

CONSEIL DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD
NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

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Summary Record of a meeting of the Council held at
the Palais de Chaillot, Paris, XVIIe., on Tuesday,
11th December, 1956 at 3.30 p.m.

PRESENT

Chairman : H.E. Mr. Gaetano Martino (Italy)

Vice-Chairman and
Secretary General : The Lord Ismay

BELGIUM

H.E. Mr. P.H. Spaak (Minister for Foreign Affairs)
H.E. Mr. A. de Staercke (Permanent Representative)

CANADA

The Hon. L.B. Pearson (Secretary of State for External
Affairs)
H.E. Mr. L.D. Wilgress (Permanent Representative)

DENMARK

H.E. Mr. H.C. Hansen (Prime Minister and Minister for
Foreign Affairs)
H.E. Mr. M.A. Wassard (Permanent Representative)

FRANCE

H.E. Mr. C. Pineau (Minister for Foreign Affairs)
H.E. Mr. A. Parodi (Permanent Representative)

GERMANY

H.E. Mr. H. von Brentano (Federal Minister for Foreign
Affairs)
H.E. Mr. H. Blankenhorn (Permanent Representative)

GREECE

H.E. Mr. Ev. Averof-Tossitsas (Minister for Foreign Affairs)
H.E. Mr. M. Melas (Permanent Representative)

ICELAND

H.E. Mr. G.J. Gudmundsson (Minister for Foreign Affairs)
Mr. H. Helgason (Permanent Representative)

ITALY

H.E. Mr. P.E. Taviani (Minister of Defence)
H.E. Mr. A. Alessandrini (Permanent Representative)

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LUXEMBOURG

H.E. Mr. J. Bech (Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs)
H.E. Mr. N. Hommel (Permanent Representative)

NETHERLANDS

H.E. Mr. J.M.A.H. Luns (Minister for Foreign Affairs)
H.E. Mr. E.N. van Kleffens (Permanent Representative)

NORWAY

H.E. Mr. H. Lange (Minister for Foreign Affairs)
H.E. Mr. J. Boyesen (Permanent Representative)

PORTUGAL

H.E. Prof. Dr. P. Cunha (Minister for Foreign Affairs)
H.E. Count de Tovar (Permanent Representative)

TURKEY

H.E. Mr. A. Menderes (Prime Minister)
H.E. Mr. M. Nuri Birgi (Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Mr. M.A. Tiney (Permanent Representative)

UNITED KINGDOM

The Rt. Hon. Selwyn Lloyd (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)
Sir Christopher Steel (Permanent Representative)

UNITED STATES

H.E. Mr. J. Foster Dulles (Secretary of State)
H.E. Mr. G.W. Perkins (Permanent Representative)

INTERNATIONAL STAFF

Baron A. Bentinck (Deputy Secretary General)
Mr. A. Casardi (Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs)
Mr. F.D. Gregh (Assistant Secretary General for Economics and Finance)
Mr. J. Murray Mitchell (Assistant Secretary General for Production and Logistics)
The Lord Coleridge (Executive Secretary)

ALSO PRESENT

General G. de Chasseay (Standing Group Representative)

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I. PROCEDURAL POINTS

1. The CHAIRMAN said that he would like to raise three procedural points.

2. Firstly, he was sure that all Ministers were agreed that there should be no disclosure to the Press of anything that might be said during these restricted meetings of the Council.

3. Secondly, he understood it to be the general wish that meetings should in principle be limited to about two hours.

4. Thirdly, how should the communiqué be drafted? At the last two meetings, three or four Ministers had been constituted into a drafting group at which other delegations could of course sit should they so wish. He believed that this was the most effective method of producing a draft likely to have a real impact on public opinion.

5. The COUNCIL:

invited the Secretary General to find out which Ministers would be prepared to sit on a communiqué drafting group.

