

And Government can help parents take responsibility. It's harder than ever for parents to pass on their values in the face of a media culture that so glorifies violence.

As Hillary pointed out in her book, the more children see of violence, the more numb they are to the deadly consequences of violence. Now, video games like "Mortal Kombat," "Killer Instinct," and "Doom," the very game played obsessively by the two young men who ended so many lives in Littleton, make our children more active participants in simulated violence.

A former lieutenant colonel and psychologist, Professor David Grossman, has said that these games teach young people to kill with all the precision of a military training program but none of the character training that goes along with it. For children who get the right training at home and who have the ability to distinguish between real and unreal consequences, they're still games. But for children who are especially vulnerable to the lure of violence, they can be far more.

Vice President Gore has led the fight to give parents the tools to limit the exposure of their children to excessive violence, from a television rating system to new ways of blocking inappropriate material on the Internet to the V-chip. By this July, fully half of all new televisions will have the V-chip; so will every new television in America by the year 2000.

Years ago, Tipper Gore sounded the first alarm about the damaging effects on our children of excessive violence in movies, music, and video games. Today, she is still drawing attention to mental illness. This June, she will host the

first-ever White House Conference on Mental Health, where we'll talk about how to recognize mental illness in young people before it's too late.

These are steps the National Government is taking to protect our children. But it is not a job Government can or should do alone. Parents come first. They should turn off the television, pay attention to what's on the computer screen, refuse to buy products that glorify violence. Make sure your children know you care about what they're doing.

And to the media and entertainment industries, I say just this: You know you have enormous power to educate and entertain our children. Yes, there should be a label on the outside of every video, but what counts is what's on the inside and what it will do to the insides of our young people. I ask you to make every video game and movie as if your own children were watching it.

In the days ahead, as we continue the process of healing, we must pledge ourselves to the task of putting an end to the culture of violence and building in its place a culture of values we can be proud to pass on to all our children.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:30 a.m. on April 24 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m., and the transcript was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Columbine High School teacher David Sanders and gunmen Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.

Washington Summit Communique *April 24, 1999*

An Alliance for the 21st Century

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance, have gathered in Washington to celebrate the 50th anniversary of NATO and to set forth our vision of the Alliance of the 21st century. The North Atlantic Alliance, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, remains the basis of our collective defence; it embodies the transatlantic

link that binds North America and Europe in a unique defence and security partnership.

2. Fifty years ago, the North Atlantic Alliance was founded in troubled and uncertain times. It has withstood the test of five decades and allowed the citizens of Allied countries to enjoy an unprecedented period of peace, freedom and prosperity. Here in Washington, we have paid tribute to the achievements of the past and we

have shaped a new Alliance to meet the challenges of the future. This new Alliance will be larger, more capable and more flexible, committed to collective defence and able to undertake new missions including contributing to effective conflict prevention and engaging actively in crisis management, including crisis response operations. The Alliance will work with other nations and organizations to advance security, prosperity and democracy throughout the Euro-Atlantic region. The presence today of three new Allies—the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland—demonstrates that we have overcome the division of Europe.

3. The Alliance takes the opportunity of this 50th anniversary to recognise and express its heartfelt appreciation for the commitment, sacrifice, resolve and loyalty of the servicemen and women of all Allies to the cause of freedom. The Alliance salutes these active and reserve forces' essential contributions, which for 50 years have guaranteed freedom and safeguarded trans-Atlantic security. Our nations and our Alliance are in their debt and offer them profound thanks.

