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DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE IDENTITY (ESDI) WITHIN NATO

The North Atlantic Alliance is based on a shared commitment to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area by the European and North American members of the Alliance. The Alliance has also been giving increasing recognition to the need to strengthen the European component within NATO through the development of the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI). The 1994 Brussels Summit confirmed that the emergence of ESDI would strengthen the European pillar of the Alliance while reinforcing the transatlantic link and enabling the European allies to take greater responsibility for their common security and defence. The Madrid Summit of July 1997 reaffirmed the Allies' full support for the development of ESDI.

The Allies have been engaged since the 1994 Summit in fulfilling these commitments in concrete terms. Particularly important in this ongoing process was the decision taken by Foreign and Defence Ministers, at their respective meetings in Berlin and Brussels in June 1996, to develop the ESDI within the Alliance. In pursuit of this aim, Ministers have taken a series of measures designed to prepare for operations led by the Western European Union (WEU), through the creation of coherent and effective forces capable of operating under the political control and strategic direction of the WEU. They have consulted regularly on the development of ESDI at their twice-yearly meetings. The Permanent Council of the WEU and NATO, meeting both separately and jointly, and their subordinate bodies were charged with implementation.

Preparations for WEU-led operations making use of Alliance assets and capabilities are now well advanced. Recent work has focussed on:

- arrangements for the release, monitoring, and return or recall of NATO assets and capabilities made available, on a case-by-case basis, to support WEU-led operations;
- arrangements for close NATO-WEU consultations on planning and conducting WEU-led operations using NATO assets and capabilities;
- arrangements for the effective sharing of information, including intelligence, that NATO and the WEU would require in the context of WEU-led operations;
- arrangements to enable NATO's command structure to provide headquarters elements and command positions for conducting WEU-led operations;

- arrangements for supporting within the Alliance all European Allies in planning for the conduct of WEU-led operations on the basis, inter alia, of illustrative mission profiles provided by the WEU;
- arrangements for incorporating the requirements for WEU-led operations in NATO's defence planning process;
- the testing and refining of these and other features of the Alliance's support for WEU-led operations in the course of a NATO-WEU workshop and a NATO-WEU seminar held in 1998 and 1999 respectively, and a joint NATO-WEU crisis management exercise scheduled for 2000.

At their meeting in December 1998, Alliance Ministers asked for recommendations to be made on how best to further enhance the effectiveness of ESDI within the Alliance, including the contribution made by all European Allies, beyond the Washington Summit.

While the key elements needed for the development of ESDI within the Alliance are now largely in place, or are expected to be in place by the time of the Washington Summit, further joint work by NATO and the WEU is foreseen after the Summit to refine and elaborate them.