

# CONSEIL DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

N A T O U N C L A S S I F I E D

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16th February, 1976

SUMMARY RECORD  
C-R(76)4

Summary record of a meeting of the Council held at the  
NATO Headquarters, Brussels, on Thursday  
29th January, 1976 at 10.15 a.m.

## PRESENT

Chairman: Mr. Joseph M.A.H. Luns

<u>BELGIUM</u> Mr. A. de Staercke	<u>GREECE</u> Mr. B. Theodoropoulos	<u>NORWAY</u> Mr. R.T. Busch
<u>CANADA</u> Mr. A.R. Menzies	<u>ICELAND</u> Mr. T.A. Tómasson	<u>PORTUGAL</u> Mr. J.C.L.C. de Freitas Cruz
<u>DENMARK</u> Mr. A. Svart	<u>ITALY</u> Mr. F. Catalano di Melilli	<u>TURKEY</u> Mr. O. Eralp
<u>FRANCE</u> Mr. J. Tiné	<u>LUXEMBOURG</u> Mr. M. Fischbach	<u>UNITED KINGDOM</u> Sir John Killick
<u>GERMANY</u> Mr. F. Krapf	<u>NETHERLANDS</u> Mr. A.F.K. Hartogh	<u>UNITED STATES</u> Mr. D.K.E. Bruce

## INTERNATIONAL STAFF

Deputy Secretary General:	Mr. P. Pansa Cedronio
Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs:	Dr. E.F. Jung
Assistant Secretary General for Defence Support:	Dr. Gardiner L. Tucker
Assistant Secretary General for Defence Planning and Policy ad interim:	Mr. R. Braband

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INTERNATIONAL STAFF (Contd)

Assistant Secretary General for  
Scientific and Environmental Affairs: Prof. M.N. Özdaş  
Director, Council Operations and  
Communications: Air Marshal W.R. MacBrien  
Executive Secretary: Mr. G. Sekeris

MILITARY COMMITTEE

Chairman: Admiral of the Fleet  
Sir Peter Hill-Norton

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FAREWELL TO THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM

1. The CHAIRMAN made the following statement:

"Departures are intrinsically sorrowful, but in the case of André de Staercke, our long-standing Dean and Belgium's Ambassador, our sorrow is commensurate with the exceptional nature of the event. For we are taking leave of an outstanding man who, perhaps more than any other, has left his stamp on the history of our Alliance both on account of his personality and the rôle that has been his within the Council virtually from the start.

It is with good reason that I refer first to his intellectual qualities for without them he would not have had the same influence. Were I asked to define the nature of his prestigious influence I would say that André de Staercke elegantly exemplifies the art of reasoning and perception which is enhanced by his striking mastery of the spoken word. And when I refer to the spoken word, I of course mean "logos" in the dialectical sense of a privileged instrument for comprehending and apprehending reality. It is no accident that the earliest diplomats were called "orators" and I have no need to dwell on the importance which Western civilization has always attached to the spoken word. The term "palette" is often used in descriptions of an artist's underlying characteristics; similarly the trait common to our colleague's interventions here has always been a happy combination of learning, fluency of expression and the ability to get straight to the heart of the matter. Knowing as I do his predilection for the author of the "Banquet", I am tempted to refer to the Allegory of the Cave, for he has the gift of piercing the veil of appearances to get at the "idea", in other words the quintessential political reality. Poussin expressed this admirably when he said that it was wrong to distract the eye with unnecessary details. In fact, I have always considered that imagination is the great quality shared by politician and artist; it is imagination which enables them both to transcend the present by an act of creation. How often, when other members of the Council have been in two minds about the best way to tackle an Agenda item, have we witnessed the Dean speak up and, by putting the matter in perspective, get the discussion moving.

I should add that the lively way in which he put his case sometimes allowed his impetuosity to run away with him, and while he was capable of letting fly a few arrows he also had a gift for the striking phrase. I well remember one occasion when, after having spoken at length during a lively

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discussion, he finally gave up and murmured under his breath: "One can't be wise on one's own". It put me in mind of Galileo's "e pur si muove", although in the case of our Dean, of course, there was no recanting on bended knees.