4. The NATO of the 21st century starts today—a NATO which retains the strengths of the past and has new missions, new members and new partnerships. To this end, we have: approved an updated Strategic Concept; reaffirmed our commitment to the enlargement process of the Alliance and approved a Membership Action Plan for countries wishing to join; completed the work on key elements of the Berlin Decisions on building the European Security and Defence Identity within the Alliance and decided to further enhance its effectiveness; launched the Defence Capabilities Initiative; intensified our relations with Partners through an enhanced and more operational Partnership for Peace and strengthened our consultations and co-operation within the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council; enhanced the Mediterranean Dialogue; and decided to increase Alliance efforts against weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

5. As part of the Alliance's adaptation to the new security challenges, we have updated our Strategic Concept to make it fully consistent with the Alliance's new security environment. The updated Concept reaffirms our commitment

to collective defence and the transatlantic link; takes account of the challenges the Alliance now faces; presents an Alliance ready and with a full range of capabilities to enhance the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area; reaffirms our commitment to building the ESDI within the Alliance; highlights the enhanced role of partnership and dialogue; underlines the need to develop defence capabilities to their full potential to meet the spectrum of Alliance missions, including forces which are more deployable, sustainable, survivable and able to engage effectively; and provides guidance to the NATO Military Authorities to this end.

6. To achieve its essential purpose, as an Alliance of nations committed to the Washington Treaty and the United Nations Charter, the Alliance performs the following fundamental security tasks:

Security:

To provide one of the indispensable foundations for a stable Euro-Atlantic security environment, based on the growth of democratic institutions and commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes, in which no country would be able to intimidate or coerce any other through the threat or use of force.

Consultation:

To serve, as provided for in Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, as an essential transatlantic forum for Allied consultations on any issues that affect their vital interests, including possible developments posing risks for members' security, and for appropriate co-ordination of their efforts in fields of common concern.

Deterrence and Defence:

To deter and defend against any threat of aggression against any NATO member state as provided for in Articles 5 and 6 of the Washington Treaty.

And in order to enhance the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area:

Crisis Management:

To stand ready, case-by-case and by consensus, in conformity with Article 7 of the Washington Treaty, to contribute to effective conflict prevention and to engage actively in crisis management, including crisis response operations.

Partnership:

To promote wide-ranging partnership, cooperation, and dialogue with other countries in the Euro-Atlantic area, with the aim of increasing transparency, mutual confidence and the capacity for joint action with the Alliance.

7. We warmly welcome the participation of the three new Allies—the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland—in their first Alliance Summit meeting. Their accession to the North Atlantic Treaty opens a new chapter in the history of the Atlantic Alliance.

We reaffirm today our commitment to the openness of the Alliance under Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty and in accordance with Paragraph 8 of the Madrid Summit Declaration. We pledge that NATO will continue to welcome new members in a position to further the principles of the Treaty and contribute to peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. This is part of an evolutionary process that takes into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe. Our commitment to enlargement is part of a broader strategy of projecting stability and working together with our Partners to build a Europe whole and free. The ongoing enlargement process strengthens the Alliance and enhances the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region. The three new members will not be the last.

At the Summit in Madrid we recognised the progress made by a number of countries aspiring to join the Alliance in meeting the responsibilities and obligations for possible membership.

Today we recognise and welcome the continuing efforts and progress in both Romania and Slovenia. We also recognise and welcome continuing efforts and progress in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Since the Madrid Summit, we note and welcome positive developments in Bulgaria. We also note and welcome recent positive developments in Slovakia. We are grateful for the co-operation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ with NATO in the present crisis and welcome its progress on reforms. We welcome Albania's co-operation with the Alliance in the present crisis and encourage its reform efforts.

We welcome the efforts and progress aspiring members have made, since we last met, to advance political, military and economic reforms.

¹Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

We appreciate the results achieved, and look forward to further progress by these countries in strengthening their democratic institutions and in restructuring their economies and militaries. We take account of the efforts of these aspiring members, together with a number of other Partner countries, to improve relations with neighbours and contribute to security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region. We look forward to further deepening our co-operation with aspiring countries and to increasing their political and military involvement in the work of the Alliance.