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II. CONTINUATION OF REVIEW BY FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

6. Mr. SPAAK (BELGIUM) thought that the hypothesis that de-Stalinisation had in no way changed the fundamental policy of the USSR was gradually being confirmed. Though the Soviet leaders had violently criticised Stalin's actions, they had not criticised his foreign policy, except in the case of relations with Yugoslavia, and even these it would appear that the reconciliation between Moscow and Belgrade was more apparent than real. As before, Soviet foreign policy seemed to be aimed at complicating the problems facing the Western countries in all parts of the world. However, the Soviets were aware of the danger of a third world war, and it was unlikely that they would strain relations to a point at which they thought war might break out. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that, during a period of stress, an accident could change the cold war into a hot war. An obvious example was the possibility of incidents arising in Eastern Germany. The attitude adopted by the Soviets during the Middle East crisis was particularly characteristic of their policy. The USSR had made no attempt to facilitate a peaceful outcome. It had vetoed the Security Council's proposals. In the United Nations Assembly it had gone so far as to refrain from voting on the question of raising an international police force: it had opposed the clearing of the Suez Canal. The USSR had therefore shown that, far from being in favour of peaceful coexistence, it was prepared to do anything to aggravate critical situations to the point where, having strained the patience of the Western countries, it would draw back in the face of the risk of a third world war. But a few weeks later it would resume its baleful activities in another part of the world.

7. As de-Stalinisation had made no change in foreign policy, there was every reason to wonder why Stalin's successors had made such a parade of de-Stalinisation and had spoken as they had at the Twentieth Congress. This was a mystery to him. Leaders like Khrushchev had run serious risks, and the result of their policy had been to sow trouble and anxiety in all the Communist parties, which had been at the root of events in Poland and Hungary and the unrest in the other satellite countries.

8. He did not rule out the possibility of de-Stalinisation being the result of an internal situation which was less satisfactory than it appeared to the West. He was thinking more particularly of the Soviet economy. He did not believe Soviet leaders could keep all the promises of well-being which they made to their people, any more than the promises of aid which they made to other Communist states and to uncommitted countries. He felt that these internal difficulties, which were far more important than was generally believed, would explain de-Stalinisation. Concerning the policy which the Alliance should adopt to counter the Soviet policy in the underdeveloped countries and Soviet propaganda in Africa and Asia, he did not think that NATO should help all underdeveloped countries in the same way. It would not be wise to give indiscriminate assistance to all the African and Asian countries. This aid should not be offered to hostile countries who would show no gratitude and who, from the outset, claimed that they had a right to said aid and that the Western countries were only doing their duty in extending it to them. The whole of the Western world should formulate a policy for aid to underdeveloped countries, but it should be confined to countries which proved themselves friendly to the West. This concentrated aid would be more effective and would show the world the difference between the underdeveloped countries which had given their allegiance to the Communists, and the others.

9. Within the NATO framework it was obvious that recent events had shattered many illusions. The Council had asked three of its members to examine the conditions under which the Organization should operate and just at that time Atlantic unity had been less of a reality than ever before. This had caused serious difficulties for the members of the Alliance, who had to choose between the United States on the one hand and France and the United Kingdom on the other. He pointed out that, when the Suez crisis had arisen, no-one had thought of calling a meeting of the North Atlantic Council; the latter had not met until after the first conference in London, and the discussions had not been very fruitful.

10. On this point he said he could not entirely agree with Mr. Pineau that it had not been necessary to call a meeting of the Council, since the action was taking place outside the geographical area of NATO. Since the signature of the Atlantic Pact, experience had shown that the geographical limits to the application of the Treaty were arbitrary. The action taken by the United Kingdom and France risked setting up chain reactions which would have had the most serious consequences. It was no excuse to say that these events were taking place south of a given parallel. To preserve the substance of the Alliance and its very existence, the concept of a geographical limit had to be discarded. The conclusions reached by the Committee of

Three Ministers were an imperative necessity, without acceptance of which there was no salvation for NATO.

11. The members of the Council who had spoken in the morning had raised the question of UNO. In this connection, he said he did not fully agree either with Mr. Dulles and Mr. Lange, who stood for the unconditional acceptance of the United Nations Charter, or with Mr. Selwyn Lloyd and Mr. Pineau, whose opposite thesis was somewhat too realistic.