I have kept for the end, my dear André, the examples of eloquence you displayed at leave-takings in this Council; on such occasions the elegance of style was matched only by the depth of your erudition. These are anthology pieces, and it gives me much pleasure to learn that they are to be treated as such.

And now, in turning to André de Staercke's career in the public service to pay him the tribute he so well merits, I would recall that when he took up his duties as Belgian Permanent Representative in 1952 he had already acquired valuable political experience, first with the Belgian Government in exile in London during the war and then as Head of the Private Office of the Prince Regent of Belgium. I would venture to say that through these difficult jobs he acquired at an early stage a political judgement which is both sensitive to shades of opinion and quick to discern the broad essentials. He seems to have been predestined by this initiation to fashion the natural gifts of which the Alliance has reaped the benefit during his twenty-four years as Belgian Ambassador - twenty of them as Dean of the Council.

My dear André, the Alliance you are leaving in 1976 is very different from the one you knew in those early days. With its remarkable ability to adapt to changing international circumstances, it has enabled the fears of the cold war to give way to the hopes which détente holds out. No other international organization can pride itself as ours can on having proved so effective in the political sphere. But since, in spite of the hopes raised by détente, there is still cause for concern, the Alliance and the defence effort it entails remain indispensable if we are to continue the patient and deliberate search for more stable political relations with the East. Like all such intellectual achievements, André de Staercke's contribution to this development has been invaluable. And central to this contribution has been the part he has played in transforming the Council into the flexible consultative body we have today. It is remarkable that the wording of the Treaty, which is fairly vague in this respect, should have been interpreted so positively. And now, if you will allow me, it is precisely of this unremitting work that I should like to speak.

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Having, as I have already indicated, become Dean very rapidly, he soon brought lustre to an office which in diplomatic circles is usually merely an honorary and passing distinction. It was not long before he had revived the original function of a Dean as the guardian of a code. And what other code but that of Atlantic solidarity?

Bergson says that a philosopher is a man who intuitively apprehends fundamental truth. And André de Staercke, in his position, saw very early on the paramount importance of Atlantic unity in the life of the Alliance. And here one thinks of Picasso's famous saying - which has unfairly been called Sibylline - "I do not seek. I find". In other words, to fathom reality you need a Rosetta-stone, a guiding principle. And with each new problem which arose the Dean pondered first and foremost on how it might affect Atlantic solidarity. It is a shame there is no ablative absolute in French for if there were I am sure that, like Caton the Censor, he would have used it to remind the Council, as he did so many times, of the overriding need to base this solidarity on frank and timely consultation. And when it was necessary to plead for harmony his enthusiasm called to mind Renan's advice to accept virtue as it comes and from wherever it comes.

These were the principles which guided his conduct in an exceptional situation where he had to grapple with unprecedented problems and take difficult initiatives as a result of the special responsibilities vested in him as Dean. I am referring here, of course, to the negotiations he conducted in connection with the arrangements for transferring the integrated military command from France and I should also like to pay tribute to his tireless activity during the drafting of the Declaration on Atlantic Relations. I could give many more examples but I have mentioned these two instances because to my mind they are perfect manifestations of the beliefs, which like all the young at heart, he has ceaselessly and ardently promoted.

As Representative of Belgium, moreover, André de Staercke had a further reason for promoting understanding within the Alliance; small countries need no convincing of the advantages of multilateral diplomacy. If Belgium has never flagged in its enthusiasm for international co-operation, both at Atlantic and European level, this is because it has learned from its eventful history that in this way it can speak with a louder voice and therefore influence developments. My dear André, the exceptionally long time you have been a member of the Atlantic Council affords proof, if any were necessary, of the value which successive governments of your

country have attached to your advice and of their appreciation of your merits. Proust says somewhere that one can only communicate properly what one has first completely absorbed. And you have been a tireless exponent, sometimes to your Government, sometimes to your colleagues, of the ideas which you feel best serve the interests of the Alliance.

I should like to take this opportunity to express once again the most sincere gratitude of our governments for Belgium's generous hospitality. It is all the more appropriate to do so here and now because you played an important part in the relocation of the Headquarters to Brussels.