The Alliance expects to extend further invitations in coming years to nations willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and as NATO determines that the inclusion of these nations would serve the overall political and strategic interests of the Alliance and that the inclusion would enhance overall European security and stability. To give substance to this commitment, NATO will maintain an active relationship with those nations that have expressed an interest in NATO membership as well as those who may wish to seek membership in the future. Those nations that have expressed an interest in becoming NATO members will remain under active consideration for future membership. No European democratic country whose admission would fulfil the objectives of the Treaty will be excluded from consideration, regardless of its geographic location, each being considered on its own merits. All states have the inherent right to choose the means to ensure their own security. Furthermore, in order to enhance overall security and stability in Europe, further steps in the ongoing enlargement process of the Alliance should balance the security concerns of all Allies.

We welcome the aspirations of the nine countries currently interested in joining the Alliance. Accordingly, we are ready to provide advice, assistance and practical support. To this end, we approve today a Membership Action Plan which includes the following elements:

- the submission by aspiring members of individual annual national programmes on their preparations for possible future membership, covering political, economic, defence, resource, security and legal aspects;
- a focused and candid feedback mechanism on aspirant countries' progress on their programmes that includes both political and

technical advice, as well as annual 19+1 meetings at Council level to assess progress; a clearinghouse to help co-ordinate assistance by NATO and by member states to aspirant countries in the defence/military field;

a defence planning approach for aspirants which includes elaboration and review of agreed planning targets.

We direct that NATO Foreign Ministers keep the enlargement process, including the implementation of the Membership Action Plan, under continual review and report to us. We will review the process at our next Summit meeting which will be held no later than 2002.

8. We reaffirm our commitment to preserve the transatlantic link, including our readiness to pursue common security objectives through the Alliance wherever possible. We are pleased with the progress achieved in implementing the Berlin decisions and reaffirm our strong commitment to pursue the process of reinforcing the European pillar of the Alliance on the basis of our Brussels Declaration of 1994 and of the principles agreed at Berlin in 1996. We note with satisfaction that the key elements of the Berlin decisions are being put in place. These include flexible options for the selection of a European NATO Commander and NATO Headquarters for WEU-led operations, as well as specific terms of reference for DSACEUR and an adapted CJTF concept. Close linkages between the two organisations have been established, including planning, exercises (in particular a joint crisis management exercise in 2000) and consultation, as well as a framework for the release and return of Alliance assets and capabilities.

9. We welcome the new impetus given to the strengthening of a common European policy in security and defence by the Amsterdam Treaty and the reflections launched since then in the WEU and—following the St. Malo Declaration—in the EU, including the Vienna European Council Conclusions. This is a process which has implications for all Allies. We confirm that a stronger European role will help contribute to the vitality of our Alliance for the 21st century, which is the foundation of the collective defence of its members. In this regard:

a. We acknowledge the resolve of the European Union to have the capacity for autonomous action so that it can take decisions and approve military action where the Alliance as a whole is not engaged;

b. As this process goes forward, NATO and the EU should ensure the development of effective mutual consultation, co-operation and transparency, building on the mechanisms existing between NATO and the WEU;

c. We applaud the determination of both EU members and other European Allies to take the necessary steps to strengthen their defence capabilities, especially for new missions, avoiding unnecessary duplication;

d. We attach the utmost importance to ensuring the fullest possible involvement of non-EU European Allies in EU-led crisis response operations, building on existing consultation arrangements within the WEU. We also note Canada's interest in participating in such operations under appropriate modalities.

e. We are determined that the decisions taken in Berlin in 1996, including the concept of using separable but not separate NATO assets and capabilities for WEU-led operations, should be further developed.

10. On the basis of the above principles and building on the Berlin decisions, we therefore stand ready to define and adopt the necessary arrangements for ready access by the European Union to the collective assets and capabilities of the Alliance, for operations in which the Alliance as a whole is not engaged militarily as an Alliance. The Council in Permanent Session will approve these arrangements, which will respect the requirements of NATO operations and the coherence of its command structure, and should address:

a. Assured EU access to NATO planning capabilities able to contribute to military planning for EU-led operations;

b. The presumption of availability to the EU of pre-identified NATO capabilities and common assets for use in EU-led operations;

c. Identification of a range of European command options for EU-led operations, further developing the role of DSACEUR in order for him to assume fully and effectively his European responsibilities;

- d. The further adaptation of NATO's defence planning system to incorporate more comprehensively the availability of forces for EU-led operations.