12. It was essential to take account of what UNO had become. The representatives of the countries at San Francisco had wanted to set up a complete system. On the one hand, an attempt had been made to eliminate war as a means of settling international problems. This was a considerable moral step forward, but it was not solely the result of the efforts made at San Francisco. On the other hand, it was expected that once war was banished, some other means would be found of making international law and justice prevail. The keystone of the system was the Security Council, that is, a Council of diplomats which by its composition was to be secure from political passions and able to resolve disputes by means other than war. The exercise of the veto, however, had made the Security Council bankrupt. It could no longer prevent war, and could not promote the reign of law.

13. Certain efforts made to save the United Nations had resulted in the powers of the Security Council being transferred to the General Assembly. The Assembly had in fact become simply a political body with a minority and a majority, which were moreover far more intransigent than in most parliaments. The situation now was extremely grave and it was possible to doubt whether, in its present form, the United Nations Organization was capable of fulfilling the dual task of preventing the use of force and of settling disputes with justice.

14. He wondered whether there was much point in continuing to attend UNO, only to be in a minority, accorded scant consideration by a majority which included among its members many countries who were without political wisdom. He added that it had been profoundly depressing to see the USSR set itself up as champion of the United Nations' recommendations affecting one part of the world, while setting at naught those recommendations addressed to itself. It would therefore no longer seem possible for UNO to continue as the cornerstone of international politics. Without going to extremes, it might be wondered under what conditions the United Nations Organization could henceforth fulfil its task.

15. With regard to the question of colonialism raised by Mr. Lange, he emphasised the danger of the mistakes which might be made in this field. He recalled that it was in the name of anti-colonialism that certain countries had in London rejected the proposals made by the Eighteen. He wondered how the fact of providing an international solution to a problem was interpreted as evidence of anti-colonialism. Just as he was not conscious of pursuing anti-colonialism in his endeavour to achieve European economic integration, he did not think he was bowing to the demands of colonialism by supporting, in the case

of Suez, a solution in harmony with the policy which he was endeavouring to apply with respect to his own country. As he saw it, in the name of anti-colonialism it was today possible to violate all treaties, starting from the Treaty of Constantinople of 1888.

16. It would be an over-simplification to imagine that from one day to the next, "colonialism" could be condemned. This would in many instances be a capital mistake, both for the colonised peoples as for those who had sovereignty over them. To a certain extent, nations today were having to liquidate 19th century colonialist policy. The 19th century concept had ceased to be an acceptable doctrine, but its liquidation must be conducted in the best interest of the world and of the colonised peoples for whom immediate granting of independence would sometimes be the reverse of an advantage. The important thing was to assist those who had been left the heritage of the 19th century but not to give boundless encouragement to those who were brandishing the myth of anti-colonialism.

17. The events of recent weeks had shown that the political ideas prevailing within the Alliance were sound, but that the manner in which they were applied was sometimes less good. The new trends in NATO were to the good but did not mean a change in the Organization was necessary. Rather was NATO's effectiveness dependent on the good will of all its members.

18. Mr. AVEROF-TOSSITSAS (GREECE) entirely agreed with Mr. Lange that it would be wrong to overestimate the economic power of the Soviets. Nevertheless, the promises made by the USSR were not without influence. For instance, the promise to send "volunteers" as reinforcements to the Arab countries had produced a definite effect on these countries. When Mr. Shepilov had visited Athens, he had promised to turn Greece into a paradise. The Government had rejected these offers and had taken care not to make them known to the public, with the result that they had had no effect.

19. There was no reason to think that the Soviets had changed any of the aims of their foreign policy. This being so, it was necessary to remain vigilant on both the military and the moral plane. From the military aspect, the considerable effort achieved by NATO dissipated any concern which the Greek Government might have felt. Its concern was directed rather to the moral attacks which might undermine the military front of the Alliance. He recalled in this connection that public opinion, in the light of the advent of atomic weapons, was now beginning to question the need for armies. The moral influence of the Alliance was diminished every time the action taken by the Western countries gave rise to unfavourable comparison with that taken by the USSR. Everything must therefore be done to avoid such comparisons being made.

20. Events in Hungary had nevertheless startled world opinion. Previously, the visits of Bulganin and Khrushchev, as well as other measures, had given rise to an increasingly dangerous sense of security in public opinion in the free world, whilst all the time the military potential of the USSR was continuing to grow. The alarm now aroused once more by events in Hungary must not be allowed to die down.

