

14th November, 1967

FUTURE TASKS OF THE ALLIANCE

Draft Report for submission to the Special Group on 22nd November,
1967

A year ago, [on the initiative of the Foreign Minister of Belgium] the governments of the fifteen nations of the Alliance resolved to take stock of the Alliance and its tasks in the world today.

2. Reports were received from Messrs. ~~Watson~~, Schütz, ^{Watson} Spaak, Kohler and Patijn. The Council wishes to express its ^{appreciation} ~~thanks~~ and thanks to these gentlemen for their efforts and for the penetrating studies they produced.

3. This exercise has meant a rethinking of aims, a re-appraisal of key policy questions and a series of searching discussions. Governments have thus gained a better understanding of the work and potentialities of the Alliance, and of the views of their Allies on basic issues. The study has clarified the political and military rationale of the Alliance as a factor for durable peace. It has shown that while no structural changes are called for, some re-orientation will follow from important current tasks, but these will not impair functioning and procedures which have proved their value over many years.

4. The Alliance is not a rigid instrument but rather a living and vigorous organism which adjusts to new situations and is capable of handling whatever tasks the governments wish it to perform. Any necessary adaptations can readily be made within the terms of the basic Treaty, and this without need of amendment.

5. The North Atlantic Treaty was signed in 1949, since when the situation has changed significantly, but not fundamentally.

The basic objective of the Treaty is to provide effective protection for the territorial integrity of its members, and to ensure their political independence and security. Since its inception, the Alliance has successfully fulfilled this task. Its vital defensive rôle will continue as long as the situation makes it necessary.

6. The Soviet Union has constantly improved and extended its offensive capabilities, the most recent addition being the Fractional Orbital Bombardment System announced on 4th November. Meanwhile, the central political issues in Europe, namely, European security and the German question remain unresolved. So long as this is so, the international situation still holds potential risks of conflict. Accordingly, the Allies, reassuring their most exposed partners, will need the full spectrum of military capabilities to deter aggression and to counter it if necessary.

7. Beyond deterrence, the Allies have always aimed at peaceful solutions. They know that it is the existence of the Alliance and its success in maintaining the peace which made possible a lowering of tension in Europe. Détente cannot thrive in a disorganized world. The Atlantic Alliance is a stabilising factor in the pattern of world politics. It is the necessary condition for a realistic continuation of current policies directed towards a greater relaxation of tensions. The way to peace and stability in Europe is not to dissolve existing groupings, but to use them constructively.

8. To march forward requires the balancing and co-ordination of two legs: defence and détente. Thus security for the Allies is the combination of first, adequate military strength and political solidarity to deter aggression, and secondly, realistic measures to reduce tensions and the risk of conflict.

9. The Atlantic Alliance has never been just a military organization: from the very beginning it has been a co-operative grouping of like-minded states with many purposes in common. As sovereign states, they have no obligation to subordinate policies to collective decision. The Alliance has no supra-national powers: nor is it politically an executive agency.

10. NATO nevertheless is indispensable politically as well as for defence, because inter alia it provides an effective forum and clearing house for the exchange of information and views, so that the Allies can frame their policies in the light of close and intimate knowledge of each other's problems and objectives.

11. To achieve the fundamental purposes of the North Atlantic Treaty, it is essential that the spirit of cohesion and solidarity should continue to inspire the consultations of the Allies. To be effective, these consultations need to be held at the formative stage of the policy and should leave room for adjustments to take account of the views of other Allies. There is no ban at any time against the raising of any international problem in the appropriate NATO body.

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12. Today it is appropriate and essential that each Ally should play its full part in promoting an improvement in relations with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. The chances of success will clearly be greatest if the Allies remain on parallel courses. The actions of all the Allies will be more effective and more influential when, particularly in matters of close concern to all, they act in accordance with a framework of policy which, so far as possible, is agreed by all. The objective of a just and lasting political order in Europe transcends the reach of any one state: it must necessarily involve the co-operative efforts of different groupings of states.

13. No European settlement is possible without a major effort by all concerned. It is uncertain how far the Soviet and East European governments are prepared to go in co-operating with the Allies to establish a more peaceful order in Europe. The evolution of Soviet and East European policies gives some ground for hope that the governments may gradually in the long run come to recognize the advantages to them of collaborating in a stable settlement. No such settlement is possible without a solution of the German question, which lies at the heart of present tensions in Europe.

14. Currently the development of contacts between the countries of Western and Eastern Europe is mainly on a bilateral basis. But there is clearly a limit to the progress which can be made bilaterally. Certain subjects, in particular those relating to European security, require by their very nature a multilateral approach.

15. The problem of a European settlement and German reunification has normally been dealt with in exchanges between the Soviet Union and the Three Western Powers having special responsibilities in this field. In the preparation for such conferences the Federal Republic has regularly joined the Three Western Powers in order to reach a common position. The other Allies, who have not failed to support the initiatives taken, should be able in future to have their views considered in the formulation of general policy by the West. This can be done without in any way impairing the special responsibilities in question.

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16. The development of the détente in Europe has brought benefits to the countries of both Western and Eastern Europe. Now is the time for a new effort to strengthen and extend it. The Allies are accordingly resolved to direct their energies to this purpose and to further it by realistic measures aimed at increasing confidence in East-West relations.

17. The relaxation of tensions is not the final goal but is part of a long-term process to promote peaceful relations and to bring nearer a European settlement.

18. The ultimate political purpose of the Alliance is to achieve a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe, guaranteed by a balanced and viable system of European security. +

19. There must be an end to unnatural barriers between Eastern and Western Europe, which are most clearly and cruelly manifested in the division of Germany.

20. When the study of the future tasks of the Alliance was set in hand, its stated purpose was "in order to strengthen the Alliance as a factor for a durable peace".

21. With this in mind, in their advance planning for the 1970's, the Allies will concentrate on a number of tasks. They will prepare and develop the outlines of a European settlement designed to achieve a just and stable order in Europe and to overcome the division of Germany. These preparations involve specialist studies of substantive issues relating to a European security system and to possible procedural approaches to East-West negotiations. The Allies will intensify their preparations so as to be ready to seize any useful opportunity for East-West multilateral discussions of these complex questions.

22. The Allies are studying disarmament and practical arms control measures, including the possibility of balanced force reductions. The active pursuit of these studies reflects the will of the Allies to work for an effective détente with the East.

23. While maintaining and strengthening the general defence posture of the Alliance, including effective deterrence, the Allies will examine with particular attention the problems of defending the flanks. In this respect, the current situation in the Mediterranean presents special problems.

24. The Allies will also seek to continue and develop their consultations on crises and conflicts arising outside the Treaty area, which cannot be insulated from the rest of the world. Some areas are clearly of particular concern to the Allies because developments there may affect the security of the Allies or the balance of global forces. It is recognized that some Allies are more directly concerned than others in different parts of the world, and that consultation among the Allies carries no implication of ~~possible~~ collective action in such cases, each of which sets its own limits. The current crisis in the Middle East, for example, clearly falls within the responsibilities of the United Nations.

25. This summary report, setting forth the general tenor and the main principles emerging from the study of the future tasks of the Alliance, is intended for submission to Ministers at their meeting in December next. Subject to their approval and in the light of such directives as they may wish to give, the Council in Permanent Session will in the normal order of business carry out the detailed follow-up of the results of the study. Some of these relate to general orientation, some to

the obligations of the members of the Alliance, and some to specific machinery and methods. These last are in the main directed towards intensifying work already in hand or to activating highly specialized studies by more systematic use of experts and officials sent from capitals.

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