If I may be allowed to descend a moment from the sublime to more earthly joys, I would say that you have been a perfect Amphitryon. In fact, your qualities as a host were just another expression of your highly civilised tastes.

And now, my dear André, however much it pains me, the time has come to face up to the fact that we are going to have to say goodbye, and to express our feelings at the thought that you will be leaving the place at this table which you have occupied for so long and with such distinction. But fortunately, unlike most departing colleagues, you will be staying with us *intra muros urbis*.

It has become the custom on these occasions to make a ritual reference to our departing colleague's talents as a writer; but in your case, so impatient are we to read you, we would almost hand you the pen ourselves. Horace speaks of the Muses stamping first one foot and then the other and nothing could better describe the dual nature of your inspiration which, and this is most rare, marries poetical verve with a rich experience of politics and mankind. When Mozart makes Sarastro say of Tamino "Er ist ein Mensch" he is paying him the greatest compliment possible and I should like to apply it to you. You had the honour of being invited several times to Chartwell by that great Statesman Sir Winston Churchill, which just goes to show not only his respect for you but also how much he enjoyed your company. One is reminded of Diaghilev saying to Cocteau "surprise me!". I am quite sure you have not finished surprising us, my dear André.

And so, Mr. Ambassador, it is with this in mind that on behalf of myself, the Council and those members of the International Staff who have asked me to do so, I offer you our very best wishes for your health and future success in whatever you do. After the warm words of praise from Dr. Kissinger and Mr. Sauvagnargues at the last meeting of the Council, I would ask you to accept the most sincere thanks

of all the member governments for the services you have rendered to the cause of the Alliance. In this connection, I should like to read to the Council the letter you have just received from the President of the United States, Mr. Gerald Ford, a copy of which has been handed to me by the United States Permanent Representative, Mr. David Bruce.

"Dear Mr. Ambassador,

As you prepare to relinquish your post as Belgium's Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council and as Dean of the Council, I wish to express the profound gratitude of the United States for your outstanding and devoted service to the Atlantic Alliance.

For the past quarter century, you have worked tirelessly to maintain and strengthen political and security ties among the members of the Alliance. During this time, you have been a valued colleague and source of continuing wise counsel to ten American Ambassadors to NATO and to a succession of Supreme Allied Commanders. You have had a singular influence in shaping and implementing the very important responsibilities of the North Atlantic Council. In a generation of dedicated service, you have made a lasting contribution to the solidarity and common defense of the United States and Western Europe.

I am confident it will be a source of continuing satisfaction to you that the Alliance remains strong and vital. The Atlantic Declaration of June 1974 marking the fresh affirmation of the Alliance by its members and the Brussels Summit in May 1975 have confirmed the continuing spirit of unity, common purpose and vigour of NATO.

With your retirement, the Alliance loses one of its most distinguished diplomats, a representative whose unstinting work for defense and the relaxation of tensions, skill and judgement have earned the highest respect of your own countrymen and of the peoples of all the nations of the Alliance."

It has given me great pleasure to read this tribute, which so accurately puts into words what the Council feels. And now, in a few moments, dear André, you will be receiving the Silver Bowl, the traditional gift for departing members of the Council. Your colleagues and I have put our heads together to try to see how we can best express not only our affection and esteem for you but also our genuine respect for your towering intellect which for twenty-five years has shone through your



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farewell speeches to departing colleagues. So we thought it might please you, as it certainly pleases us, to have a book containing your speeches and the signatures of all the present members of the Council. On top of this, the NATO Staff, including of course the Deputy Secretary General, the Assistant Secretaries General and I, have decided to present you with an album produced by the Headquarters Photographic Service containing a year-by-year record of your outstanding service to the Alliance and of the Statesmen who have played a rôle during this period and who were your friends. Please accept it as a token of heartfelt esteem from the Alliance."

2. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE made the following statement in his capacity as the new Dean of the Council:

"A mournful privilege has been conferred on me today; it is to take leave on behalf of my colleagues round this table of those of us whose time with the Council is at an end.

