

13. Ministers took note of the report of the Council in Permanent Session concerning a Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. This report examined four areas of discussion at such a conference: (A) Questions of Security, including Principles Governing Relations between States and certain military aspects of security; (B) Freer Movement of People, Information and Ideas, and Cultural Relations; (C) Co-operation in the Fields of Economics, Applied Science and Technology, and Pure Science; and (D) Co-operation to Improve the Human Environment. Ministers requested the Council in Permanent Session to continue these studies with a view to facilitating a constructive discussion of these subjects at the negotiations.

14. Ministers representing countries which participate in the NATO integrated defence programme reaffirmed their longstanding belief that a mutual and balanced reduction of forces in Central Europe which preserves the legitimate security interests of all concerned would maintain security and enhance stability in Europe, make an important contribution to the easing of tension and improve East-West relations generally.

15. These Ministers reviewed the developments with respect to mutual and balanced force reductions since their last meeting in Lisbon. They reaffirmed the decisions taken at the meeting of Deputy Foreign Ministers and High Officials on 5th and 6th October, 1971, to propose exploratory talks with the Soviet Government and other interested governments and to charge Mr. Brosio with this mission on the basis of a substantive mandate. They expressed their thanks to Mr. Brosio for accepting.

16. These Ministers noted with regret that the Soviet Government has so far failed to respond to the Allied initiative in this important area of East-West relations in which that Government had earlier expressed an interest. Noting statements by Soviet leaders to the effect that they hoped East-West talks on force reductions in Europe would begin as soon as possible, these Ministers hope that Mr. Brosio will soon be able to go to Moscow. The interested Allied Governments continue to believe that prior explorations of this question are essential in preparation for eventual multilateral negotiations.

17. These Ministers emphasized the importance they attach to measures which would reduce the dangers of military confrontation and thus enhance security in Europe. They noted that a Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe should deal with these aspects in a suitable manner.

18. Ministers noted a report on further studies conducted within NATO on mutual and balanced force reductions since the Lisbon Meeting. They instructed the Permanent Representatives to continue this work.

19. Ministers welcomed the fact that the negotiations between the US and USSR on strategic arms limitations have resulted in concrete agreements to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war and to improve communication arrangements between the two governments. Satisfaction was expressed for the close Alliance consultation which has been conducted throughout the course of the Strategic Arms Limitations talks. Ministers expressed the hope

that these negotiations will soon lead to agreements which would curb the competition in strategic arms and strengthen international peace and security.

20. Ministers reaffirmed their determination to promote progress in disarmament and arms control and reviewed recent developments in these fields. They expressed satisfaction at the measures envisaged to prohibit the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and their destruction. They hoped that all States will adopt similar measures. Ministers also expressed the hope that headway could be made towards reaching an agreement on the controlled prohibition of chemical weapons. Ministers representing countries which participate in the NATO integrated defence programme noted with interest the efforts being undertaken to find effective means for the verification of an eventual agreement on a comprehensive test ban.

21. Ministers took note of a report on the situation in the Mediterranean prepared on their instructions by the Council in Permanent Session. They reaffirmed their concern about the course of events in this area, while expressing their hope that a peaceful solution would be found in the Eastern Mediterranean. In the light of the conclusions of the report before them, they instructed the Council in Permanent Session to continue consultations on this subject and to follow the evolution of the various aspects of the situation in order to report thereon at their next meeting.

22. Ministers were pleased by the new achievements of the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society (CCMS) in its studies, especially in the fields of air and water pollution, and by the initiation of a project on the application of modern technology to health care.

23. The Spring Ministerial Meeting of the Council will be held in Bonn on 30th and 31st May, 1972.

24. Ministers requested the Foreign Minister of Belgium to transmit the text of the preceding paragraphs on their behalf through diplomatic channels to all other interested parties, including neutral and non-aligned governments.

25. Ministers of the countries participating in NATO's integrated defence programme met as the Defence Planning Committee.

26. In the light of the considerations outlined in the preceding paragraphs, they emphasised that NATO's efforts to achieve sufficient defence capabilities and the striving for détente are not incompatible but complementary, and that sufficient and credible defence is a necessary corollary to realistic negotiations on security and co-operation in Europe. In the same context and as a fundamental principle, these Ministers reaffirmed the well-known position of the Alliance that its overall military capability should not be reduced except as part of a pattern of mutual force reductions balanced in scope and timing.

27. These Ministers discussed mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) and reaffirmed their intent to continue their close involvement in the development of common allied positions.