

16th January 1967

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

11. a.m.

Meeting of Secretary General with selected  
members of the International Staff: Council  
Resolution on Future Tasks of the Alliance.

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Present: Deputy Secretary General  
Mr. Jaenicke  
Mr. Chapman  
Mr. Van Campen  
Mr. Hockaday  
Mr. Bacchetti  
Mr. Simms

The Secretary General informed those present that, as a result of recent discussions with Ambassador de Staercke, he was in a position to indicate the ideas of the Belgian Government with respect to the procedure to be followed initially in attempting to implement the Council Resolution on the Future Tasks of the Alliance. In the course of the current week, the Belgian Government would distribute to other delegations a document spelling out its own ideas. Following this, Ambassador de Staercke would conduct exploratory talks with certain other Permanent Representatives. About 15th February, Mr. Harmel would wish to appear before the Council, possibly with other Ministers participating, to present the Belgian Government's ideas. At such a meeting, the appointment of an open-ended high-level group under the responsibility and possible chairmanship of the Secretary General might be discussed, as well as an outline of the substance of the study to be carried out. It was the Belgian Government's view that the high-level group might include such people, for example, as Mr. Rostow for the US, and Mr. Thomson for the UK; the possibility of certain countries being represented on it by their Permanent Representatives to NATO, however, would not be ruled out. The Secretary General commented that the Belgian proposals raised certain questions. An open-ended group would almost certainly be comprised of ten or more members. Could such a large group do useful work, unless it were to divide into sub-committees? Determination would have to be made as to whether the results of the study should be made public or not, and to what extent the group should be under the control of the Council.

Mr. Van Campen pointed out that the success of the Three Wise Men exercise had been due in large part to the fact that the ultimate responsibility rested with only three men. Mr. Chapman noted his agreement with the idea that the study should be carried out by men of international stature, since a main purpose of the exercise was to satisfy public opinion that the Alliance was adapting itself to changed circumstances. The Secretary General said that it was important not only to recognise that circumstances had changed, as this alone might suggest that the Alliance had out-lived its usefulness, but also to specify the kind of changes that had taken place and to show how these had affected the Alliance. It was true that the exercise should have an impact on public opinion, but just how such an impact should be achieved was another matter. The Three Wise Men had not publicised their efforts; it had been public knowledge, however, that they were at work, and perhaps the precedent thus established would be useful in the present instance.

Mr. Bacchetti observed that there were significant differences between the Three Wise Men exercise and the present one. In the former exercise, there had been no doubt that the ultimate end would be some reorganization of the Alliance; moreover, members had been chosen from among the smaller and medium sized powers. The present exercise was a highly political one; it would be difficult to exclude representatives of the larger powers, and it would be extremely difficult to change a report drafted by high-level representatives of important countries. A mixed procedure might be feasible: those charged with the responsibility for the study might report to the Council from time to time, so that there would be a continuing exchange of views, and the Council would not, in the end, simply have to "rubber stamp" a report drawn up by three or four men. The Secretary General, while recognising the value of this suggestion, expressed the view that there could hardly be more than three or four meetings of the Council for this purpose. The proposal might be given effect by including the Secretary General in the drafting group and having him report to the Council, or by having the whole group come before the Council. It might even be desirable not to have the Secretary General chair the group.

With regard to membership, the Secretary General said the question would have to be asked whether or not a Frenchman should be included in the group. In this connexion, it should be noted that the French approach to the questions under study was fundamentally different from <sup>its</sup> Allies. Mr. Bacchetti observed that while the exercise might prove to be a dangerous one, as it had been decided on, it would be better to have the French in rather than out. The Secretary General pointed out that the Alliance might then be split on the political side as well as on the military side. The Belgians had been stressing the desirability of examining the so-called "two-pillar" concept. This concept was not necessarily connected with the French position, but the French might seek to use it for their own ends. Mr. Van Campen said that he did not favour an open-ended group. However, if a limited group were to be chosen, what should be the basis for selecting one country and not another? The Secretary General, summing up, said that the key questions were: (i) whether the group should be open-ended or limited; and (ii) if limited, whether the French should be in or out. Mr. Van Campen commented that the precedents established by open-ended groups were not encouraging: in this respect the force planning exercise was a particularly egregious example. Mr. Roberts expressed the view that there were compelling arguments for keeping the exercise under the control of the Council. He was inclined to believe that the "first battle" might well take place on the procedural question of selecting a limited group, but he thought it essential that the group should not be open-ended and discussion of the procedural point might ~~xxx~~ indicate how the exercise would go in the long run. The Three Wise Men exercise provided a useful precedent for the selection of members. The Secretary General commented that the only way to keep the French out would be to limit the membership to the smaller powers. Mr. Chapman suggested that a high-level group might designate persons at a lower level to carry out specific studies. The Secretary General said that, in his view, it was necessary to come somehow to the establishment of a sub-group, of no more than five people, that would really do the work. Mr. Van Campen suggested that it might be possible to establish the group with members of one nationality and deputies of another; for example, a Belgian member might have a Dutch deputy, and so on.

With regard to the substance of the matter, the Secretary General averred that the exercise could succeed only if it was clear that there was a political will and intention on the part of most countries to demonstrate the need for a continuation of NATO. If the need for continuing the Alliance should be questioned openly, the Alliance would already be "half dead". Mr. Chapman disagreed, voicing the opinion that it would be psychologically advantageous to question and then re-affirm the necessity of the Alliance. The Secretary General commented that this question might be resolved by the manner of the presentation. Mr. Hockaday observed that, if it were stressed that, as stated in the Resolution, the study was concerned with the future tasks facing the Alliance, there would be an implication that the Alliance continued.

Mr. Jaenicke said that, in his view, it would be well to discuss the substance of the matter a bit more before fixing the procedure too formally. It was clear that there were dangers in the exercise. One way to deal with the argument that the presence of the Americans was not necessary to European security might be for the International Staff to make a study of the activities of the Alliance with the emphasis on how these could be carried on if the US were no longer in NATO. Such a study would undoubtedly show that any idea of excluding the US could not be supported. The Secretary General pointed out that the French response to any such contention might be that this merely demonstrated their own argument that the Alliance was shaped for the Americans. A more basic point was whether the Americans were necessary to the balance of power. Even the French could not dispute their necessity in this regard. Vis-a-vis public opinion, it was necessary to make the points that the balance of power is a reality and can only be assured by the continuation of the Alliance. On the other hand, it was true that NATO was no longer in the state of alarm of a few years previous, and certain changes might be made, even in the military field, in the light of this consideration.

Summing up, the Secretary General suggested that the report might start from the idea of re-justifying the Alliance, examining such matters as the two-pillar concept, and the effect of the new political situation on the institutions of the Alliance. What the report should seek to do was not so much to analyse every event of recent years

throughout the world as to show the impact of important events on the balance of power, especially in Europe. It should not be expected that this exercise would patch up difficulties with the French; it would already be a good thing if those difficulties were not enlarged. In conclusion, the Secretary General suggested that the group meet again on Friday, 20th January, at 11 a.m.

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