements from nations in order to protect deployed troops. Heads of State and Government, at their last Summit, tasked the Council in Permanent Session to identify and undertake the policy, military and technical work related to a possible expanded role of the Theatre Missile Defence programme beyond the protection of NATO deployed forces to include territorial missile defence. Such a role would be a key milestone towards providing territorial missile defence in Europe.
16. Heads of State and Government, at their last Summit, tasked the Council in Permanent Session, taking into account the Bucharest Summit tasking, to present recommendations comprising architecture alternatives for consideration at the next Summit; these should draw upon the work already done and the United States’ phased adaptive approach. If the Alliance decides to develop a NATO missile defence capability in Europe to protect populations and territory, the United States’ phased adaptive approach would provide a valuable national contribution to that capability and, thus, to Alliance security.
17. We continue to support increased cooperation between NATO and Russia on missile defence including maximum transparency and reciprocal confidence-building measures. We reaffirm the Alliance’s readiness to explore the potential for linking United States, NATO and Russian missile defence systems at an appropriate time. The United States’ new approach provides enhanced possibilities to do this.

18. We have noted the reports on Raising NATO's Profile in the Field of Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation; on the Action Plan on Proposals to Develop and Implement NATO's Contribution to a Comprehensive Approach; and on Progress Achieved in the Implementation of NATO's Role in Energy Security. We task the Council in Permanent Session to continue its work on these important topics.
19. We are committed to renewing our Alliance to better address today's threats and to anticipate tomorrow's risks. At their Strasbourg/Kehl Summit, our Heads of State and Government tasked the Secretary General to develop a new Strategic Concept and submit proposals for its implementation for approval at the next Summit, keeping the Council in Permanent Session involved throughout the process. We have discussed the preliminary work of the Group of Experts which is helping to lay the ground for the Alliance's new Strategic Concept. This work has so far covered the changing international security environment; NATO's fundamental tasks; relations with other nations and organisations; and internal reform. We thank the Group for the work it has done until now, and encourage its continued close consultations with all Allies. We look forward to discussing the Group's findings at our informal meeting next April in Tallinn. We encourage all our partners to continue to present their views on our new Strategic Concept during its elaboration. The new Strategic Concept will play an important role in guiding and shaping a 21st century Alliance to face existing and emerging threats and challenges, while maintaining strong collective defence.
20. The Alliance's new Strategic Concept will also provide general guidance on NATO reform. Reform is an ongoing process aimed at preserving and improving NATO's ability to conduct its full spectrum of missions. Reform should also enhance performance and optimise the use of resources by creating a lean, more effective organisation, while respecting that NATO is a consensus-based organisation. We welcome the progress already made in reforming NATO Headquarters on the basis of the decisions taken at the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit. The Council in Permanent Session has been mandated to take the necessary decisions to implement these reforms as quickly as possible. We look forward to a preliminary report at our Tallinn meeting. A report on implementation will be reviewed at the Lisbon Summit.

1. Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.
 2. Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)/Partnership for Peace (PfP) Partners, Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) and other partners across the globe.
 3. As complemented by President Sarkozy's clarifications and correspondence on this issue.
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Statement on Afghanistan

by Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Nations participating in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

1. The future of Afghanistan and the stability of the region are directly linked to the security of our own countries, our own citizens and the wider international community; Afghanistan must never again become a safe haven for terrorism. For this clear reason, and to contribute to a better future for the Afghan people, today we – the Foreign Ministers of the 43 countries participating, at the request of the Afghan government, in the UN-mandated NATO-led ISAF operation – reconfirm the commitment of ISAF nations to help build lasting security and stability in Afghanistan, which remains the Alliance’s key priority.
2. We recognise the urgency of the challenge and we welcome the opportunity to work with the new Afghan government. We will therefore accelerate our efforts in support of the Afghan people and government. Our goal is to help Afghans to take over full responsibility and ownership as soon as possible for the security of their own country. Increasing Afghanistan’s lead role across the board remains our primary objective.
3. The past months have been particularly challenging. Afghan and ISAF forces alike, have suffered significant numbers of casualties. The Afghan people have also suffered great loss. We pay tribute to every sacrifice made and extend our condolences.
4. We remain convinced that this mission is essential, and that our overall strategy, agreed at the Bucharest Summit, is the right one. To implement our strategy as effectively as possible and in the light of changing circumstances on the ground, we have agreed to make changes to our approach as set out below. As part of this, the ISAF operation will have, as a priority, the protection of the Afghan people, building Afghan security capacity and facilitating governance and development.
5. The transition to Afghan lead on security is an objective we share with the Afghan government. We will urgently step up our efforts to empower the Afghan authorities and help them take over further security responsibilities. The transfer of lead security responsibility in Kabul was a first step and further transfers will happen as conditions across the country allow. We are therefore investing more in training, equipping and sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces, through the NATO Training Mission, to build Afghan capacity. Our mission will be accomplished when Afghan forces can secure their own country; the Training Mission and donations to the Afghan National Army Trust Fund will help bring that day closer.
6. We endorse the underlying thrust of the assessment made by General McChrystal in August on how best to deliver our strategy in Afghanistan. We strongly welcome

President Obama's announcement that the United States will provide substantial additional troops and resources for this purpose. We also welcome the additional contributions announced recently and the fact that many other ISAF nations are, or will be increasing their military and civilian contributions in Afghanistan. All this reflects our determination and commitment to provide the resources essential for the success of the ISAF mission.

7. Military forces alone, however, are not sufficient to ensure success. Security, governance and development must go hand in hand and require ever greater efforts to deliver a comprehensive approach under UNAMA leadership. We continue to support UNAMA in this regard. Strong action from the United Nations, the European Union, and many other organisations is absolutely essential to a successful international civilian effort. We, as nations, recognise the need to provide additional civilian resources and to help develop the Afghan government's capacity to govern at the national, provincial and district levels, to provide basic services and spur economic development. In support of the last point, NATO and ISAF should seek to maximise, to the extent possible, the positive economic impact of their presence in Afghanistan.
8. We welcome the goals set out by President Karzai in his inaugural speech. We share his emphasis on improving governance, fighting corruption, working towards reintegration and reconciliation, strengthening the rule of law, protecting human rights, expanding regional cooperation, and laying out a goal for Afghanistan to have the lead in security operations. We agree that the implementation of these commitments will be central to making progress. We encourage the new government to deliver rapid and tangible results in this regard.
9. We have agreed to support the Afghan authorities on reintegration issues and stand ready to contribute to a process of reconciliation. Both these processes must be Afghan-led and owned.
10. We look forward to a sequence of conferences bringing together the Afghan government and the international community. These conferences should contribute to enhanced efforts in Afghanistan, set clear, viable and realistic benchmarks for progress and underscore the long-term commitment from the international community to help build security and stability in the country, to the benefit of us all.
11. We reiterate the need for all of Afghanistan's neighbours to support the international efforts in the country, which are also in their security interests. Enhancing political dialogue and deepening our cooperation with Pakistan, in particular, will be a priority. We welcome existing efforts that contribute to regional cooperation in this regard.
12. We, the nations participating in ISAF, will continue to work closely together on all matters related to the mission, its ongoing adaptation to the evolving situation on the ground and its relationship with the wider international effort in Afghanistan.

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