We task the Council in Permanent Session to address these measures on an ongoing basis, taking into account the evolution of relevant arrangements in the EU. The Council will make recommendations to the next Ministerial meeting for its consideration.

11. We have launched a Defence Capabilities Initiative to improve the defence capabilities of the Alliance to ensure the effectiveness of future multinational operations across the full spectrum of Alliance missions in the present and foreseeable security environment with a special focus on improving interoperability among Alliance forces (and where applicable also between Alliance and Partner forces). Defence capabilities will be increased through improvements in the deployability and mobility of Alliance forces, their sustainability and logistics, their survivability and effective engagement capability, and command and control and information systems. In this connection, we endorse the Council decision to begin implementing the Multinational Joint Logistics Centre concept by the end of 1999, and to develop the C3 system architecture by 2002 to form a basis for an integrated Alliance core capability allowing interoperability with national systems. We have established a temporary High-Level Steering Group to oversee the implementation of the Defence Capabilities Initiative and to meet the requirement of co-ordination and harmonisation among relevant planning disciplines, including for Allies concerned force planning, with the aim of achieving lasting effects on improvements in capabilities and interoperability. Improvements in interoperability and critical capabilities should also strengthen the European pillar in NATO.

12. We reaffirm our commitment to the 1995 Peace Agreement, negotiated in Dayton and signed in Paris, which established Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single, democratic and multi-ethnic state, and to the full implementation of the Peace Agreement. We reiterate our readiness to work constructively with all Parties that support the Peace Agreement and seek to implement it.

13. The Madrid Peace Implementation Council meeting in December 1998 confirmed that the next two years would be vital in strengthening the peace process in Bosnia and

Herzegovina and recognised that SFOR's presence remains essential, both to keep the peace and to provide the secure environment and support for civilian implementation. Return of refugees to areas in which they are a minority will remain vital for political stability and reconciliation. We will support efforts to take this process forward.

14. SFOR will continue to work closely and effectively with the High Representative, whose role we support, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the OSCE and other major international organisations, the UN International Police Task Force and other agencies implementing the civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement. We commend the crucial contribution of men and women of both NATO and Partner countries serving in SFOR, who are helping to bring peace to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

15. SFOR's presence cannot, however, be maintained indefinitely. SFOR is being streamlined through efficiency measures. We note that the Council in Permanent Session is examining options on the future size and structure of SFOR.

16. The continuing crisis in and around Kosovo threatens to further destabilise areas beyond the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). The potential for wider instability underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to the stabilisation of the crisis region in South-Eastern Europe. We recognise and endorse the crucial importance of making South-Eastern Europe a region free from violence and instability. A new level of international engagement is thus needed to build security, prosperity and democratic civil society, leading in time to full integration into the wider European family.

17. NATO is determined to play its full part in this process by contributing to the building of a more secure and co-operative relationship with and between the countries of the region. Given the differences in economic development and the diversity and complexity of the problems of each country in the region, international efforts to develop and stabilise the region must be comprehensive, coherent and well co-ordinated. To achieve these ends, NATO, the WEU, the EU, the OSCE and the UN must work closely together. The international financial institutions also have a crucial role to play. The Alliance's efforts to enhance regional security and stability in South-Eastern Europe and to

help resolve humanitarian problems, and the efforts by other international organisations, as well as those by the countries of the region, should be mutually reinforcing.

18. We will be meeting with colleagues from the countries of South-Eastern Europe tomorrow. We intend to build on that meeting by maintaining NATO's consultations with the countries of the region. Accordingly, we will propose to them a consultative forum on security matters which brings together all NATO members and countries of the region at an appropriate level.

