

CSIS European Trilateral Track 2 Nuclear Dialogues Statement:**Toward an Appropriate Mix of Conventional, Nuclear, and Missile Defense Forces**

24 August 2011

1. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's 2010 Strategic Concept declared that the "modern security environment contains a broad and evolving set of challenges to the security of NATO's territory and populations." To meet these demands, the accompanying Lisbon Declaration called for a Defense and Deterrence Posture Review (DPPR) to explore, among other topics, what should be the "appropriate mix of conventional, nuclear, and missile defence forces" for the Alliance.
2. Based on the belief that a common and coordinated approach is in the best interests of NATO and of our three countries, the undersigned have developed a U.S.-U.K.-French "Track 2" consensus on how the Alliance should approach its strategic posture and address the critical strategic choices facing it. This non-paper from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Track 2 Trilateral Nuclear Dialogues is based upon discussions in London (11-12 April 2011) and Paris (11-12 July 2011). We urge Alliance members to consider the strategic approach outlined in this statement in determining what constitutes an appropriate mix of conventional, nuclear and missile defense forces for NATO.
3. NATO's new Strategic Concept addresses a complex, constantly changing and uncertain security environment in which a much-expanded Alliance takes on new roles and responsibilities. Long-established tactics and strategies, such as terrorism and asymmetric escalation, are fusing with weapons of mass destruction and such new technologies as offensive cyberspace capabilities to pose innovative threats, many with potentially catastrophic effects, to the security of Alliance members. The accelerating pace of globalism, with its rapid growth in cross-border flows of goods, technology, people, weapons and crime, has deepened interdependence within the Alliance and between the Alliance and the rest of world, -- both creating new opportunities and exposing new vulnerabilities. For example, failed states and anarchy in distant countries provide sanctuaries for violent extremists engaged in international terrorism. At the same time, the success of global campaigns to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has been mixed at best and requires greater effort and cohesion from Alliance members. We fully support the analysis provided by NATO's Group of Experts¹ of the demanding nature of today's security environment and endorse the overall strategic approach outlined in NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept.

¹ See pp. 13-17, NATO, "NATO 2020: Assured Security: Dynamic Engagement – Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO," May 17, 2010, last accessed June 27, 2011, <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/expertsreport.pdf>

Conventional Forces

4. NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept states boldly and optimistically that the Alliance, "will ensure that NATO has the full range of capabilities necessary to deter and defend against any threat to the safety and security of our populations." It goes on to provide a lengthy list of needed capabilities, ranging from cyber-defense to counter-terrorism, as well as supporting military activities (e.g., training, planning, energy security, etc.). In the accompanying Lisbon declaration the Alliance, "endorsed the Lisbon package of the Alliance's most pressing capability needs and thereby provided a renewed focus and mandate to ensure these critical capabilities are delivered within agreed budgetary ceilings and in accordance with the Alliance's defense planning process." What NATO's Strategic Concept does not say, however, is how the Alliance will accomplish this. While asserting that, "NATO must have sufficient resources -- financial, military and human -- to carry out its missions," and that these resources must, "be used in the most efficient and effective way possible," the list of measures recommended to accomplish these goals -- reduce unnecessary duplication, operate jointly, maximize efficiency, engage in continual reform, etc. -- have all been endorsed in the past but only fitfully implemented by most Alliance members. While necessary, these measures by themselves will not be sufficient to overcome the significant shortcomings, particularly with respect to interoperability, that have been demonstrated by recent operations in Libya and Afghanistan, shortcomings caused by two decades of underinvestment by most of the European allies, a decade of nearly-continuous military operations by key Alliance members, and by the lack of serious reform within NATO.
5. NATO's track record in meeting goals for defense spending and capital investment is far from encouraging. The insufficient priority accorded defense can be seen from the fact that only four of the European Allies spent 2 percent or more of their respective GDP on defense in 2010;² only a dozen or so have met the 2004 NATO goals of making 50 percent of land forces deployable and sustaining 10 percent of them in operations or on high-readiness standby.³ Recognizing that prosperity is a core national interest and that strong economies are vital for national security, NATO nations understandably have been actively trying to reduce budget deficits and reduce public spending. However, reductions are falling disproportionately on defense budgets in most Alliance nations. The post-2001 surge in U.S. defense spending (during which its base defense budget more than doubled) is coming to an end. In addition, the U.K., France and Germany -- which provide 65 percent of all defense expenditures in European NATO and 88 percent of all research and technology investment -- are either significantly cutting their budgets or going to be under

² NATO, "Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defense," NATO press release, March 10, 2011, last accessed June 22, 2011, http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_03/20110309_PR_CP_2011_027.pdf.

