“The only means of arriving at just solutions, as we see it, is through negotiation, through diplomacy…”

Halvard M. Lange


Educated in Oslo and in London, Lange was a professor at several universities during the 1930s, lecturing on modern and economic history. Originally a member of the Social Democratic Party, Lange became a member of the National Executive of the Labour Party in 1933, ultimately serving on the Party’s committee.

During the war, Lange was arrested by the Gestapo in August 1940, released in June 1941, re-arrested in August 1942 and spent the rest of the war in concentration camps.

Upon his return to Norway in 1945, he served as a full member of the Norwegian Parliament’s Nobel Committee. He was appointed Norway’s Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1946 and would remain in that office until 1965.

A strong supporter of Western alignment, Lange had arguably been the most influential figure in Scandinavian policy during both Norway and Denmark’s entry into NATO and ultimately signing the North Atlantic Treaty on behalf of his country on 4 April 1949.

Halvard Lange. December 11, 1956; (C-VR(56)69)
Gaetano Martino


A former physician and an internationally renowned Professor of Human Physiology, Martino was a distinguished member of many Italian and foreign academies and scientific societies. A Dean of the University of Messina (1943-1957) and the University of Rome (1966-1967), he devoted a significant part of his work to the issue of university education as a tool to strengthen the teaching and dissemination of a European awareness.

A prominent Liberal politician, Martino was elected by the Constituent Assembly in 1946. As Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1954 to 1957, Martino promoted a stronger European integration and internationalism in Italy. In 1955, he organized the Martino conference which resulted in the revivification of the European process. The following year, he secured the Italian acceptance to the United Nations and in 1957 he attended the Treaty of Rome which established the European Economic Community.

Martino was elected as President of the European Parliament in 1962 and served until 1964. A principal aspect of his parliamentary work was focused upon the development of European scientific research, which he considered to be a key component of the process of European unification. He also continued to serve as Deputy in the Italian Chamber until his death.

“We must recognize that there is only one way to overcome our current problems: by strengthening and expanding Atlantic cooperation.”

Gaetano Martino, December 12, 1956; (C-VR(56)72)
"I hope that non-member countries, as a result of this report, will also have a better understanding of our purely defensive aims and purposes; particularly, the fact that they are not exclusive to the members of the coalition, but do take into account the broader interests of the whole international community."

Lester B. Pearson, December 12, 1956; (C-VR(56)71)
The Report of the Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation in NATO was officially accepted in December 1956.

On 5 May 1956, the North Atlantic Council appointed Halvard Lange, Gaetano Martino and Lester B. Pearson to lead the Committee on Non-Military Cooperation (also known as the “The Committee of Three” or “The Three Wise Men”).

The task of the Committee was to write a report that would examine and redefine the objectives and needs of the Alliance, making recommendations to strengthen its internal solidarity, cohesion and unity.

The “Three Wise Men” identified key areas where cooperation in dispute resolution was needed and suggested ways such cooperation could foment within the Atlantic Community:

- political cooperation;
- economic cooperation;
- cultural cooperation;
- cooperation in the information field; and
- organization and functions.

The Report of the Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation in NATO was officially accepted in December 1956.
The Report made several recommendations, including the peaceful settlement of inter-member disputes, economic cooperation, scientific and technical cooperation, cultural cooperation and cooperation in the information field. It also introduced a more cooperative approach to security issues and broadened the strategic framework within which the Alliance operated. It reinforced NATO’s political role at a time when the Organization was hardening its military and strategic stance, advocating massive retaliation as a key element of its new strategy.

"... [They] have been selected, not only for their own merits, but because there is a certain geographical balance between them. If we could get those three of our colleagues to be the three wise men and do this duty... we might make progress.”

Selwyn Lloyd, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, United Kingdom, May 5, 1956 (C-VR(56)22)