19. We direct the Council in Permanent Session, building on, as appropriate, the existing EAPC and PfP framework, to give substance to this proposal, inter alia, in the following areas: 19+1 consultations where appropriate;

- the promotion of regional co-operation in the framework of an EAPC co-operative mechanism, taking into account other regional initiatives;

- targeted NATO security co-operation programmes for the countries in the region, as appropriate;

- regionally focused PfP activities and exercises; better targeting and co-ordination of Allies' and Partners' bilateral assistance to the region.

20. The Alliance's efforts to enhance regional security in South-Eastern Europe complement those by other international organisations, as well as those by the countries of the region. We welcome the forthcoming European Union conference on a Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe on 27th May 1999, and the South-Eastern Europe Co-operation process, as well as other regional efforts. Coherence and co-ordination between the various initiatives will be of great importance.

21. The security of the Balkan region is essential to achieving lasting stability throughout the Euro-Atlantic area. Our goal is to see the integration of the countries of the region into the Euro-Atlantic community. We want all the countries and peoples of South-Eastern Europe to enjoy peace and security and establish normal relations with one another, based on respect of human rights, democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.

22. We reaffirm our commitment to consultation, partnership and practical co-operation through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace. We commit our-

selves today to build an enhanced and more operational relationship with Partners for the 21st century that strengthens stability, mutual confidence, and security throughout the Euro-Atlantic area. The EAPC and the PfP have transformed political-military relations across the continent and have become the instruments of choice when the Alliance and its Partners consult and act together in the pursuit of peace and security. We look forward to consulting with our Partners at tomorrow's EAPC Summit meeting.

23. The EAPC, founded in 1997, contributes substantially to stronger political consultation and practical co-operation between the Alliance and its Partners, for solutions to security issues. We applaud this expanded dimension of political consultations, which has enhanced transparency and confidence among all EAPC members. The Alliance and its Partners have consulted regularly on regional security issues, such as on Bosnia and Herzegovina and on Kosovo. We have also developed new areas of co-operation such as peacekeeping, humanitarian de-mining, control over transfer of small arms, and the co-ordination of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.

24. We welcome the successful fulfilment by the Alliance and its Partners of five years of Partnership for Peace and the full implementation of PfP enhancements launched in 1997. Enhanced PfP has ensured that NATO-Partner co-operation contributes concretely to Euro-Atlantic stability and security. The participation of 15 PfP Partners in IFOR/SFOR demonstrates the real-life benefits of PfP's focus on interoperability and provides valuable lessons for future Alliance-Partner co-operation. The presence of Partner officers in an international capacity in NATO military headquarters enables Partners to participate in planning for NATO-PfP exercises and NATO-led PfP operations. Enhanced PfP has also permitted NATO to take action to assist Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with their unique security concerns.

25. We welcome and take special note of the initiatives designed to make the Partnership more operational and ensure greater Partner involvement in appropriate decision-making and planning, as we had envisioned in our Madrid Declaration. These steps will ensure that the Partnership will be better able to address its objectives, and will provide a solid foundation for its continuing evolution as the core of a

co-operative security network between NATO and its Partners for the 21st century. To further this goal, we have today approved the following comprehensive package. We have:

approved a Political-Military Framework for NATO-led PfP operations, which will enhance Partners' roles in political guidance and oversight, planning, and command arrangements for such operations;

endorsed the expanded and adapted Planning and Review Process, which will further enhance interoperability of Partner forces declared available for PfP activities, and will allow for more focused and increased Partner contributions of valuable forces and capabilities for future NATO-led PfP operations;

endorsed the outline Operational Capabilities Concept for NATO-led PfP operations, which will provide for deeper military co-operation between the Alliance and Partners with the goal of improving the ability of Partner forces and capabilities to operate with the Alliance in NATO-led PfP operations and directed the Council in Permanent Session to pursue its further development;

endorsed the outline programme on enhancing PfP training and education to optimise and harmonise NATO and national PfP activities in order to meet the current and future demands of an enhanced and more operational PfP. The outline programme includes the role of three new PfP tools—a PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes, a PfP Exercise Simulation Network and PfP Training Centres. We directed the Council in Permanent Session to develop a PfP Training and Education Enhancement Programme.

