

14th April, 1967

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MINUTE FOR THE CHAIRMAN
MEETING OF THE SPECIAL GROUP
Monday, 17th April, 1967

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

You may wish to say:

It is well that at the outset of our undertaking we agree on what we are trying to achieve by this study. Unless we have a clear agreement now on this subject, we run the risk of producing papers which will vary ^{too} widely as to presentation and conclusions. I therefore welcome this opportunity of meeting together today and I believe it important that the Rapporteurs, assisted by the officers of the International Staff continue, throughout the study, to keep in close touch.

2. The Ministerial Resolution called on us "to study the future tasks which face the Alliance, and its procedures in fulfilling them, in order to strengthen the Alliance as a factor for a durable peace". To my mind, this directive requires us to produce by next December a ^{report} ~~paper~~ which will set forth in specific terms how and where the Alliance can act in the foreseeable future as a stabilising factor for peace in the world. Such a peace of course finally depends in large measure on bringing about a stable and peaceful settlement in Europe. The continued cohesion and vitality of our Alliance will depend on its ability to respond to the needs of the times.

3. Such a ^{report} ~~paper~~ it seems to me must be divided into two phases. In the first phase, which we launch today, we need to describe in objective, realistic and reasonable terms the situation confronting us today: what is Soviet foreign policy? what is the nature of our relations? what should be the guiding principles of our defence posture? and what is the situation in the world outside the Treaty area?

4. It is on the basis of such a description that we can then move to phase 2 in which we shall propose to our Ministers the tasks to be undertaken by the Alliance. The tasks to be defined should be attainable, manageable and susceptible to be undertaken in the foreseeable future. They should be described as clearly and as concretely as possible. To summarise, then, the paper, as I envisage it, should be practical in its conclusions and should be oriented toward the present and future and toward achieving action.

5. With regard to procedure, I simply wish to recall our agreement that the Rapporteurs will serve as Chairmen of their Sub-Groups, and that in their absence, the Permanent Representatives belonging to the same nationality as the Rapporteurs will take the Chair.

6. Next I wish to remind you of our understanding that in order to ensure freedom of discussion in the Sub-Groups, no records shall be kept.

7. Thirdly, let me refer to my P.O. which informs you of the names of the officers of the International Staff whom I have asked to serve on the Sub-Groups. They and the Committee Secretaries - ~~if these are desired~~ - will be there to assist your work.

8. I thought I should also let you know that I plan to hold a press conference tomorrow night, Tuesday, at the end of ^{our} these initial meetings. On Thursday we issued a NATO press release in which we published the names of the Rapporteurs and the titles of the subjects to be studied. I plan to fill out this information on a background basis.

9. Finally, I would like to discuss briefly the timetable of our work until the Ministerial Meeting in June because it is a factor to be kept in mind. As you will recall, the Council was instructed to give Ministers a progress report on that occasion.

10. As I see it, it may be expected that the Sub-Groups will proceed at different speeds and that consequently their reports will be completed according to different schedules.

Nevertheless, I would hope that, insofar as they are not available at the beginning of your work, the initial reports of the Rapporteurs might be ready by the end of April. Allowing, on this assumption, two weeks for discussion and drafting, the interim or concluding reports of the Sub-Groups might be expected to be available by 15th May. After distribution and consideration of these reports by the Special Group, the latter's Progress Report to Ministers might then be written by 31st May - which is the last possible deadline. Final papers for Ministerial meetings must go to capitals at least two weeks in advance.

11. I realize of course that this is a somewhat tight schedule, but since we are committed to submit a report to Ministers, we might perhaps try to meet these deadlines.

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xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx should be allowed the widest flexibility in
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Nevertheless, for the purpose of foreseeing the development
of the exercise, it may be anticipated that after their initial
meetings today and tomorrow, the Sub-Groups will decide to
disband and reconvene only after their Rapporteurs have
prepared the first papers. It may also be expected that the
preparation of these papers may take up to one month and that
some or all of the Sub-Groups may not be able to meet again
before the week of 15th May.

If this is indeed the schedule that is followed and since final papers for Ministerial Meetings must go to capitals at least two weeks in advance, there will be at the most only two weeks for the Special Group to prepare its Progress Report to Ministers - 15th to 25th May.

Of course it may be that we can proceed more rapidly and we shall adapt our procedures accordingly but I did want to mention this aspect of our work in order that we keep it in mind.7

12. I know you are aware of the great importance which Ministers and public opinion attach to your work. You know that you can count on the unstinting support of myself and my staff. I am confident that working together we shall be able to produce an important study in the history of our Alliance.