

3rd July, 1967

NOTO CONFIDENTIAL
RS/67/85

To: Secretary General

cc: Deputy Secretary General ✓
ASG for Political Affairs
Acting ASG for Economics & Finance
Directeur du Cabinet
Mr. Chapman
Mr. de Camaret
Dr. Bühlring
Mr. Van Campen
Mr. Lintall-Smith
Mr. de Burlet
M. Thiebault
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Registry

From: W.M. Newton

Subject: Meeting of Sub-Group 1 on 27th and 28th June, 1967

The three meetings of Sub-Group 1 involved nearly ten hours of discussion. A Mansard Report would therefore be lengthy, repetitive and sometimes desultory. This report therefore attempts to give a synthesis of the views expressed on topics of particular significance and interest.

1. The attempt to initiate a substantive discussion of the German problem was in the main aborted. The Netherlands, U.S. and others emphasized that a necessary first contribution was a statement of Bonn's policy on this matter. Dr. Sahm said that he could not do this. Professor Bryzinski referred to speeches by Chancellor Kiesinger on the 14th, 17th and 23rd June as "extremely interesting and rather novel", but Dr. Sahm was not to be drawn into adding any comment on these speeches. He argued that after thirteen years of its old policy, Bonn had only recently begun to experiment with a new policy based on détente and that this policy might have to be modified in the light of experience. It was therefore unreasonable to ask Bonn at this stage to come up with a whole set of new policy ideas on the German problem. It was all very well to invite the Rapporteur to be bold in his treatment of the subject but being bold nearly always meant making suggestions for new concessions.

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Dr. Wiekert said that we should not fall for the fallacy that there was some magic formula to solve the German problem and asked "Do I detect a feeling in the Group that German policy should perhaps go further?" Professor Bryzinski pointed out that instead of being asked to react to German views on the German problem, the Group was being asked to answer questions in the Rapporteur's paper, i.e. to define its position before hearing the German position or having a text to work on.

2. Although the attempt to extract from the Federal Republic a statement of policy on the German problem drew a blank, a specific request put forward by the U.K. and U.S. was accepted. This was that the German Representative should supply a statement of what principles the Federal German Republic thought should apply in the future to relations between Bonn's NATO Allies and the Soviet Zone. Their argument was that with the Federal German Republic applying a new policy to intra-German relations, the Allies of Bonn were bound to ask themselves what their policy should be vis-à-vis the Soviet Zone. Dr. Sahn agreed to provide such a statement for the Group.

3. A number of speakers were inclined to play down the need for any very detailed or profound analysis of the German problem. The Canadian and the Dane in particular seemed to think that the process of détente had such a long way to go before there could be a situation in which the German problem could become ripe for negotiation that discussion of the latter was somewhat academic. The Dane even said that the period involved might be "longer than the history of NATO". The Belgian said that under the old policy there had been no difficulty in defining a position on the German problem in that détente could only progress to the extent that there was also progress toward German reunification, but under the new policy line the modalities were not indicated and all we had was the objective. We therefore needed guidelines. Dr. Sahn pointed out that on the new policy line, détente should not be pursued in any way which would prejudice reunification. He could not accept the Canadian concept of a timeframe in which the Group simply concerned itself with "expansion of the détente" and left aside the question of a European settlement and the German problem as being outside the timeframe on which the Group was working.

4. The Canadian Ambassador mentioned the United States contribution of two scenarios based on the most optimistic and pessimistic probabilities. He developed the optimistic perspective, arguing that time was on the side of the West. The Netherlands Representative said he would only accept this idea on the proviso that the NATO Allies stayed united. Professor Bryzinski had doubts about this idea that time was on our side. He pointed out that there were many forces at work to present the status quo as constituting the essence of the détente. Our job was to resist this and to "shape the détente" to serve our own purposes rather than those of Moscow.

5. Professor Bryzinski also challenged the assumption and the oft-reiterated view that the bilateral approach in East-West relations must be our methodology. He said that multilateral issues had already become important and would become increasingly important in East-West relations. As examples, he instanced the Common Market's commercial policy, GATT, IIF, etc. The Eastern European governments no doubt felt happier in handling questions on a bilateral basis because this was much less difficult for them than to face up to the multilateral issues which in the economic field, for example, meant that Eastern European countries might have to undertake radical transformation of their Communist economies. He argued that it would be to our advantage to develop multilateral relations as a leverage for reorientating the policies of these East European régimes. Our aim should be to get them to put Europe at the centre of their policy preoccupations. In this way, multilateral questions could exercise a Europeanizing effect and accelerate the evolutionary tendencies.

6. The Italian Representative repeated Signor Fanfani's suggestion that the Harmel Exercise should be extended to examine the idea of a European conference. This approach might have promise, not indeed in respect of solving the German problem at this time, but possibly by bringing about major progress in economic relations which later on might well have useful political results. Dr. Sahn said that there was no need for formal action to extend the Group's terms of reference, which were amply wide enough to deal with this and similar considerations. Ambassador Watson said that he thought the Group should examine the question of a European security conference and come up with some fairly specific suggestions. There was a big difference between the idea of engaging in East-West talks and the much remoter idea of getting into the ultimate question of a European settlement. The other speakers saw a European conference as not a proposition for the near future. The U.S. regarded it as likely to be counter-productive from the West's point of view: if we wanted to pursue the economic aspects of East-West relations this could always be done in ECE, OECD, etc.

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7. Professor Bryzinski suggested that there should be a new piece of machinery in NATO. He called it a Commission, which on a continuing and permanent basis would study East-West relations and implications for them of new weapons systems, disarmament and other security angles. The failure of the Group to get to grips with the German problem seemed to him a proof that there was need for just such a Commission. The Commission's job would be to study organizing the peace, just as traditionally NATO had organized defence. The existence of such a Commission would have useful "spill-over" effects on the member governments and their processes of policy formation. Its existence would also help NATO's image in public relations. The Canadian Ambassador asked whether the Harmel Exercise, which was a continuing one, would not fulfill exactly the rôle of such a body? The Rapporteurs emphasized that any proposals on machinery or on aspects of public relations ought really to come up at a late stage in the work of the Sub-Group - at any rate after the substantive questions had been clarified - probably at the stage when the results of all of the Sub-Groups were available.

8. There was a long and rather desultory discussion of items listed in the Rapporteurs' paper under the heading "Practical Steps and Procedures". The discussion was not so much substantive as on the question as to how the various items should be grouped. At one stage, it was contended that they should be grouped under three headings - security, economic etc., political. In the end, opinion rallied for the view accepted by the Rapporteurs that it would be better to group these elements under (a) détente, and (b) guidelines regarding ultimate elements of a European settlement. The Rapporteurs undertook to get into touch with Mr. Kohler on items having security aspects.

9. There was the usual tussle regarding where the main responsibility for the report should lie. Attempts to suggest that it lay essentially with the Rapporteurs were combined with pleas that national representatives could not expect to subscribe to "every thought and every line" of the report. Dr. Chén said that just the same it was not merely a question of the freedom of thinking of the Rapporteurs, but also of a report to be agreed as representing the views of the Sub-Group.

10. The Group agreed to meet again on the afternoon of 18th September and to continue its discussions throughout 19th September. A number of papers were circulated during these meetings on 27th and 28th June and various additional papers were promised for distribution before the September meeting. (See the report by the Secretary, Mr. L. Lintall-Smith (LS/67/39)).