26. We remain firmly committed to our partnership with Russia under the NATO-Russia Founding Act. NATO and Russia have a common objective in strengthening security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. Throughout the Kosovo crisis, NATO and Russia have shared the common goals of the international community: to halt the violence, to avert a humanitarian catastrophe, and to create the conditions for a political solution. These goals remain valid. Consultation and dialogue are even more important in times of crisis. NATO and its member countries are determined to build on the areas of common ground with Russia concerning the

international response to the crisis in Kosovo and remain ready to resume consultations and co-operation in the framework of the Founding Act.

27. Close relations between NATO and Russia are of great importance to stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Since the conclusion of the Founding Act in May 1997, considerable and encouraging progress has been made in intensifying consultation and co-operation with Russia. The NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council has developed into an important venue to consult, to promote transparency and confidence-building, and to foster co-operation. Russia's participation in the implementation of the peace agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina was a significant step towards a new co-operative relationship. We have developed an extensive dialogue on such matters as disarmament and arms control, including the adaptation of the CFE Treaty; peacekeeping and nuclear weapons issues. Strategy, defence policy and doctrines, budgets and infrastructure development programmes, and non-proliferation, are further examples of this increasing co-operation.

28. We attach great importance to a strong, enduring and distinctive partnership between NATO and Ukraine. Ukraine has an important role to play in enhancing security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and in particular in Central and Eastern Europe. We are pleased with the progress reached since the signing of the NATO-Ukraine Charter in Madrid, and will continue to strengthen our distinctive partnership. We continue to support Ukrainian sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity, democratic development, economic prosperity and Ukraine's status as a non-nuclear weapons state as key factors of stability and security in Europe. We encourage Ukraine to carry forward its democratic and economic transformation, including its defence reform, and reaffirm NATO's support for Ukraine's efforts to this end. We applaud the progress made in the Joint Working Group on Defence Reform. We welcome the establishment of a NATO Liaison Office in Kyiv to further enhance Ukraine's role as a distinctive Partner. We also look forward to today's inaugural Summit meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission.

29. The Mediterranean Dialogue is an integral part of the Alliance's co-operative approach to security since security in the whole of Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the

Mediterranean. We are pleased with the development of our Mediterranean Dialogue. The Dialogue is progressive in nature and we welcome the progress towards developing broader and deeper co-operation and dialogue with the countries in the Mediterranean region. We endorse the enhancements to the political and practical co-operation of the Mediterranean Dialogue agreed by the Council in Permanent Session and direct it to pursue their early implementation. We encourage Allied nations and Mediterranean Dialogue countries to organise events such as the Rome Conference in 1997 and the Valencia Conference in 1999 as positive steps to strengthen mutual regional understanding. We look forward to further opportunities to strengthen co-operation in areas where NATO can add value, particularly in the military field, and where Dialogue countries have expressed interest. The Dialogue and other international efforts, including the EU Barcelona process, are complementary and mutually reinforcing and thus contribute to transparency and building confidence in the region.

30. The proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons and their means of delivery can pose a direct military threat to Allies' populations, territory, and forces and therefore continues to be a matter of serious concern for the Alliance. The principal non-proliferation goal of the Alliance and its members is to prevent proliferation from occurring, or, should it occur, to reverse it through diplomatic means. We reiterate our full support for the international non-proliferation regimes and their strengthening. We recognise progress made in this regard. In order to respond to the risks to Alliance security posed by the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery means, we have launched an Initiative that builds upon work since the Brussels Summit to improve overall Alliance political and military efforts in this area.