³ NATO, "NATO 2020: Assured Security: Dynamic Engagement – Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO," May 17, 2010, last accessed June 27, 2011, <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/expertsreport.pdf>

considerable pressure to do so. These are hard, budgetary realities that undermine the credibility of the Strategic Concept's assertion that there will be "sufficient resources" for the Lisbon package of "most pressing capability needs."

6. During the upcoming years of financial austerity, Alliance members must make smart decisions on how they will spend the reduced level of resources available for defense. The first priority, both for the Alliance as a whole and for each member, is to acquire the "most pressing capability needs" identified in the Lisbon package. Now that NATO has defined its collective defense priorities, Alliance members must increase real spending on those collective defense requirements, recognizing that an effective Alliance is an essential national requirement for the security of each NATO member and therefore must be given sufficient priority in defense spending. Increased bilateral cooperation, such as the evolving U.K.-French relationship, and role specialization, such as Denmark's decision to eliminate its submarine fleet to free up resources for expeditionary ground forces, also have an important role in increasing NATO's efficiency at the strategic level. NATO, as a whole, needs a balanced, full-spectrum force, which, given the resource constraints facing the Alliance, requires that members make smart, tough decisions in a collective defense framework.
7. NATO also faces important decisions about the overall size of its conventional forces and how it employs those capabilities. In the past year alone, NATO has operated in a set of very different strategic environments. The ongoing war in Afghanistan, which the Lisbon Declaration states is "directly linked" to the security of NATO, has tested the Alliance's ability to conduct complex counterinsurgency operations that rely heavily on ground power. At the same time, the ongoing operation in Libya depends upon the air and naval power of the Alliance. Conducting these very different simultaneous operations has severely strained NATO forces and raise important questions about the Strategic Concept's commitment to, "maintain the ability to sustain concurrent major joint operations and several smaller operations for collective defense and crisis response, including at strategic distance."
8. The stress on NATO forces has been exacerbated by the extensive use of national restrictions, or "caveats," by Alliance members. European "caveats" in Afghanistan and European and U.S. "caveats" in Libya have significantly limited the ability of the Alliance to bring these military operations to a timely conclusion. As a consequence, we believe strongly that the use of "national caveats" in NATO-approved combat operations undermines the effectiveness of NATO as a collective security institution and that the Alliance, therefore, should move to limit their use to the maximum extent possible.

Nuclear Forces

9. Domestic politics within NATO countries, combined with renewed interest in thinking about a world without nuclear weapons, have made forward-based nuclear weapons a frequent subject of political controversy. Paragraph 19 of the Alliance's new Strategic

Concept states clearly and unambiguously, however, that NATO will “maintain an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces” and, “ensure the broadest possible participation of Allies in collective defense planning on nuclear roles, in peacetime basing of nuclear forces, and in command, control and consultation arrangements.” Some commentators proclaimed that this statement represented a weakening of previous NATO support for the forward basing of US nuclear weapons in Europe. Words, like facts, are stubborn things, however, and we take “ensur[ing] the broadest possible participation ... in peacetime basing of nuclear forces...” to mean exactly what it says: that NATO’s heads of government have agreed that under current conditions nuclear forces based in Europe contribute significantly to the Alliance’s overall deterrent and reassurance posture

