

ORGANISATION DU TRAITÉ DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD
NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

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PALAIS DE CHAILLOT
PARIS-XVI
KLEber 50-20

NATO SECRET

To : Secretary General
(through Deputy Secretary General)

From : Executive Secretary

Record of a private meeting of the Council
held at 10.15 a.m. on Wednesday, 14th November 1956

I. FORTHCOMING MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL WITH THE STANDING
GROUP AND THE MILITARY COMMITTEES

The CHAIRMAN sought the views of the Council concerning the dates and the agendas for meetings of the Council with the Standing Group and with the Military Committees. Following a brief discussion, during which agreement was reached upon the dates suggested, the Chairman indicated a memorandum on the subject would be circulated to permanent representatives for their consideration. (Document RDC/490/56).

II. GENERAL GRUENTHER'S PRESS STATEMENT

2. The CHAIRMAN referred to a telegram which General Gruenther had sent to the NATO Ministers of Defence concerning remarks he had made to the press on November 13th, copies of which had been circulated to the Council. In the light of the somewhat extravagant treatment which his remarks received in certain newspapers, he thought it would be wise to make an authoritative text available to Ministers of Defence and to permanent representatives. As members of the Council would see, there was little in General Gruenther's statements which was sensational or novel.

III. TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS OF SOVIET POLICY

3. Upon the suggestion of the Chairman, the Council proceeded to a detailed examination of the text of the Summary of Conclusions (AC/34(56)WP/10).

4. The U.K. REPRESENTATIVE, supported by the CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE and one or two other representatives, suggested that the last sentence of the second sub-paragraph of paragraph 2, reading "the effects of the upheaval in the Satellites on the military strength of the Soviet Bloc are as yet unclear" should be deleted on the grounds that to include the statement as a conclusion might be to imply that Soviet military strength had been weakened by recent events, an assumption, which, at this stage, it would be premature to make.

14.056

5. The U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, supported by the GERMAN, ITALIAN and NETHERLANDS REPRESENTATIVES, suggested there was merit in leaving the sentence in the paragraph, as it did no more than state that the situation was unclear and was likely to remain so for some time. Moreover, he thought it would be useful to indicate to Ministers that this aspect of the problem had been considered even if no final conclusions could be drawn at this time.

6. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE said it was the view of his authorities that careful account should be taken of recent events in the Satellites. They were not sure, however, that it would be correct at this time to imply that the situation which had arisen in Eastern Europe would have any effect on the military strength of the Soviet Union. In the circumstances, it was the view of his delegation that the proper place for such a statement would be in Part II of the paper rather than in the Summary of Conclusions.

7. The NETHERLANDS REPRESENTATIVE said that if the sentence was to be interpreted in the way the U.S. representative suggested, he would be in agreement with him. He thought it would be wrong, however, if this statement were taken as implying that Soviet military strength has been weakened.

8. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE said he interpreted the sentence to mean that there has been a change in Soviet military strength, which indeed he thought to be the case. For example, the lines of communication of the Soviet forces in Eastern Germany have been made less secure by recent developments in Poland and Hungary.

9. In the general discussion of paragraphs 3 and 4 which followed, the GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE said he thought it would be a mistake to insist too much upon the thesis that the USSR wishes to avoid a general war. The paper as it was presently drafted went too far in suggesting that the Soviet Government wishes to avoid a general war. There was no proof that this was the case. He considered the situation had changed to a point where it was possible and indeed desirable to question this concept.

10. In the ensuing discussion, emphasis was laid upon the distinction to be made in considering the risks of a general war between :

- (a) a miscalculation on the part of the Soviet Government as to the reaction of the Western Powers, and
- (b) a miscalculation by the Soviet Government of the intentions of the Western Powers.

11. The BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE suggested that a distinction also should be made between the risks which the Soviet Union would be prepared to take to hold what they have and the risks which they would be prepared to run in order to expand their empire.

12. In this connection, the CHAIRMAN ~~suggested that~~ ^{wished to know if} account should also be taken of the possibility that the Soviet Government might be forced because of internal difficulties, to undertake some venture which could lead to a general war.