For an Ambassador, his last Council meeting has always been an anxious moment since in making his farewell speech, he must likewise make reply to the lofty words of the Dean. Imagine then the anxiety felt by the one who is not being called on to reply but, on the contrary, to say goodbye to the Dean. In fact, so as not to deprive the Council of a literary masterpiece I had even thought of asking Ambassador de Staercke to prepare his own eulogy. The only thing that held me back was the fact that modesty is not the least of his qualities.

Now faced with this task, how can I fail to be aware that try though I may, it will be impossible for me to draw a portrait of Ambassador de Staercke which includes all the aspects, even important ones, of a multi-faceted personality and which describes all the features, even significant ones, of a highly complex character. How can I find the words which will render justice to a man who has been both an attentive witness and a remarkable protagonist in the history of the Alliance for over a quarter of a century.

With an authority all his own which came not only from his unequalled ability and his unchallengeable experience but which is also a natural quality, André de Staercke has led us all, with a mastery sometimes tinged with friendly impatience, through the most intricate of webs towards what he invariably perceived to be the crux of the problem facing us.

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Aggressive but never unpleasantly so, particular without being pedantic, self-confident without being presumptuous, he gave us a constant demonstration of a distinguished mind enhanced by his perfect knowledge of all the shades of meaning of the French language which, when used by him, often bewitched even those whose views did not coincide with his own.

The Secretary General has given us a glowing account of the Dean's activities within the Alliance, but who among us will forget the many personal reasons we have to be grateful for the generous and courteous assistance which was always so readily available in time of need. Each new arrival had in you, my dear André, a teacher and guide who was a past master in the rules of the game. Your authority in this sphere was unimpeachable. I too, owe you a very great deal.

In your own mind, the help which you gave us found its "raison d'être" in the conviction that the interests of the Alliance and the principle of solidarity would best be served if all its members could be persuaded of the need to take account of the special, and sometimes difficult, situations in which individual countries can find themselves. These situations often call for discretion and patience to enable the country concerned to find the way out of its problems while preserving the credibility of the Alliance in the eyes of its public. And yet patience is not your most memorable trait. On the contrary, your deeply-rooted faith in the values upheld by the Alliance has often prompted you to adopt the attitude which you once described as "obligatory impatience". Your temperament, your taste for verbal sparring and intellectual provocation, the youthful agility of your mind, did not make this obligation a hard one.

Yes, youthfulness - yet another of your many arresting qualities. A constant liveliness of mind which irrigated with its fertile waters that great wisdom which kept you lucid when others were drifting into the mists of lassitude; an extra charm that made your hospitality much sought after and extremely enriching, a hospitality the perfect quality of which has already been described by our Secretary General.

What more can I say about this eminent diplomat than you yourself have already said Mr. Chairman. His absences from the Council were always keenly felt since without him it was harder to find the starting point, the idea which could lead to a decision even if that first idea was discarded on the way. I should like in this connection to recall what was said about André de Staercke by a great European politician

who was also his great personal friend, namely, Paul Henri Spaak: "He knows the machinery and history of NATO inside out, he likes diplomacy, he knows how to establish contact, how to unravel the threads of an intrigue and sometimes even how to make it more entangled. His dislikes are as fierce as his friendships are warm, but they don't prevent him from seeing things as they are ...". Here in a nutshell are the main professional qualities of our friend and colleague.

Is there any need for me to give my version of his contributions to the life of the Alliance.

These are already recorded in the history of our Organization and there is no stage in the development of the Alliance which does not bear the imprint of André de Staercke's perspicacity and dedication. The Secretary General has recalled the negotiations with France after she left the integrated defence system. Need I recall his contribution to the creation of that pleasant institution, the Permanent Representatives' luncheon which is unique in diplomatic circles, at least by its regularity.

Need I recall his part in the preparation of Council meetings or the oft repeated successes he scored in obtaining a consensus when the initial positions were divergent. Need I recall his recent efforts to resolve a problem affecting the interests of the European countries as well as those of the Alliance as a whole. The fruits of this last achievement will be garnered when Ambassador de Staercke is no longer at this table and this will be a symbol of his presence among us which will live long after his physical departure from our club which has often been described, and rightly so I feel, as exclusive.