21. According to information received by the Greek Government, the Hungarian crisis was not nearly over. The economic upheaval alone was so serious that its momentum would continue for some time to come. Yugoslavia had been particularly concerned by the events in Hungary. He had discussed this question in Belgrade and had come away with the impression that Yugoslavia was determined to follow a completely independent foreign policy. Furthermore, the talks which the Greek Military Mission had had in Belgrade had shown that Yugoslavia was determined to put up a fierce defence if it was attacked. Yugoslav relations with Poland, Czechoslovakia and Roumania were good; with Bulgaria they were bad and with Albania strained. The Greek Government gathered that Belgrade was continuing to spread its propaganda among the satellite countries and that Yugoslav Communism was tending to move away from whole-hearted Marxism, as was shown in the agrarian policy followed by the Yugoslav Government. The latter hoped that very close bonds could be established with Greece, and the Greek Government had assured Marshal Tito of the sincere friendship which Greece felt for Yugoslavia and had told him the Greek Government considered the Balkan Pact to be still in force between their two countries.

22. The Greek Government regretted that, with regard to Turkey, the Balkan Pact was now in abeyance, but that state of affairs could not be remedied until a solution had been found to the Cyprus problem. The Greek Government was following with great concern events in the Near and Middle East. The many contacts which Greece had with the Arabs showed that major developments were taking place. It was becoming less and less true that in order to keep a hold on the Arab peoples, it was enough to have the support of a small number of influential individuals. There was henceforth an Arab public opinion which had to be reckoned with. Greece had a particular interest in the affairs of Egypt, owing to the existence in that country of a Greek colony of over a hundred thousand people.

23. He wished to inform the Council of the fact that the day after the ultimatum issued by France and the United Kingdom, the Athens Communist press had stated that the Soviet Union intended to request Greece for permission to fly over its territory. He had taken the bull by the horns and informed the Soviet Ambassador that the Greek Government would not authorise any such flights, and would even go so far as to shoot down any Soviet planes which might fly over its territory.

24. With regard to the future, he said that the Egyptian Government was still somewhat distrustful of the Soviets. Greece was encouraging this attitude and recommending a policy of moderation. There was, nevertheless, no longer any hope that Egypt could be linked politically to the West in the foreseeable future.

25. The immediate objectives of the West should, in his opinion, be to promote peace between the Arab countries and Israel by all possible means; to consolidate agreement between the West and the Arab oil-producing countries; and to encourage the peaceful development of Egypt's policy of independence. It was also important to put an end to rivalry between the great Western Powers in the Near East. He concluded by stressing that the Cyprus problem continued to be a major matter of concern to the Greek Government.

26. Mr. HANSEN (DENMARK) said that there was no doubt that, following on recent events in the Middle East, public opinion in every member country was hoping for fruitful results to the present meeting. At the same time, events in Hungary had convinced many people who had hitherto been indifferent to NATO, of the great importance of the Alliance. These developments, taken in conjunction with what had happened in Poland, were of enormous significance for the future. He agreed with Mr. Foster Dulles that the forces of liberty now set in motion in the satellite countries, and possibly also in the USSR, promised in the long-term to produce hopeful changes. As regards future contacts between West and East, he agreed with Mr. Selwyn Lloyd that the Western countries, far from impeding such contacts, should continue to maintain them and should not withdraw diplomatic representation from any of the satellite countries. At present there was an unavoidable setback in plans for cultural exchanges, but he hoped that this setback would remain only temporary and that the West would not cut itself off from such contacts, which were beneficial to both West and East. He thought it was unlikely that there would be any return to Stalinism in the Soviet Bloc; but on the other hand, the cold war continued, and tension between East and West had been renewed. As regards the Middle East, Denmark had not concealed the fact that she was opposed to the action taken by the United Kingdom and France, but this had in no way impaired her warm friendship for these countries. He would be most interested to know whether Mr. Selwyn Lloyd could make any statement on possible future developments as regards the Suez Canal; would it be possible to find a solution through the operation of the Suez Canal Users' Association, either alone or in co-operation with the United Nations? He emphasised that the reopening of the Canal was of vital importance to all members of NATO. In conclusion, he said that recent events in Eastern Europe had shown that Western unity was a pre-requisite for the survival of democracy as understood by the free world.

