

28. They noted the growth of Soviet military efforts in recent years and the indications that the Soviet Union continues to strengthen both its strategic nuclear and its conventional forces, especially naval forces. They therefore agreed on the need for continued and systematic improvement of NATO's conventional forces and for the maintenance of adequate and modern tactical and strategic nuclear forces in order to ensure that the deterrent remains effective at all levels, and in order to avoid weakening the basis of NATO's search for détente.

29. They discussed a follow-up report to the Alliance Defence Study for the Seventies (the AD 70 Study). They welcomed the progress being made by members in improving Alliance defences. In particular they noted with satisfaction the further specific and important efforts announced on 7th December by those European member countries which participated in the European Defence Improvement Programme, and recognised the emphasis which these European member countries are placing on modernising the equipment of their forces, land, sea and air, along AD 70 lines. They also welcomed the substantial improvements to their conventional forces planned by the United States, and they noted with satisfaction the enhanced United States contribution to NATO's strategic deterrent which will result from the deployment of the POSEIDON weapon system. They heard with appreciation the reaffirmation by the United States Secretary of Defense that, given a similar approach by the other Allies, the United States would maintain and improve their own forces in Europe and would not reduce them except in the context of reciprocal East-West action.

30. They endorsed the priority areas which were proposed to them for the further implementation of the AD 70 recommendations. Within these areas they identified for early action certain fields such as additional anti-tank weapons and modern tanks; advanced electronic equipment for certain combat aircraft; improved all-weather

strike, attack and reconnaissance air forces; improved air defences and aircraft protection; better maritime surveillance and anti-submarine forces; more maritime patrol aircraft and seaborne missile systems; the replacement of over-age ships; the strengthening and modernisation of local and reinforcement forces on the Northern and South-Eastern Flanks; and larger ammunition stocks for land and air forces.

31. They recognised the global nature of the Soviet maritime capability, and in particular the deployments and activities of the Soviet fleets in the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean. In their discussion they reaffirmed the need for appropriate Allied measures, and reviewed progress.

32. They noted the force commitments undertaken by member nations for the year 1972 and they adopted a five-year NATO Force Plan for the period 1972-1976, including many AD 70 implementation measures.

33. They concluded that the aim within NATO should be to allocate to defence purposes, where this is within the economic capability of countries, a stable and possibly larger proportion of their growing national wealth, in order to maintain an adequate deterrent and defensive capability.

34. The Defence Ministers comprising the Nuclear Defence Affairs Committee (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States) also convened to examine reports on the activity of the Nuclear Planning Group during the past year and on its projected work.

35. The next Ministerial meeting of the Defence Planning Committee will be held in the Spring of 1972.