And now the moment has come. Your departure, my dear André, leaves a great void in the Council. I think I can say, without fear of contradiction, that the Council will not be the same without you but, alas, we must accept what was certainly not inevitable but which has unfortunately become so. You are leaving an indelible memory behind you.

I should like to conclude with a quotation from St. Augustine which, in fact, I learnt through you: "When a man has done, it is then that he begins".

I feel sure that your new life, this "new lease of life" as our Anglo-Saxon friends say, will be filled to the brim and to help you remember this long and unflagging parenthesis in your career I shall make the gesture you

yourself have made so often in concluding those farewell speeches in which you so ably mingled regret with humour and which will, as we have learnt from the Secretary General, fill the first volume of your "opera omnia". I now pass round the Silver Bowl which will come to rest in front of you for the second but, alas, also for the last time and in which you will find not only our signatures but also the expression of our unfailing admiration and our sincere friendship."

3. The BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE made the following statement:

"Mr. Chairman, now it falls to me to reply to you and to the new Dean. I am deeply grateful to you; first, for the happiness you have given me by reading President Ford's letter, which is one of the greatest honours I have ever received. I have already replied to the President, but I should also like to ask Ambassador Bruce to tell him how much I appreciated his gesture. Secondly, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you, the International Staff and all your assistants and also the Council, for your many gifts, which have given me great joy. When my eyes fall on this bulky volume and the words I have spoken in farewell to my former colleagues, I shall remember them with deep affection and happiness. I should also have liked to have a record of the masterpieces of eloquence which they and you, Mr. Chairman, afforded us on these occasions, but no doubt this would have been over-cumbersome, so that you contented yourselves with my own words; it is true that there were enough of these and to spare! I believe the new Dean suggested that I might sing my own praises, but in that case all my eloquence would have been rooted in silence. At all events, since you expect me to address you I shall, with your permission, read the speech I had prepared for this occasion. But before I do so, I want to tell you once more how touched and grateful I am to receive this album of photographs and this volume of my speeches in the Council.

The wheel has turned full circle and now - should I say already, or at last! - after I have so often paid tribute to my departing colleagues the time has come for me to hear my own eulogy pronounced first by you, Mr. Chairman, and afterwards by the new Dean. Few ordeals can be more redoubtable than to see this attentive twin escort accompany me with the affectionate support of the Council's members to the gates of a paradise which I leave with "the dark pleasure of a melancholy heart".

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The Emperor Marcus Aurelius, who was one of our finest Western Statesmen - in the word "Western" I include both America and Europe - Marcus Aurelius used to thank the gods for blessing him with good parents, good friends and good colleagues and for sometimes holding back awhile before employing the gifts of his intellect or the resources underlying his power. I would not have the audacity to compare myself with such an august personage; I mention him only because, during the twenty-six years for which it has been my privilege to serve on this Council, I, too, have had the good fortune to come into daily contact with a dedicated International Staff, highly capable military authorities, understanding national delegations, kindly colleagues and distinguished Secretaries General.

To each one of you, I should like to say a word of thanks. But, like Baudelaire, I have more memories than if I were a thousand years old and it would be unreasonable of me to allow my gratitude to outrun your patience. You may be sure, however, that despite the general terms in which I have expressed my gratitude, I am well aware of just how much I owe to each and every one of you. Had it not been for the encouragement of all those involved, whether closely or remotely, in the activities of the Atlantic Alliance, without their friendly complicity and constant help, I would - to borrow from Kant the only metaphor to be found in his works - I would have been no more than a dove beating its wings in a vacuum.

May I, however, pay a more direct tribute to the NATO Staff and to yourself, Mr. Secretary General? Since it has fallen to Belgium to receive the Council, the Military Committee, SHAPE and many other Allied bodies, I should like, as your Dean, to tell you how greatly my task as Representative of the host country has been eased by our guests' sense of propriety and tact, as a result of which the continuing presence in Belgium of the large Atlantic community has given my country very real pleasure; we hope that this sentiment is echoed by you all. But here I want to extend a special word of praise to the International Staff as it is with them that I have had the privilege and good fortune to work for so many years. I have thus had a unique opportunity to appreciate the sum total of behind-the-scenes work that is required to ensure the Staff's smooth operation and, over the years, I have come to realise - more, perhaps, than anyone else - just how much dedication, whether unpretentious or brilliant, and warm-hearted, discreet and human self-sacrifice at all levels goes into the daily efforts of a Staff which is capable of restraint even in asserting its legitimate aspirations. May the Alliance succeed in preserving this instrument which is so vital to its success!

