

10 May 2013

Dear Secretary-General,

While plans for the June NATO Defence Ministerial are still evolving, we are writing to convey to you our collective aspirations for our next meeting in order to ensure that we can make real progress towards Allies' objectives for the defence agenda.

We are approaching the one year anniversary of the Chicago Summit, where Allies articulated the ambitious vision of NATO Forces 2020: *modern, tightly connected forces equipped, trained, exercised and commanded so that they can operate together and with partners in any environment.*

We recognize and appreciate the efforts you have made to make this vision a reality. As we reflect on the last year, however, we note with concern that we still have a long way to go to achieve the mandate given to us by our Heads of State and Governments. Given the strategic challenges that face the Alliance – from falling defence budgets and uncertainty in the international security environment – we must be decisive in advancing the reform and transformation of NATO.

Building on the spirit of our discussion in Chicago and on the substantive conversation we had during the February Ministerial, we all agree that we should use the June Ministerial as an opportunity for a more deliberate, substantive, political and free-flowing debate that addresses the key issues and sets a clear course for follow-on work. Our June meeting gives us a chance to align NATO more effectively with the realities of members' defence budgets and the needs of a modern, fit-for-purpose Alliance, with an eye on a longer-term strategy for NATO transformation.

With this in mind, the June Ministerial would be well served by including the following items in our deliberations:

- The production of a long anticipated strategic level Defence Planning “dashboard” to brief us on how well Allies' planned capabilities will meet the Level of Ambition. The dashboard would give us a common picture to understand the extent of the shortfalls, surpluses and the associated risks.
- Moreover, in addition to finalizing the capability targets to nations in the current cycle of the NATO Defence Planning Process, the dashboard would help us begin a political discussion about how we can address shortfalls and mitigate risks. Informed by our national realities and prospects for the coming decade, we need a qualitative and realistic assessment of capability targets in order to more rigorously prioritize capability investments (you will find attached an illustrative synchronization calendar that could be a useful tool in supporting this approach). We would all appreciate a reformed NATO Defence Planning Process that is more transparent and that allows nations to readily understand capability shortfalls and their implications;

- In light of the importance of maintaining NATO interoperability and deployability post-ISAF, we would appreciate an update on the work NATO Military Authorities are currently conducting on the Connected Forces Initiative.

We should also mention that we maintain an enduring interest in seeing through successful reforms to NATO institutions. This not only includes existing work tasked at previous Summits, but also to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of NATO structures and working methods to sharpen the structure and purpose of Ministerial discussions to produce clear decisions to move our Alliance forward.

Over the longer-term, as we look ahead to the October Ministerial and a busy 2014 that may see another Summit, our intent is to provide you with our views on the progress the Alliance is making towards our goals on a regular basis.

We look forward to seeing you in June in Brussels.

Sincerely,



Peter MacKay  
Minister of National Defence  
Canada



Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert  
Minister of Defence  
The Netherlands



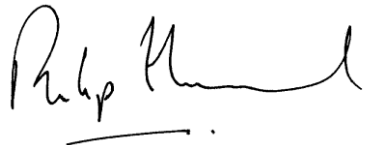
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