27. Mr. LUNS (NETHERLANDS) said that recent developments had increased the tension between Russia and the rest of the world. The general indignation at Soviet repression in Hungary had shattered Soviet attempts to beguile the free nations into illusory peaceful coexistence. For a long time to come, public opinion in the NATO countries would be immune to all attempts of Soviet propaganda to undermine the strength of NATO. At the same time increased tension had developed between the West and the "uncommitted" countries of Africa and Asia. Every effort must be made to put an end to this tension, and to prevent these countries from moving into the Soviet orbit. In his view, the best way to achieve this was through increased technical and economic assistance on a multilateral basis. Notwithstanding rebuffs such as the repudiation by Indonesia of its obligations towards the Netherlands, and the actions of Colonel Nasser, he was convinced that technical assistance was the most effective way of putting an end to the misery of the underdeveloped countries, which formed a fertile soil for anti-Western sentiments.

28. At present there existed much confusion on two fundamental ideas: (a) national sovereignty; (b) colonialism. The newly independent nations were fiercely jealous of their independence, and believed in absolute sovereignty, which was a dangerous fallacy. Respect for treaties was not a diminution of national sovereignty; for example, it would be possible for Egypt to accept an international régime for the Suez Canal, on the analogy of the international statute for the Rhine, without ceasing to be a sovereign country. As regards colonialism, many countries considered that actions undertaken by Western countries were colonialist, while the same actions undertaken by the Soviet Union were not colonialist. Whether this fallacy was brought about by adroit Communist propaganda or not, it harmed relations between the West and underdeveloped countries, and must be exploded. He recalled that Turkey had rendered a great service to the free world in exposing at the Bandoeng Conference the colonialism of Russia. While the Western countries should lay the basis for a better relationship with the underdeveloped countries through technical assistance, cultural exchanges and political alliances such as the Baghdad Pact and SEATO, they must beware of trying to outbid the Soviets in encouraging nationalistic sentiments. Further, the West must have a united policy if a steady deterioration was to be avoided in its relations with a large part of the world. The rift in the NATO Alliance resulting from the events in the Middle East had been most serious, and it was essential to ensure that nothing of the kind should occur again. Whatever the criticisms which had been made of the United Kingdom and French action, all member countries recognised that their motives had not been dishonourable in any way, that there had been great provocation, and that, in glaring contrast to the Soviet action in Hungary, there had been no intention of reducing Egypt to a state of dependence. He welcomed the fact that the United Kingdom and France had accepted the United Nations recommendations; at the same time, he thought that these countries were entitled to expect that the United Nations should try to bring about a solution of the following three problems:

- (a) the tension between Israel and her neighbours;
- (b) the problem of the Arab refugees;
- (c) the problem of the operation of the Suez Canal.

29. If the United Nations failed in these tasks and there was a return to the status quo, a severe defeat would have been inflicted on the United Nations.

30. The Netherlands continued to believe that NATO was the key organization for the defence of the free world. Two conditions were, however, necessary to maintain its strength:

- (i) an undiminished military effort;
- (ii) better co-ordination by member countries of their policies.

31. Events in Hungary had shown that there was no need for NATO to apologise for its military strength, and that on the contrary this should be increased, since negotiation from a position of strength was the only way to face the Soviet threat. He hoped that it would be possible to maintain the present level of United States, Canadian and United Kingdom forces on the Continent, and that the remaining member countries would continue to discharge their obligations loyally. The general examination within NATO of the economic strength of member countries should be used, not as a pretext to shirk responsibilities, but to increase the strength of the West. In conclusion, he fully supported the recommendation by the Committee of Three Ministers for increased political co-operation among the members of the Alliance, and he emphasised that a determined will to co-operate must first exist, if co-operation was to be put into practice.

