

NATO UNCLASSIFIED
Releasable to Montenegro

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DOCUMENT
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Silence Procedure ends:
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PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF NATO INFORMATION

Note by the Secretary General

1. As part of NATO Adaptation, the Archives Committee has reviewed the policy on the Public Disclosure of NATO Information and endorsed a number of revisions that promote and enhance the processes for the declassification and disclosure of current NATO information. At the same time, the Committee revised and approved the supporting Directive on the Public Disclosure of NATO Information (AC/324-D(2010)0010-REV1) and Guidelines on the Processing of Current NATO Information in accordance with the ad hoc Declassification and Disclosure Process (AC/324-D(2016)0003 (INV)).

2. I do not believe this needs further discussion, accordingly, **unless I hear to the contrary by 18:00 hours on Monday, 27 February 2017**, I will take it that Council has approved the revised Policy on the Public Disclosure of NATO Information and noted the Directive and Guidelines.

(Signed) Jens Stoltenberg

1 Annex

Original: English

POLICY ON THE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF NATO INFORMATION

Introduction

1. This document establishes the policy on the public disclosure of NATO information in support of the NATO Information Management Policy (NIMP)¹.
2. This Policy is published by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and is authorised for public disclosure.
3. The Policy is supported by a Directive on the Public Disclosure of NATO Information.

Scope and Implementation

4. This Policy applies to information falling within the scope of the NIMP and shall be implemented by the NATO Archivist.

Principle and Objectives

5. In keeping with the democratic principle that there is a clear duty to inform the public, and as an expression of the importance of the common historical and cultural values that tie members of the Alliance indivisibly together, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will disclose to the public NATO information when such information is no longer classified or sensitive.
6. The objectives of the public disclosure of NATO information are:
 - a) to inform public opinion and broaden the understanding of the purposes, principles and results of the common endeavour of NATO in all its fields of activity;
 - b) to stimulate discussion about NATO through the examination of information that documents NATO's evolution, missions, policies, consultation and decision making; and
 - c) to promote and facilitate research about NATO.

¹ Currently C-M(2007)0118.

Policy

7. It is the policy of NATO to disclose and make available to the public NATO information that:

- a) has permanent value and is at least thirty years old; or
- b) has been declassified, if appropriate, by competent authorities in accordance with the NATO Security Policy² and its supporting Directives; and
- c) has been examined by competent authorities in the member nations where required, and approved for public disclosure.

8. NATO information shall be examined by competent authorities for declassification and public disclosure against the NATO Exemptions listed in Annex 1 as well as specific national concerns.

9. A decision not to disclose specific NATO information to the public shall be by reference to its contents.

10. When NATO information cannot be disclosed in its entirety, it may be further screened for partial disclosure.

11. NATO information of permanent value that is not classified and is thirty years old shall be automatically disclosed to the public consistent with the applicable policy on unclassified information.³ This applies both to information marked unclassified at the time of its creation and to information that has been declassified in an authorised manner.

12. Independently of the systematic disclosure of NATO information outlined above, NATO information including information that is less than thirty years old may be declassified and publicly disclosed as the result of an ad hoc request by a competent authority of NATO, or by a nation or international organisation having formal relations with NATO. Such ad hoc requests shall be approved by competent authorities in the member nations.

13. Classified information that has been introduced into NATO by a nation or international organisation, and that has not been circulated under a NATO marking, shall be disclosed subject to the agreement of that nation or international organisation.

² Currently C-M(2002)49

³ Currently C-M(2002)60

Responsibilities

14. Originators, successor organisations or higher authorities are responsible for:
 - a) the declassification of NATO classified information in accordance with the NATO Security Policy and its supporting Directives;
 - b) the approval of ad hoc requests for public disclosure where required and the identification of current information whose disclosure would contribute to the achievement of Alliance's agreed transparency goals and objectives; and
 - c) making a determination and/or recommendation on each item's suitability for public disclosure at time of initial approval and/or publication.
15. The NATO Archives Committee, on behalf of the NAC, is responsible for the continuation and expansion of this Policy, for publishing and maintaining specific supporting directives and guidelines, and for coordinating the examination of the NATO information proposed for public disclosure by competent authorities in the member nations.
16. Heads of NATO Civil and Military bodies are responsible for ensuring that the principle and objectives of this policy and its supporting directives are understood and applied within their organisations.
17. The NATO Archivist, on behalf of the Archives Committee and within the scope of this Policy, is responsible for initiating, coordinating and reporting on the declassification and public disclosure of NATO information, and proposing amendments to this Policy and the related directives and guidelines.
18. The NATO Archivist is also responsible for ensuring the public availability of, and access to, publicly disclosed information in the NATO Archives.

Definitions

Access is the right, opportunity and means of finding, using or retrieving information. (Source: NIMP) Within the context of this Policy, access relates to NATO information that has been publicly disclosed.

Availability is the property of information and material being accessible and usable upon demand by an authorised individual or entity. (Source: NIMP) Within the context of this Policy, availability relates to NATO information that has been publicly disclosed.

Competent Authority is the originating member nation, office, successor organisation or higher authority, NATO commands or agencies and, as appropriate, other interested member nations, non-NATO nations or international organisations.

Information is any communications or presentation of knowledge such as facts, data or opinions in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative or audiovisual forms. (Source: NIMP)

Information of Permanent Value is all information that is required to document NATO's evolution and missions, consultation and decision making processes. (Source: NATO Primary Directive on Information Management (PDIM))

NATO denotes the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the bodies governed either by the Agreement on the status of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, National Representatives and International Staff, signed in Ottawa on 20th September, 1951 or by the Protocol on the status of the International Military Headquarters set up pursuant to the North Atlantic Treaty, signed in Paris on 28th August, 1952. (Source: NIMP)

NATO Information Management Policy establishes a framework to ensure that information is handled effectively, efficiently and securely in order to serve the interests of NATO. This includes managing all aspects of information throughout its life-cycle

Originator is the nation or international organisation under whose authority the information has been produced or introduced into NATO. (Source: NIMP)

Partial Disclosure is the public disclosure of portions of information as the result of screening and redacting.

Screening is the examination of information to determine whether portions of it can be declassified and publicly disclosed.