

Organización del Tratado del Atlántico Norte

NATO – Russia Council

Meeting of the NATO-Russia Council at the level of Foreign Ministers: Statement

NATO Headquarters, Brussels, December 9, 2004

We, the Foreign Ministers of the NATO-Russia Council, met in Brussels on 9 December 2004. We welcomed the notable progress that has been achieved in implementing the decisions taken at our last meeting on 28 June 2004 in Istanbul, and reiterated our determination to build upon the solid foundations we have established, by seeking ever greater opportunities to intensify our political dialogue and further develop our practical cooperation in the spirit of the May 2002 Rome Declaration. We noted with satisfaction the growing practical and operational character of NRC cooperation. We underscored the need to develop further our ability to work together in concrete ways to respond quickly and efficiently to an increasing number of emerging threats to the security and well-being of our peoples, and pledged once again to contribute to the security of all in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Continuing the political consultations conducted in 2004 on the situations in Afghanistan, in the Balkans, in Georgia and in Iraq, we exchanged views on current international security issues.

With respect to the situation in Ukraine, we took note of the steps taken by all parties toward resolution of the political crisis in accordance with the rule of law and Ukraine's constitutional norms. We appealed to all parties to continue to avoid the use or instigation of violence, to refrain from intimidation of voters, and to work to ensure a free, fair electoral process that reflects the will of the Ukrainian people. We reiterated our support for the independence, the sovereignty, the territorial integrity of and democracy in Ukraine. This is vital for the common and indivisible security and stability of all.

We reiterated our solidarity in the face of the terrorist threat, and our determination to strengthen our cooperation in preventing, combating and managing the consequences of terrorist acts, acting in accordance with the UN Charter, international law and human rights. We were pleased to take two concrete decisions to transform this political will into action. We approved a comprehensive NRC Action Plan on Terrorism, which will guide our future efforts in all aspects of this common struggle, and welcomed agreement on the modalities of Russian contribution to NATO Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean Sea aimed at helping deter, defend, disrupt and protect against terrorism. In this context, we noted with particular satisfaction that NATO and Russian military forces already have begun preparing to serve side by side in this operation.

We reiterated our determination to work to promote security and stability in and around Afghanistan, and welcomed Russia's offer to provide practical support to

the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). We also expressed concern over threats posed by the narcotics industry in Afghanistan, including its links to the financing of terrorism. In this context, we noted the Report of the Chairman of the October 2004 NRC Seminar on threats posed by trafficking in Afghan narcotics, and approved the recommendations contained therein, agreeing to explore further NATO-Russia cooperation in this area.

We noted ongoing work in the field of crisis management, and in particular the successful conduct of the NATO-Russia Procedural Exercise in September. Taking into account principles contained in the Generic Concept for Joint NATO-Russia Peacekeeping Operations, we are determined to seek appropriate ways to develop and build upon lessons learned from this exercise, in order to ensure the success of any future joint peacekeeping operations.

We were particularly content to note the continued intensification of cooperation among our military forces, and the adoption of an ambitious Work Plan for 2005 and Beyond to guide the future work of NRC Military Representatives. In addition to increasing the interoperability levels of our forces, such efforts also help build the mutual understanding and trust necessary for a meaningful, sustainable partnership. We stressed the importance of NRC cooperation on defence reform, and welcomed the October 2004 agreement by NRC Defence Ministers on an initial framework for Political-Military Guidance towards Enhanced Interoperability between Russian and NATO Forces. In this context, we looked forward to Russia's early accession to the Partnership for Peace Status of Forces Agreement, which would facilitate intensified joint training and other forms of practical cooperation.

We agreed to build upon the success of the June 2004 civil emergency response exercise "Kaliningrad 2004" by developing a joint exercise programme in this area and developing further the Hungarian-Russian initiative on civil emergency planning and response. We also welcomed the success of "Avariya 2004", the field demonstration on nuclear weapon accident/incident response procedures hosted by the Russian Federation in August 2004, and the offer of the United Kingdom to host a similar event in September 2005.

We noted progress in our ongoing efforts to broaden and strengthen cooperation in evaluating and responding to threats posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery. We further decided to initiate practical cooperation on protection from NBC agents. We look forward to a full report in the autumn of 2005 on the results of focused expert discussions of specific opportunities for such cooperation .

Finally, we recalled all relevant statements, reaffirmed the 4 June 2003 Statement of NRC Foreign Ministers in Madrid, and recalled NATO's position on providing political assurances of restraint. We also reaffirmed adherence to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) as a cornerstone of European security. We reaffirmed our determination to fulfil the commitments reflected in the Final Act of the 1999 Conference of the States Parties to the CFE Treaty. Calling upon all CFE States Parties to promote achievement of this shared goal, we agreed to continue work co-operatively toward ratification by all the States Parties

and entry into force of the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty, which would permit accession by non-CFE states. We welcomed the approach of the four non-CFE member states, who have stated their intention to request accession to the adapted CFE Treaty upon its entry into force, and agreed that their accession would provide an important additional contribution to European stability and security. We reaffirmed our readiness to pursue work in the field of arms control and confidence-building measures