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As for you, Mr. Secretary General, to begin to describe you is already to accept that the portrait will be incomplete. You combine such contrasting talents that your personality itself defies description. Your astounding flair for improvisation stems from your quick-wittedness. Although you sometimes have to be everywhere at once, your presence is always to be felt. Your jests are aimed at giving zest to the serious side of things and your treasure-chest of anecdotes serves either as the warrior's rest or, better still, to relieve difficult moments. Your erudition knows no bounds, nor is it ever barren, for it testifies to an all-embracing interest. To be admirable, one must be able to admire; so it is that nothing in the broad spectrum of human experience escapes your notice, whether it has to do with the world's navies or with the life of Napoleon. Like all men of spirit, you are given to warm feelings on occasion but, being also a man of character, you usually manage to conceal them - except, perhaps, when the Netherlands is involved, whereupon your patriotism breaks to the surface. You have placed your unique experience at the service of an outstanding cause, and this you do lightheartedly, with the apparent facility that characterises great workers. Your efforts are renewed each day, but your aims are far-reaching. They are discernible in your speeches, and this is why it is always important to listen to you. Thanks to you, the Alliance has a stay and a guide, and the debonair aspect you give it reflects its strong serenity. I consider myself privileged by fortune to have known you and, perhaps, to know you better than others as your attitude towards me has always been warmly fraternal.

Let me speak now of the Council. How can I address it in a few brief words? I do not wish to bring it an example, a lesson or a message. To have served the Alliance is an honour which, to my mind, confers no right to harangue it. If I have been able, in some small way, to contribute to its aim of preserving peace in the world; if I have helped, however little, to safeguard and foster what I believe to be the finest gift that can be accorded to man, namely, to have some say in his own destiny; if, in this collective enterprise for freedom, I have been able to join my own impulse with that of others, then I shall feel amply rewarded.

But it is impossible to quit something that has given meaning and purpose to one's life for over twenty-six years without in some way saluting the occasion. This is what I should now like to do. Faced with Communist ecumenism, with this constantly reaffirmed determination to impose on the universe a concept of life which could not even be contested; faced with the threat which, irrespective of the hopes or



promises of détente, changes its form but not its sinister intent; faced with this force which must be permanently contained in order to prevent a fatal imbalance; notwithstanding all this, the Alliance has enjoyed, and still enjoys, immense good fortune. First, because a brief Treaty has led to the establishment of various bodies and structures which, over the years, have gradually been adapted to changing requirements. The North Atlantic Council has thus moved from improvisation to institutionalisation, while at the same time preserving the flexibility of operation that marked its inception. It is my firm conviction that if the Council succeeds in retaining this indeterminate, or rather progressively determinate approach, whereby the practices and precedents of the past are freely adapted to current needs, it will continue to render incomparable service as a body in which member States apply the rules of solidarity without relinquishing their individual sovereignty.

Secondly, the Alliance has been fortunate in the institution of the office of Secretary General. Before 1952, NATO was run by the Council Deputies, who had the foresight to realise that a Committee composed of civil servants, which had no part in the military structure, was vested with no real authority and served only to bridge the gap between Ministerial Meetings, could not give the Alliance the guiding hand it needed to become a lasting institution. It was the Council Deputies who advocated the Lisbon reform whereby, in 1952, the post of Secretary General was created. The task prescribed for him was simply to chair the Council and direct the International Staff. The natural turn of events, together with the pre-eminent qualities of the incumbents, have made the Secretary General what he is today: the embodiment of the Alliance. In 1956, the Report of the Three Wise Men broadly set out his powers without stipulating any limits to them. The partners' respect did the rest, backed by the constant support of the Council and each Secretary General's sense of balance. Here, too, I believe that the effectiveness of the Alliance depends on its members' resolve to support unremittingly the man who stands for the intrinsic values of our Atlantic institution. You, Mr. Chairman, are the fountain-head of these values and your Administration gives them added lustre. I cannot, of course, mention all your colleagues by name, but there is at least one whom I must single out, and through him I address a cordial farewell to all the others. The Deputy Secretary General, Paolo Pansa, has so much in common with you that it might be thought that this Neapolitan was Dutch, just as the reverse might be the case with you. This interchangeability results in such a miraculous accumulation of qualities that I could no more spell them out individually than attempt to pinpoint the specific advantages we derive from each.

