

12. Ministers noted the Report of the Council in Permanent Session concerning a Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. The Report examined the issues which might be included on the Agenda of a Conference as set forth in paragraph 13 of the Brussels Communiqué of December 10, 1971, as well as the procedural questions relating to the convening of a Conference. Ministers directed the Council in Permanent Session to develop further its substantive and procedural studies in preparation for a Conference.

13. Ministers representing countries which participate in NATO's Integrated Defence Programme recalled the offers to discuss mutual and balanced force reductions which they had made at Reykjavik in 1968, at Rome in 1970 and subsequently reaffirmed.

14. These Ministers continue to aim at negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions and related measures. They believe that these negotiations should be conducted on a multilateral basis and be preceded by suitable explorations. They regretted that Soviet Government has failed to respond to the Allied offer of October, 1971 to enter into exploratory talks. They, therefore, now propose that multilateral explorations on mutual and balanced force reductions be undertaken as soon as practicable either before or in parallel with multilateral preparatory talks on a Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

15. These Ministers noted the studies conducted since their last meeting on political, military and technical aspects of mutual and balanced force reductions. They instructed the Permanent Representatives to continue this work in preparation for eventual negotiations.

16. These Ministers stated that the present military balance of forces in Europe does not allow a unilateral relaxation of the defence efforts of the allies. Unilateral force reductions would detract from the Alliance's efforts to achieve greater stability and détente and would jeopardize the prospects for mutual and balanced force reductions.

17. Ministers took note of a report by the Council in Permanent Session on the situation in the Mediterranean. They expressed their concern regarding the factors of instability in the area which could endanger the security of the members of the Alliance. They instructed the Council in Permanent Session to follow closely the evolution of the situation and to report to them at their next meeting.

18. The next Ministerial Session of NAC will be held in Brussels in December 1972.

19. Ministers requested the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg to transmit this communiqué on their behalf through diplomatic channels to all other interested parties, including neutral and non-aligned governments.