31. The WMD Initiative will: ensure a more vigorous, structured debate at NATO leading to strengthened common understanding among Allies on WMD issues and how to respond to them; improve the quality and quantity of intelligence and information-sharing among Allies on proliferation issues; support the development of a public information strategy by Allies to increase awareness of proliferation issues and Allies' efforts to support non-proliferation efforts; enhance existing Allied programmes which in-

crease military readiness to operate in a WMD environment and to counter WMD threats; strengthen the process of information exchange about Allies' national programmes of bilateral WMD destruction and assistance; enhance the possibilities for Allies to assist one another in the protection of their civil populations against WMD risks; and create a WMD Centre within the International Staff at NATO to support these efforts. The WMD initiative will integrate political and military aspects of Alliance work in responding to proliferation.

32. Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation will continue to play a major role in the achievement of the Alliance's security objectives. NATO has a long-standing commitment in this area. Allied forces, both conventional and nuclear, have been significantly reduced since the end of the Cold War as part of the changed security environment. All Allies are States Parties to the central treaties related to disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, and are committed to the full implementation of these treaties. NATO is a defensive Alliance seeking to enhance security and stability at the minimum level of forces consistent with the requirements for the full range of Alliance missions. As part of its broad approach to security, NATO actively supports arms control and disarmament, both conventional and nuclear, and pursues its approach against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means. In the light of overall strategic developments and the reduced salience of nuclear weapons, the Alliance will consider options for confidence and security building measures, verification, non-proliferation and arms control and disarmament. The Council in Permanent Session will propose a process to Ministers in December for considering such options. The responsible NATO bodies would accomplish this. We support deepening consultations with Russia in these and other areas in the Permanent Joint Council as well as with Ukraine in the NATO-Ukraine Commission and with other Partners in the EAPC.

33. The CFE Treaty is a cornerstone of European security. We reaffirm our commitment to the successful adaptation of the Treaty reflecting the new security environment and paving the way to greater conventional security and stability

in Europe. In the course of the negotiations so far, Members of the Alliance have already declared their intention to undertake reductions in their equipment entitlements or holdings, and we strongly encourage others to follow suit with similar substantial reductions. In this context, we are pleased that agreement has been reached by CFE States Parties in Vienna in March 1999 on the key outstanding issues, permitting drafting work to proceed without delay. Allies will do their utmost to complete an adapted Treaty for signature by the time of the OSCE Istanbul Summit in November 1999. Until the adaptation process is completed, the continued full implementation of the existing Treaty and its associated documents will remain crucial.

34. We call on Russia to ratify the START II Treaty without delay. This would pave the way for considerable reductions of nuclear arsenals and would allow negotiations on a START III Treaty aiming at further far-reaching reductions. We remain committed to an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and call upon all countries to accede to and implement the Treaty in due course. We support the early commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.

35. We are determined to achieve progress on a legally binding protocol including effective verification measures to enhance compliance and promote transparency that strengthens the implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We re-emphasise the importance of universal adherence to, and effective implementation of, the Chemical Weapons Convention. We support de-mining efforts in Bosnia, the development of practical initiatives under the auspices of the EAPC, and—for signatories—activities to meet obligations under the Ottawa Convention.

36. We call on Belarus, Russia and Ukraine to ratify the Open Skies Treaty without delay.

37. We will seek to intensify on a mutually reinforcing basis the Alliance's contacts and co-operation with other international organisations with a role to play in consolidating democracy and preserving peace in the Euro-Atlantic Area.

38. As stated in the Washington Treaty, we recognise the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Alliance and the UN have worked together effectively in implementing the Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We look forward

to developing further contact and exchanges of information with the United Nations, in the context of co-operation in conflict prevention, crisis management, crisis response operations, including peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance. In the crisis in Kosovo, the Alliance is using its civil and military capabilities to work with the UNHCR, the lead agency in the field of refugee relief, and other relevant international organisations, in providing humanitarian assistance and refugee relief. The Alliance will consider on a case-by-case basis future co-operation of this kind.