10. We have written previously supporting forward stationing of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe, emphasizing that those weapons provide an essential linkage between the North American and European parts of the Alliance by demonstrating nuclear risk-sharing in a tangible manner.⁴ Particularly so long as Russia maintains thousands of short- and medium-range nuclear forces deployed close to NATO’s eastern members, NATO’s forward-based weapons play important political roles. We have pointed out that nuclear burden-sharing, including basing nuclear weapons on allied soil and fielding operational aircraft capable of conducting nuclear missions, send an important message not only to potential adversaries, but also to allied governments and political leaders by “coupling” forces in Europe to the strategic forces of the Alliance. In particular, the governments of the newer NATO Allies have indicated that they view the presence of US nuclear weapons in Europe as essential symbols of the Alliance’s commitment to their security. We hope sincerely that as the Alliance develops its Defense and Deterrence Posture Review that the value of nuclear risk-sharing and burden-sharing is recognized and maintained in a manner consistent with Paragraph 19 of the Strategic Concept. It remains essential, as NATO foreign ministers agreed at their April 2010 meeting in Tallinn, that “decisions on nuclear policy will be made by the Alliance together.”

NATO’s Nuclear Policy Process

11. The Alliance-wide commitment to nuclear capabilities should extend to updating the process by which the Alliance develops its nuclear policy. As is well known, particularly to us, NATO’s existing nuclear policy bodies and processes date from the Cold War. France is not a member of those bodies and does not take part fully in Alliance nuclear policy discussions. There is no question that Alliance deliberations on nuclear policy would benefit from additional French input. Recasting the existing nuclear policy groups within NATO, which could include renaming them to reflect their post-Cold war policy

⁴ CSIS Trilateral Nuclear Dialogue Group, “Role of Nuclear Weapons in NATO Security,” Center for Strategic and International Studies report, September 28, 2010, last accessed June 7, 2011, http://csis.org/files/publication/101019_Role_NW_NATO.pdf.

function, could perhaps ease full French participation. We believe NATO would be strengthened by having France participate fully in all of the Alliance's discussions of nuclear policy issues.

Ballistic Missile Defense

12. We believe that protection against ballistic missiles is a critical capability that NATO needs to implement more aggressively, thereby increasing risk- and burden-sharing across the Alliance. The 2010 Strategic Concept, building on previous Alliance decisions, developed a clear direction for building Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) capabilities. Noting that the "proliferation of ballistic missiles...poses a real and growing threat to the Euro-Atlantic area," the Alliance pledged to, "develop the capability to defend our populations and territories against ballistic missile attack as a core element of our collective defense, which contributes to the indivisible security of the Alliance." However, at the same time that NATO decided in the Lisbon Declaration that, "[m]issile defense will become an integral part of our overall defense posture," the Strategic Concept stated that, "[d]eterrence, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities, remains a core element of our overall strategy." In short, missile defense supplements, but does not replace, the deterrent value provided by nuclear weapons: the growing threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery necessitates improving NATO's BMD capabilities as a critical complement to the strategic deterrence provided by Alliance nuclear capabilities. We note, however, that NATO will not acquire BMD capabilities that threaten Russia's nuclear deterrent in any manner.

13. Recent developments have increased both the importance and urgency of completing the DDRP and the BMD Implementation Plan. Iran conducted the first successful test flight of the Shahab-3 missile (with a range 1,200 miles) in July 1998 and claims to have built several hundreds of them. Iran also launched a new mobile, solid-propellant medium range ballistic missile (MRBM) in December 2009. In a May 24, 2011 report, the International Atomic Energy Agency stated it continued to be concerned regarding Iran's experimentation with and manufacture of components consistent with a nuclear implosion device, possible future weapons testing, and studies involving equipping the Shahab-3 missile with a nuclear payload.⁵ While the Alliance should continue, as called for in the Strategic Concept, "[to] actively seek cooperation on missile defense with Russia and other Euro-Atlantic partners," we believe strongly that the effort to cooperate with Russia should not delay NATO's plans for completing the DPPR and implementing the "BMD action plan" agreed to by NATO Defense Ministers in June 2011. The United

⁵ International Atomic Energy Agency, "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran," report of the Director General, May 24, 2011, last accessed June 27, 2011, <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2011/gov2011-29.pdf>.

States has made clear that the European Phased Adaptive Approach will be part of its contribution to NATO’s missile defense but a general debate on the costs associated with ballistic missile deployment should also take place within the Alliance. Moreover, the undersigned also believe that a BMD Implementation Plan should include definite milestones and schedules for production and deployment tied to a robust test schedule that will ensure the maturity of necessary technologies. The growing threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery demands that NATO move decisively to counter this threat and buttress its strategic deterrent.

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