32. Dr. PAULO CUNHA (PORTUGAL) said that NATO was faced with both immediate and long-term problems. Among the immediate problems was the situation in the Middle East, which was of the gravest consequence to NATO because of the division it had revealed within the Alliance. A formula must be found for avoiding the recurrence of such a situation in the future; at the same time, he agreed with previous speakers that a formula was not enough in itself, and that what was required was the determination on the part of member countries to evolve, through frank discussion, a joint policy in affairs concerning the Alliance as a whole. As regards the long-term problems, he agreed with previous speakers that because of the fear of thermonuclear war, the danger of war was today less than it had been. Nevertheless, it was only possible for NATO to prevent war by increasing its military defensive potential. He agreed with Mr. Foster Dulles that the countries of the West must continue their moral offensive against Communist expansion by advocating, and practising, moral principles. He noted that the United Nations, as at present constituted, was incapable of solving the problems facing the world. He hoped that the member countries of NATO would take advantage of the homogeneity of outlook and community of interests prevailing within NATO to consult with each other in NATO, to reach commonly agreed decisions, and thus to avoid taking differences of opinion outside NATO into other international organizations. As regards the question of colonialism, he pointed out that this was the first time that this question was being directly discussed in NATO. The Council had not hitherto considered the problem of colonialism, or tried to determine whether there was a "bad" or a "good" colonialism. He thought that it would be of great value if NATO were to examine this problem. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his belief that the only hope for the free world lay in the united action of the free peoples of the world.

The Middle East situation

33. Mr. MENDERES (TURKEY) opened discussion on the Middle East situation. He was glad to have this opportunity of expressing the views of his Government on the grave dangers

in this part of the world. Referring to his memorandum⁽¹⁾ he said that in drafting it he had been greatly helped by the draft political directive to the military authorities which stated that although NATO defence planning was limited to the defence of the NATO area it was necessary to take account of dangers which might arise for NATO because of developments outside that area. He was also helped by the brilliant report of the Committee of Three Ministers which set out the principle that the influence and interest of NATO members was not confined to the Treaty area.

34. Russia appeared to be concentrating her efforts to create local disturbances, particularly in the Middle East, and NATO must concern itself with this area which was of vital interest to the Alliance. As the Three Ministers had said, co-operation required the solution of common problems and the Middle East was essentially an area for which a common course of action must be arrived at. The problem in the Middle East, an area of Soviet penetration, was not confined to Syria alone; Afghanistan, Egypt and Jordan must also be kept in mind. NATO must face its responsibilities in this area and decide on the necessary steps before it was too late. Referring to his memorandum, Mr. Menderes said that it made particular mention of the Baghdad Pact, both under the heading of "Short-term measures" as well as under that of "Long-term measures". This was because Turkey regarded the Pact as an indispensable instrument of peace, security, stability and prosperity in the Middle East. The Pact was the best method of associating East with West and was infinitely preferable to bilateral relations which could only give rise to distrust and rivalries. The United States had reaffirmed its support for the collective efforts of the members of the Baghdad Pact to maintain their independence. NATO and the Baghdad Pact were complementary and liaison between the two defensive systems was essential. The Council must study this problem.

35. Mr. Menderes went on to say that his Government had always resisted an emotional approach to the problems of the Middle East. Turkey, contrary to Russo-Egyptian propaganda would never indulge in any reckless move.

36. Mr. Menderes went on to say that there was one further subject he must mention which was of vital importance to the solidarity of NATO. His personal friend, the Greek Foreign Minister, had mentioned the Cyprus problem today, as on many previous occasions. Greece had taken this problem to the United Nations, and therefore presumably wished to solve it in that forum. Mr. Averof's purpose in mentioning it today must therefore have been at least partly propaganda. Or was it his intention to have the question settled by NATO?

37. Mr. Averof had also mentioned the Balkan Pact. He appeared to infer that this Pact would remain valid between two countries, Yugoslavia and Greece. If this was so, it was

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no longer the Balkan Pact, but quite a different one. The Belgrade communiqué had mentioned the purpose of strengthening the Pact. Would Mr. Averof reconcile his present statement with what had been said in this communiqué?

38. Mr. AVEROF TOSSITZAS (GREECE) said that he was prepared to reply to Mr. Menderes.

39. The COUNCIL:

agreed to continue discussion at its meeting on the following morning.

Palais de Chaillot,
Paris, XVIIe.