Thirdly, the Alliance has made effective progress - albeit painstaking and as yet incomplete - with its military organization. The going was not easy for, after the war had ended, the threat was so imminent that, just as Rome entrusted its fate to a temporary dictator, so the Free World looked for survival to the eminent military chiefs who had already saved it once. This situation was bound to be short-lived, as it could have placed the whole democratic system in a state of imbalance. To this were added tremendous organizational problems, as national interests often clashed with geographic requirements, the evident needs of collective defence and the need for a collective effort to spell out a joint strategic concept. It was very much to the credit of the military authorities, and especially General Eisenhower, that they understood that their success could be assured and durable only if it were securely embodied in a political authority. It was to the credit of the governments, and especially Sir Winston Churchill, that the necessary impetus was given to these efforts, and it was to the credit of Lord Ismay, the first NATO Secretary General, that they finally came to fruition. But something of the initial imbalance still persisted, and it was only gradually, by dint of wisdom and mutual restraint, that the West's enormous military machine found its place in the Alliance, slowly determined its hierarchy, structure and fields of responsibility and adjusted the delicate scope of its collaboration with the political authorities. These problems are no doubt permanent ones, inherent in the life of a constantly-changing organization such as ours. Here again, men have played, and are playing, an essential rôle, and in this respect I want to pay tribute to the Chairman of the Military Committee, Sir Peter Hill-Norton. His natural restraint, which lends even more weight to his eminent post, the prestige vesting in a rank second to none, his uncompromising strength of character, the laconic clarity of his statements, the sometimes harsh lucidity of his views, his military and political realism, all these qualities have admirably equipped him to resolve the difficulties he so fully appreciates. I have no brief, Mr. Chairman, to deliver praise or reprimand but, as Sir Winston Churchill once said to me: "you always have the right to admire". And so I should like to ask Sir Peter Hill-Norton to convey my admiration to his colleagues on the Military Committee, after retaining his rightful share thereof. I should also be grateful if he would convey the same affectionate admiration to the Supreme Commanders of the Alliance and to their staffs. It is not enough to say that I knew them all; I have the most pleasant memories of the welcome they invariably accorded me during the travels that brought me in contact with them over so many years.



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This brings me to the Permanent Council. Although I mention it last rather like Bossuet: "there remained the redoubtable infantry of the Spanish Army", this is not because it is redoubtable; far from it! It is because, for twenty-five years, it has been the apple of my eye, the flesh of my flesh, and the final instance I wish to cite of the Alliance's continuing good-fortune. At the risk of making my colleagues blush with vanity, I have to tell them that at all times, both past and present, they have lived up to my highest expectations. The reason I consider them to be so perfect is that they have achieved outstanding success in forging a distinctive style of conduct, in building a spiritual family and in developing a team spirit that enables them to remain themselves while adopting a singularly detached and yet collective approach. No doubt this again dates back to Lord Ismay, whose simplicity of manner was such that, as he saw it, there were no problems civilised men could not resolve among themselves if they wanted to. Here, once more, is the call for well-ordered freedom! Thus it was that the Permanent Council became a repository of gentle good-breeding, what Lord Ismay described as the "decent club: one of the only places in the world where friends can fight and even agree".

And since it is understood that no discourse of mine within these walls would be complete without a quotation from St. Augustine, I should mention that this learned Doctor agreed with Lord Ismay in considering that the only useful meetings "are those where it is possible to disagree without bitterness, as within oneself, and where the needed touch of dissent lends savour to a near-constant unanimity".

