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GAS/67/56

NATO SECRET

16th May, 1967

1978

To: Directeur du Cabinet

cc. - ASG for Political Affairs
Mr. Lintall-Smith

Mr. van Campen
M. Leconte

Acting ASG for Economics and Finance
Dr. Bühling
Mr. Thiebault

Deputy Secretary General
Mr. de Camaret
Mr. Tansever
Mr. Newton

From: Christian Chapman

Subject: Second Meeting of Sub-Group 1 held on 11th May, 1967

The substantive discussion of the Sub-Group centred around two problems: the policy of détente and the question of bilateral versus multilateral approaches to this policy. Below are summarised the major points made during this meeting:

2. The French member made a lengthy statement. Détente in his view was a desirable goal and was also a process already in progress. He emphasised that in the last few years Soviet attitudes had changed and the Soviets had accepted the notion of détente. He recognised that recently there had been a certain hardening on the part of the East - notably Poland - but believed that this was a temporary phenomenon running against a deeper trend among the Eastern European élites who desired to renew the traditional links with the West. He insisted on one point: the climate of détente exerted a pressure on the public opinion of the Eastern European countries which was felt by their Governments and in turn by the Soviet Government.

3. He considered that the Soviets needed détente because they did not want a confrontation with the West. They also wanted to develop broader relations, particularly in the economic field, with certain Western countries. The Soviet Union moreover wanted to be a power that was no longer feared; in fact the French member commented Western European public opinion no longer considers the Soviet Union a threat. At the same time, the Soviets still wanted it said that Germany and the United States continued to represent a threat - in other words, the Soviets want their cake and eat it too; they want a part of détente, but do not accept all its

consequences. Thus, the policy of détente poses problems for the Soviet Union whose policy is at present contradictory.

4. The French member thought that we should not be dogmatic regarding the indivisability of détente, for if it were considered in absolute terms, there would be no movement, no country being permitted to develop bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. He considered that there were certain basic Alliance obligations: (a) friendship - it was evident that each member country would be aware of the national interests of the others in developing its relations with Eastern countries; (b) consultation - we should continue in the Alliance to exchange information on bilateral contacts but it would be false to consider that such exchanges could only be carried out on a multilateral basis without considering the need for consultation on a more restricted basis. He questioned the need for "machinery" for consultation mentioned in the Rapporteurs' questionnaire, considering that this suggested too cumbersome a method.

5. Finally, he questioned a formula in the Rapporteurs' paper indicating that as détente develops, the rôle of the Alliance increases. He asked whether this meant that the Alliance should take positions qua Alliance? If so, he did not agree with this view. Or, did this mean that the greater the détente, the more contacts there would be, and therefore the more need for mutual exchange of information? He considered that this whole matter should be kept in perspective and should not require an extension of NATO.

6. The Belgian member also sought to define détente. He said that in his view détente was a state, but the aim of the Alliance was not this state but the use of it in developing relations with the East. Détente was a method, a process, to seek concrete solutions to European problems. He thought that détente could best be considered in three fields: (a) economic and technical co-operation; (b) disarmament; and (c) political, which he recognised as the most difficult and the last to be undertaken.

7. With regard to bilateral versus multilateral diplomacy, the Belgian member suggested that, as an underlying principle, even bilateral approaches had repercussions on all other member countries, and that a rapprochement between East and West must be pursued on a multilateral basis. He felt that this process was not so much a question of machinery as of spirit and attitude. Indivisability of détente was of course not rigid. However, it was essential that in any bilateral presentations of problems it should be made clear that the problems of détente could not be solved bilaterally but only multilaterally.

8. Finally, the Belgian member stated that his concept of the final report to Ministers was that it should be in two parts: (a) a redefinition of the objectives and rôle of the Alliance, and (b) specific suggestions on how to achieve these objectives.

9. The United States member commented on the scenarios which were prepared by his delegation and which are annexed to the Rapporteurs' Paper. Scenario No. 1 was a view of the development of events over the next five years which would be preferred by the United States. (The most optimistic probabilities.) Scenario 2 outlined "the most pessimistic probabilities", probably preferred by the Soviet Union. The United States member pointed out that if Scenario 2 proved to be more accurate, it would generate such pressures in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as to force the Eastern countries more in line with Scenario 1. In this eventuality, we could expect greater convulsions in the East. (He was generally supported in this view.)

10. He agreed that all bilateral relations had some implications multilaterally but suggested a qualitative difference. On the one hand, there were what he termed "housekeeping" problems (consular agreements, civil air agreements, commercial agreements, etc.). On the other hand, there were those matters that generally involved European security and a European settlement. He considered that the first set of questions could only be treated bilaterally but that with regard to the second set, no one in fact was in a position to make decisions committing the other member countries.

11. The Danish member suggested that détente might be treated in two groups: (a) the tactics and policies the main characteristics of which are that they are reversible and not durable and (b) those aspects that represent a "force of nature" and are not reversible, as, for instance, the existence of nuclear weapons.

12. He thought that the Chinese were right in considering the Soviet Union revisionist. The Soviets could not possibly return to a Stalinist period and were now confronted by a serious dilemma: it was impossible for them to develop their country on a large scale and increase GNP substantially on the basis of communist ideology. In the afternoon discussion certain additional points of interest were made:

13. The Belgian member reported that in visiting the Eastern countries, Mr. Harmel had told the officials he had met that we did not seek to divide the Eastern European countries. This statement was received with a considerable sense of relief because, following the Federal Republic's recent efforts, there was fear in the East that the West would try to play one country against another.

14. With regard to the Secretary General's paper, the United States Representative agreed that we should take what Soviet leaders say at face value. This represented their objectives, even though reality often inhibited them from achieving these objectives. The French member agreed that importance should be attached to Soviet declarations but then asked what should be done with this paper. It was pointed out by the German and United States Representatives, and this interpretation was supported by the other members, that the Secretary General was free to make contributions to the Group for its discussion. (I had already made this point earlier.)

15. There was considerable discussion on procedure with regard to the Progress Report to Ministers. The United States, Danish, Belgian, French and Canadian members expressed the view that the Progress Report should be limited to a procedural report. The Danish Representative also made the point that we should differentiate between what we tell Ministers and what we tell the public in the communiqué. He felt that it was better to let the public wait until there was something concrete to present. The United Kingdom, German and the Netherlands members felt that the report should have some substance. The Italian member felt that it should be brief and part procedural, part substance. The German co-Chairman pointed out that the nature of the report also depended on what the other sub-groups did.

16. There was a sharp discussion centred on the question of whether the Rapporteurs were free to write their own reports or whether they had to submit them to the sub-groups for approval. The terms of reference laid down that the Special Group has to approve reports (Working Paper of 20th March, 1967), but most members seemed to be in sympathy with giving the Rapporteurs greater freedom. As the Netherlands member pointed out, the Special Group was always in a position to review the reports.