

## Clarification to NGO Presentation regarding NATO Nuclear Policy

As stated on 1 May 2003, we wish to issue a clarification to the NGO Presentation, 'The Evolving Nuclear Strategy of the US and UK and its Implications for the NPT', on behalf of the British American Security Information Council (BASIC). Our statement suggested that NATO nuclear doctrine may have been amended to bring it more into line with US nuclear doctrine and, as a result, declared that NATO now reserves the right to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.

Despite past promises of open publication, most of NATO's strategy papers are classified, making it difficult for NGO's to fully assess what policy changes have occurred. On the basis of what is known, our statement is misleading. However, a number of concerns remain and it is by no means certain that such a change in NATO nuclear policy will not take place in the near future.

We appreciate the Canadian delegation's swift action in drawing our attention to this and for their intervention in Cluster One, which reaffirmed that the 1999 Strategic Concept remains the base for NATO's nuclear policy. We also appreciate Canada's clarification that NATO's nuclear weapons use policy continues to be guided by the 1995 Negative Security Assurances given by NATO's three nuclear weapons states.

Our analysis indicates that NATO's nuclear posture has been under review. The United States' Nuclear Posture Review stated that, "A plan is already underway to conduct a NATO review of US and allied dual capable aircraft in Europe and to present recommendations to Ministers in summer of 2002. Dual capable aircraft and employed weapons are important to the continued viability of NATO's nuclear deterrent strategy and any changes need to be discussed within the alliance."<sup>1</sup>

The Final Communiqué from the NATO Ministerial meeting of the Defence Planning Committee/Nuclear Planning Group of June 2002 stated, "we provide guidance to further adapt NATO's dual-capable aircraft posture" and "we continue to place great value on the nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO, which provide essential political and military linkage between the European and the North American members of the Alliance."<sup>2</sup>

US nuclear strategy has changed since 1999. While the policies of the United States, as well as nuclear weapons states and NATO were previously ambiguous with regard to nuclear weapons use policy, US Presidential directives and the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction now clearly allow for the use of nuclear forces in response to the use of chemical or biological weapons.<sup>3</sup> Historically, NATO nuclear

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Nuclear Posture Review Report, Dec. 31, 2001, p. 44 [excerpts] URL (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm>) version current on May 6, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> NATO Press Release, 6 June 2002.

<sup>3</sup> The Classified version of The Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, National Security Presidential Directive 17, was leaked to the *Washington Times*. See, Kralev, N. "Bush Approves Nuclear Response," *Washington Times*, Jan. 31, 2003.

doctrine and policy has been amended following changes in US nuclear doctrine and policy.<sup>4</sup>

We note that NATO failed to reiterate previous communiqué language supporting the conclusions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference following the Prague Summit. We also note that NATO adopted a global policy of anti-terrorism operations and a series of initiatives to strengthen counter-proliferation and defence against WMD. Many of these documents are currently classified and we would welcome assurances that they do not include new roles for nuclear weapons, particularly in use against chemical or biological weapons.

Additionally, we are concerned that NATO member states not possessing nuclear weapons may be compromised by the evolving nuclear strategies of the US and UK, as outlined in our NGO Presentation. This is particularly worrying given that nuclear first use remains an option in NATO nuclear policy and that security assurances attached to the NPT are not legally binding. For example, would the actual use of the UK's Trident system, which is committed to NATO, require an affirmative decision by all member states?

NATO currently includes 16 nominally non-nuclear states (soon to be expanded to 23) that are nevertheless part of the nuclear Alliance. We urge that all member states of NATO reject any direct proposals or indirect efforts to amend the Alliance's nuclear policy in any way that makes use of nuclear weapons more conceivable. Indeed, in compliance with NPT obligations, NATO allies should undertake nuclear disarmament measures and end NATO reliance on any nuclear posture.

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We would like to thank other NATO analysts for their assistance with this statement and note that BASIC and PSR plan to work with others to more thoroughly address these and related NATO nuclear policy questions.

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<sup>4</sup>Butcher, M., "NATO Nuclear Policy: Between Disarmament and Pre-Emptive Nuclear Use," BASIC Note, 18 November 1999.