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POTENTIAL THREATS FACING NATO

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

A REPORT ON POTENTIAL THREATS FACING THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION



JANUARY 31, 2000.—Message and accompanying papers referred to the Committee on Armed Services and ordered to be printed

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To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President of the United States, including by section 1221(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106–65), I hereby determine and certify that the new NATO Strategic Concept imposes no new commitment or obligation on the United States. Further, in accordance with section 1221(c) of the Act, I transmit herewith the attached unclassified report to the Congress on the potential threats facing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *January 31, 2000.*

REPORT TO THE CONGRESS ON THE STRATEGIC CONCEPT OF NATO

ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL THREATS TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

The threat of a large-scale conventional military attack against NATO is negligible. The emergence of any such threat would likely take years, if not decades, to develop. The United States and its Allies would, therefore, have considerable warning and preparation time in the very unlikely event of such a dramatic change in the European security environment. The Allies continue to improve their capacity to meet conventional and other challenges, including through NATO Defense Planning, joint exercises, and the Defense Capability Initiative launched at the Washington Summit.

The Alliance faces risks that are multi-directional, multi-dimensional, and difficult to predict in detail. While most of Europe is more secure than at any time in decades, the Alliance confronts actual and potential dangers which are likely to increase. They will come from a number of sources including ethnic and religious strife, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, potential outbreaks of regional conflict, and transnational threats such as terrorism.

Over the next year, we will continue to face challenges in the Balkans, where Alliance forces will continue to be engaged in peace support operations. In Kosovo, with strong Alliance involvement and support, including participation by partner nations, the international community is working to create a peaceful, democratic society where people can live in security and enjoy universally recognized human rights and freedoms on an equal basis. In Bosnia, the Dayton process has brought stability and ended violence, but much more needs to be done to achieve meaningful ethnic reconciliation. A constitutional struggle still looms between Serbia and Montenegro.

Throughout the region, political, economic, and social progress is likely to remain tied to continuing direct international involvement in many aspects of policy formulation and resource allocation. The Stability Pact for southeast Europe was launched this summer by regional countries and key international players, including the United States, to address this need. It complements work already underway bilaterally and through a variety of institutions, including NATO, to strengthen democracy, economic development, and security throughout the region.

The conflict in Chechnya is a source of mounting civilian casualties and large numbers of displaced people. It poses a threat to the stability of the entire Caucasus region and highlights the type of security challenges emerging in the New Independent States. The United States and its allies continue to press Russia to exercise the fullest restraint, to refrain from the indiscriminate use of force

against civilians, and to pursue a political solution to the conflict. Allies also support the OSCE's efforts to facilitate such a political solution.

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, in particular, constitutes a real threat to Allied populations, territory, and military forces. Recently, a series of events have underlined these concerns, including nuclear tests in South Asia, continued concern about Iraq's WMD programs, accelerated missile development in South Asia, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf area, and the continued availability of dual-use technologies relevant to producing chemical and biological weapons. Particularly worrisome is the security of materials in Russia and other New Independent States (NIS) that could be used for WMD production and delivery, increased cooperation among rogue states, and more effective efforts by proliferants to conceal illicit activities.

Enhanced Alliance efforts are required both to stem proliferation and to prevent and protect against attacks employing such weapons. The Alliance is pursuing plans to open a WMD Center at NATO as part of an initiative launched at the Washington Summit to improve overall Alliance political and military efforts to respond to the risks posed by WMD. The United States and its NATO partners are also continuing to work the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention and to negotiate and bring into force new nonproliferation agreements such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention Protocol, and the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. We also are working vigorously through the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Australia Group to prevent the transfer of sensitive technologies to proliferation programs.

Russia and other NIS states will continue to need assistance as they attempt to deal with the WMD capabilities they inherited from the former Soviet Union. Under the Expanded Threat Reduction Initiative announced last January, the United States, with allied assistance, will redouble its efforts to assist Russia, Ukraine, and other NIS in dismantling its nuclear and chemical weapons, in eliminating former chemical and biological weapons facilities, in safeguarding sensitive nuclear materials, in employing weapons scientists, and in redirecting former biological weapons institutes.

Possible terrorist attacks on Alliance territories and against Allied citizens and military facilities by organizations with virtually worldwide contacts also pose serious concerns. In addition to more conventional threats such as bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations, some terrorist groups have expressed an interest in or have sought to acquire chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear agents. At the Washington Summit, allies reaffirmed their commitment to combat terrorism and to develop appropriate measures to ensure continued protection of NATO forces and installations.

In sum, despite the virtual disappearance of a large-scale conventional threat, the Alliance continued to face a range of serious risks on its periphery that put a premium on a high level of vigilance

as well as on enhanced mobility, sustainability, interoperability, and capability of Allied forces.

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