13. The PORTUGUESE REPRESENTATIVE suggested there was a need to examine carefully the thesis that consequences of a nuclear war would be worse for the Soviet Union than they would be for the Western Powers. He was not certain this was any longer a valid assumption. He was not clear which side was convinced that there would be no general war. If the Soviet Union is genuinely convinced there will be no general war, then it was an unlikely possibility. If, on the other hand, this concept was held only by the Western Powers and if the Soviet Union considered they could deal the West a crippling blow before any effective retaliation could be made, he was certain the Soviet Union would not hesitate to do so.

14. The BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE said he could not agree with the Portuguese representative. Certain of the assumptions to which the Portuguese representative referred had never been made by the Council. He thought the situation had been admirably described by General Gruenther in his statement to the press. If the Soviet Union are not yet convinced that the Western Powers are prepared to retaliate promptly, then it was our job to make certain they are convinced.

15. The U.K. REPRESENTATIVE said that he could not accept the ideas advanced by the Portuguese representative. In support of the U.K. point of view, the NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVE recalled that on various occasions in private conversations Khrushchev had expressed the opinion that a general war was not a possibility.

16. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE suggested it was difficult to produce a paper in such a large group as the full Council. He proposed that three members of the Council be invited to assist the Assistant Secretary General in charge of Political and Cultural Affairs in the final preparation of the document in such a way as to reflect the different views which had been expressed.

17. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE did not think that a smaller group such as was suggested would be practicable. It would be very difficult for only three members of the Council adequately to interpret the views of all the other members. He felt the inability of the Council to get on with the task before them was a very serious reflection upon their methods of work. Few concrete amendments had been suggested to the present paper and such ideas as had been expressed in the discussion made it clear that an entirely fresh approach should be taken to the problem. Certain doubts had been expressed

about certain fundamental principles. He did not think it likely that these doubts would be maintained. The idea of a deterrent force was basic to NATO's defence strategy. If the position has changed and the Soviet Union is now willing, in the opinion of the Council, to risk atomic retaliation, then the entire strategic concept of NATO would have to be changed. If this view were upheld it would be a very serious development. Recent events, if anything, have confirmed the soundness of the approach which the Council has taken in the past. In his opinion the paper under consideration was along the right lines. If the various nuances in the paper were not sufficiently precise, it was up to those who considered that they needed correction to put forward suggestions for their change.

18. In discussing paragraph 4, the U.S. REPRESENTATIVE said that while his authorities did not wish to call into question the operation of Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty, they felt it important to have freedom to decide in what manner any particular threat should be met. For example, he did not think it should be suggested that any attack would be met by atomic retaliation. The U.S. authorities could foresee limited operations not necessarily involving a general war and in which it might not be to the advantage of the Western Powers to employ nuclear weapons. To give effect to his ideas, the U.S. representative said he would like to suggest the first sentence of paragraph 4 read " the Soviet leaders are fully aware that any all-out attack they might launch against NATO, etc. " The proposal was discussed at length without any decision being reached. (For details of revisions see AC/34(56)WP/11).

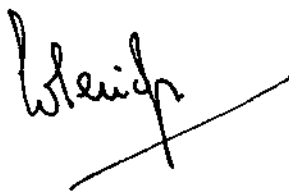
19. The COUNCIL agreed :

- (a) to meet at 11 a.m. on the 15th November to consider new drafts of paragraphs 1 and 3 which would be amended to take into account the various proposals which had been advanced during the discussion;
- (b) in principle to meet at 2.30 p.m. on Monday the 19th November to consider the document in final form.

IV. RELIEF FOR HUNGARY

20. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that his Government had under consideration proposals to increase their financial contribution towards the cost of relief supplies which are being sent by Canada to Hungary. For these purposes they have already made available \$ 100,000 to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, and \$ 100,000 to the Canadian Red Cross. Before reaching a decision on the amounts by which they might increase their contribution they would appreciate knowing what other Governments are doing or contemplate in this connection.

21. The CHAIRMAN requested members of the Council to seek information from their Governments on this point which could be given to the Canadian representative.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, possibly reading "W. Reid", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

15th November, 1956