A near-constant unanimity! I should like to draw particular attention to this expression. It implies a habit of working together in such a way that, whatever the play of the actors, whatever their improvisation or preparation, the scene is always set for eventual compromise and agreement; this has been and is the continuing achievement of our Alliance. The term also implies a form of consultation that has grown up among us, which consists not only in comparing and contrasting our instructions but also in considering, through frank and free discussion, how they may be merged into a common line of thought, appraisal or conduct. This, I feel, is of very great importance in an Organization like ours. Many years ago, when the Headquarters of the Alliance was transferred to the Porte Dauphine in Paris, Mr. Spaak, who was then Secretary General, asked me to give him in Latin - that fine Latin prose that carries wisdom within it - a maxim reflecting in a few words the collective aim of the Atlantic Alliance and the independence of its members. In my studious childhood I had

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been through San Gimignano. Amid that unbelievable landscape of rival towers, I saw a striking sentence in the Palazzo del Podestà. It was engraved on the seat-back of the man who presided over the destinies of the city: "Animus in consulendo liber": "Man's mind ranges unrestrained in counsel". Mr. Spaak adopted the maxim. For a long time it adorned the conference area in the Porte Dauphine building. Then you took it up, Mr. Chairman, and placed it where it really belongs: here in Brussels in the North Atlantic Council's main conference chamber. The mind ranges unrestrained in counsel. This is at once the ultimate resource and the goal of this free-ranging Alliance which we formed to safeguard our future.

Thus, by dint of empirical progress, nor without dispute on occasion, the Permanent Council came, as it were, to manage Western security and to spell out a strategy and tactics commensurate with the threat and the collective resources made available to it.

In so doing, it provides a nerve centre from which to direct the Allies' far-flung forces; it also serves as a forum where different national policies are clarified, co-ordinated and sometimes even aligned. By virtue of its composition, it is admirably equipped for meetings and frank exchanges between North America and Europe. Lastly, its high versatility and flexible procedures enable it to adjust as required the relations between Allies without in any way jeopardising the Alliance itself.

Nor has this constantly-enriching process come to an end. I am one of those who hope that it is irreversible and that one day it will give rise to a permanent institution rooted in a freely-chosen form of civilisation no matter what name it receives.

But, you may ask, amid all this energy and vitality, amid these prospects for the Permanent Council, is there any room for a Dean? My answer, Mr. Chairman, is naturally in the affirmative since the Dean in question will be Felice Catalano. However, my friendship and affection for him will not cause me to exaggerate his qualities. They are self-evident. His shrewd judgement and rectitude will set the seal on the authority he already exerts with his colleagues. His independence of mind is touched with a shade of scrupulosity which suits him well as it denotes humility rather than diffidence. His courteous manner, clear-sightedness and discreet cordiality eminently warrant our confidence. Merit carries conviction only when it is at one with resource, and in him this quality is coupled with discrimination and strength of

purpose. To him, at once moved and smiling, I pass on the torch I have lightly carried for so long. In his task, he will, as I know from personal experience, be effectively assisted by a most charming "Doyenne" - his wife. Whereas she and I fulfilled in some measure separately the offices of Dean, now at last they are to be performed by a delightful couple who ally gracefulness with harmony.

I said earlier that I was going to touch on a few of the events we have gone through together. I am afraid that, like a guest who takes too long to say goodbye, I have, perhaps, abused of your patience. I shall leave you now, and take with me the Silver Bowl you have presented to me as a precious gage of your trust and friendship. The affection of one's peers is heart-warming when recollected in tranquility.

Finally, let me try to explain, both to myself and to you, why it is that I am going. There are, to my mind, a multitude of reasons - whether they be Horace's wish to lead life's sweet oblivion to gentle rest or the feeling that it is unwise to wait until the sun is going down. In essence, I feel that we should not outplay our rôle. Unless, when all is said and done, I have simply been moved to respond to the suggestion St. Mark the Evangelist put on the lips of One whose voice has echoed unruffled through the centuries: "it is evening, let us go across to the other side".

4. In conclusion, the CHAIRMAN invited the Permanent Representatives, the Chairman of the Military Committee and the senior officials present to gather round him and Mr. de Staercke for a group photograph of the members of the Council.

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