

DECLARATION ON ALLIANCE SECURITY

Issued by the Heads of State and Government in Strasbourg / Kehl on 4 April 2009

We, the Heads of State and Government of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, met today in Strasbourg and Kehl to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our Alliance. We have reaffirmed the values, objectives and obligations of the Washington Treaty which unite Europe with the United States and Canada, and have provided our transatlantic community with an unprecedented era of peace and stability. We have also reaffirmed our adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

NATO continues to be the essential transatlantic forum for security consultations among Allies. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and collective defence, based on the indivisibility of Allied security, are, and will remain, the cornerstone of our Alliance. Deterrence, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities, remains a core element of our overall strategy. NATO will continue to play its part in reinforcing arms control and promoting nuclear and conventional disarmament in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, as well as non-proliferation efforts.

NATO's enlargement has been an historic success in bringing us closer to our vision of a Europe whole and free. NATO's door will remain open to all European democracies which share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and whose inclusion can contribute to common security and stability.

Today, our nations and the world are facing new, increasingly global threats, such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and cyber attacks. Other challenges such as energy security, climate change, as well as instability emanating from fragile and failed states, may also have a negative impact on Allied and international security. Our security is increasingly tied to that of other regions.

We will improve our ability to meet the security challenges we face that impact directly on Alliance territory, emerge at strategic distance or closer to home. Allies must share risks and responsibilities equitably. We must make our capabilities more flexible and deployable so we can respond quickly and effectively, wherever needed, as new crises emerge. We must also reform the NATO structures to create a leaner and more cost-effective organization. We will strengthen NATO's capacity to play an important role in crisis management and conflict resolution where our interests are involved.

We aim to strengthen our cooperation with other international actors, including the United Nations, European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and African Union, in order to improve our ability to deliver a comprehensive approach to meeting these new challenges, combining civilian and military capabilities more effectively. In our operations today in Afghanistan and the Western Balkans, our armed forces are working alongside many other nations and organisations. In Afghanistan, our key priority, we are committed to helping the Afghan Government and its people to build a democratic, secure and stable country that will never again harbour terrorists who threaten Afghan and international security.

NATO recognizes the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence and welcomes the European Union's efforts to strengthen its capabilities and its capacity to address common security challenges. Non-EU Allies make a significant contribution to these efforts in which their fullest involvement possible is important, as agreed. We are determined to ensure that the NATO-EU relationship is a truly functioning strategic partnership as agreed by NATO and by the EU. Our efforts should be mutually reinforcing and complementary.

We will develop our relationships with all our partners, both in our neighbourhood and beyond, with whom we have a joint commitment to cooperative security. Our partners are key in enabling us to implement our vision of a community of shared values and responsibilities. We value the support that many of our partners bring to our operations and missions.

A strong, cooperative partnership between NATO and Russia, based on respect for all the principles of the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act and the 2002 Rome Declaration, best serves security in the Euro-Atlantic area. We stand ready to work with Russia to address the common challenges we face.

We are committed to renovating our Alliance to better address today's threats and to anticipate tomorrow's risks. United by this common vision of our future, we task the Secretary General to convene and lead a broad-based group of qualified experts, who in close consultation with all Allies will lay the ground for the Secretary General to develop a new Strategic Concept and submit proposals for its implementation for approval at our next summit. The Secretary General will keep the Council in permanent session involved throughout the process.