

15th November, 1967
at 3.30 p.m.

MEETING OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL WITH
PANEL GROUP FROM UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION
FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

Also present: Ambassador Cleveland
Mr. J.W. Simms

Opening the meeting, the Secretary General suggested that the discussion might proceed most profitably on the basis of questions put to him by members of the Panel. The following questions were then raised: How to bring about a European settlement, what the functions of NATO should be prior to and following such a settlement, and how NATO should be reformed in order to enable it to carry out its functions in this connection most effectively. The Secretary General said that in replying to these questions, he would also deal with the question, what should NATO do, not only before and after the settlement, but during the period when it was being worked out. He pointed out that the last security plan devised by the West for Europe dated from 1959. Since there was no plan corresponding to present circumstances, there could be no plan for a NATO role.

The Harmel exercise was an expression of the need to devise an up-to-date plan and spell out the role NATO should fulfil. However, that exercise could not be expected to go further than agreeing that an up-to-date study of Europe's security needs should be made within the Alliance and with the co-operation and responsibility of the Allies. It might be possible for all members of the Alliance to reach such an agreement, or it might be that only fourteen or fewer would find themselves in a position to approve such a study. Of course, the special responsibilities of France, Germany, Great Britain and the United States should be respected, but it would be highly desirable to institutionalize and make permanent the role of the other Allies. The Soviets had their

plan for a European settlement. This was a mixture of tactics, propaganda and substance. As stated at Karlovy Vary and Bucharest, it implied the complete defeat of the 1959 Western plan: the status quo would be maintained with respect to frontiers; East Germany would be given international recognition; the NATO and Warsaw Pacts would be dissolved; and a European Security Pact would take their place.

Ambassador Cleveland said that he did not see a European settlement coming "inductively" from Germany and working its way out to embrace other questions. Rather, he envisaged it as the product of a more general United States/USSR détente. The Secretary General commented that such was the natural point of view of a world power. He agreed that Europe should consider the connection between its own problems and other problems and was willing to concede that sometimes, in making a problem more comprehensive, one might find that more possibilities of resolving the problem were offered. On the other hand, the United States must be careful to do nothing to increase the fear in some European countries that European interests would be sacrificed as a consequence of the search for a general détente. Ambassador Cleveland observed that the NATO consultative process provided an assurance that Europe would have a natural place at the table at which non-European matters were discussed. General de Gaulle reportedly had said that, once the Vietnam war was ended, the United States would make peace with the Soviet Union without regard to Europe's wishes. It was certainly true that the major line of detente would be from the United States to the USSR, but it was United States policy to carry on talks with the Soviets in such a way as to assure its NATO partners that Washington was listening to them and willing to modify its views in accordance with theirs. A member of the Panel asked whether the role of the United States' allies in the decision-making process could be

augmented. The Secretary General expressed the view that it might be possible to do so, but that the European role was determined to a large degree by lack of European unity and strength. A member of the Panel pointed out that most Americans were unaware of the primacy of United States' power in the world and needed to be educated in this regard. He thought they also needed to be instructed regarding the necessity of sharing their power with their Allies. The Secretary General commented that this problem could be divided into two parts: on the American side, there was the necessity of using power in a moderate way and of sharing it; on the European side, there was the necessity of making a contribution that would justify the United States sharing its power.

The question was raised as to the possibility that a European power centre might develop in the foreseeable future. In reply the Secretary General noted that there had been a great many setbacks and disappointments in this regard. To a large extent, it was the responsibility of General de Gaulle that matters had not developed as had been foreseen at one time, but he (the Secretary General) personally was convinced that European unity was in the interest of both Europeans and Americans. Moreover, the importance of such unity was underlined by Soviet abhorrence of it. He had no doubt that, while the Soviets might possibly find a way to live with NATO, they would never accept a united Europe. In answer to a question as to the relative importance of European unity and NATO, the Secretary General pointed out that a united Europe was in no way inconsistent with the existence of NATO. A member of the Panel asked the Secretary General what institutional changes he thought should be made in the Alliance. In reply, the Secretary General said that he did not put much store in the efficacy of institutional changes. The North Atlantic Treaty was flexible

and adaptable. It was essentially a question of whether or not the Allies wished to use the tools at hand. It might be desirable to effect some streamlining in the Organization, though the difficulties in this connection were obvious.