39. Co-operation and co-ordination between the Alliance and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe has expanded considerably in the light of the support we have provided to the OSCE-led Kosovo Verification Missions. We hope to make use of these important bridges between our two organisations to work together in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, in the spirit of the OSCE's Common Concept for the Development of Co-operation between Mutually Reinforcing Institutions. We continue to support the efforts of the OSCE to develop a Document-Charter on European Security, worthy of adoption at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in November 1999.

40. The Alliance and the European Union share common strategic interests. Our respective efforts in building peace in the former Yugoslavia are complementary. Both organisations make decisive contributions to peace and stability on the European continent. Co-operation between the two organisations on topics of common concern, to be decided on a case-by-case basis, could be developed when it enhances the effectiveness of action by NATO and the EU.

41. The Alliance, in order to adapt its structures to better prepare it to meet future challenges, launched a comprehensive programme including the continuing adaptation of NATO's command structure. Accordingly, Allies welcome the activation decision of the implementation phase of the Alliance's new command structure. This will ensure NATO's ability to carry out the whole range of its missions more effectively and flexibly; support an enlarged Alliance and our more operational relationship with Partners; and provide, as part of the development of the ESDI within NATO, for European command arrangements able to prepare, support, command and conduct WEU-led operations. After

successful trials, we have embarked on the full implementation of the CJTF concept, giving us an important new tool for crisis management in the next century. Allies also welcome the full integration of Spain into NATO's military structure from January this year, another significant milestone for the Alliance.

42. Terrorism constitutes a serious threat to peace, security and stability that can threaten the territorial integrity of States. We reiterate our condemnation of terrorism and reaffirm our determination to combat it in accordance with our international commitments and national legislation. The terrorist threat against deployed NATO forces and NATO installations requires the consideration and development of appropriate measures for their continued protection, taking full account of host nation responsibilities.

43. NATO Heads of State and Government believe that a key to the future success of the North Atlantic Alliance is the efficient production and availability of advanced weapons and technology in support of security for all its members. We also believe that viable defence industries on both sides of the Atlantic are critical to the efficient functioning of NATO military forces. To that end, we welcome continued transatlantic defence industrial co-operation to help ensure interoperability, economies of scale,

competition and innovation. We will seek to ensure that NATO's armament activities meet the Alliance's evolving military needs.

44. We welcome the presence in Washington of the President and other representatives of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NPA). The NPA plays a significant role in complementing NATO's efforts to project stability throughout Europe. We therefore attach great importance to enhancing our relations with the NPA in areas of common concern. We also appreciate the contribution made by the Atlantic Treaty Association in promoting better understanding of the Alliance and its objectives among our publics.

45. We express our deep appreciation for the gracious hospitality extended to us by the Government of the United States on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty.

NOTE: The joint statement was issued by the heads of state and government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington, DC, on April 24. It was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary but was not issued as a White House press release. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's News Conference

April 24, 1999

The President. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to read a brief statement, after which we will entertain questions, alternating from the American press corps and the international press corps here.

We have just about completed the first two days of our NATO meeting, welcoming new members, adopting very important changes to make NATO operations more relevant and more effective in meeting the new challenges of the 21st century.

We have also reaffirmed our determination on Kosovo to get the Serb forces out, to get the refugees back home, under the protection of an international security force, moving toward self-government.

Yesterday we sent a strong message of support to the frontline states who have risked and sacrificed so very much in this crisis. NATO will respond to any actions by Serbia against its neighbors as a result of NATO presence on their territory during this crisis or to any move to undermine the democratically elected government of Montenegro. We also expressed our support for a genuine democratic transition in Serbia.

For 5 years now, we have been working to build a new NATO, prepared to deal with the security challenges of the new century. Today we have reaffirmed our readiness in appropriate circumstances to address regional and ethnic conflicts beyond the territory of NATO members. I am pleased that our strategic concept