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20th July, 1967.

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Dear Professor Patijn,

Following up your request to let you have in writing some of the points we discussed during our recent conversation when you visited Paris, I should like to take the opportunity of sending you, with Mr. Simms who is accompanying the Secretary General to Bonn, some notes I have made on APAG, the regional experts' committees and the Committee of Political Advisers. I would appreciate it if you would consider these notes as being primarily for your own information.

I should like to draw your attention particularly to the points made in the following paragraphs:

APAG

Page 2, last paragraph; page 3, first paragraph.

Committees of experts from capitals

Page 1, last paragraph.

POLADS

Page 1, third paragraph.

What these points amount to is that the limitations of NATO are derived from NATO's constitution as an Alliance of sovereign states which makes it an inter-national organisation and not a supra-national organisation.

Our public opinion, and subconsciously our governments and diplomats, would like NATO to solve problems which it would be in a position to do only if we decided to break, so to speak, the sound barrier into supra-nationality. But when it comes to that, neither our public nor our governments are willing to take this step. I am profoundly convinced that it is this situation which prevents us from co-ordinating our foreign policies, not only with regard to the Third World, but even, unfortunately, with regard to East/West relations.

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Nobody knows more than yourself the profound and in many respects valid reasons why our member countries are unwilling or unable to take the decisive step forward which would enable NATO to perform in a way adequate for the requirements of the present day world. Under these circumstances we come to realise that NATO, as it is at present constituted, provides us with an optimal mechanism. One of the main purposes of the Harmel study, I should think, would have to be to make this situation clear. We could then appeal for greater, more frequent, more sincere use of our existing machinery - and we would be surprised how productive this would be.

Yours sincerely,

Joachim Jaenicke

Professor C.L. Patijn,
Meeting of Rapporteurs,
Foreign Office,
BONN.

THE ATLANTIC POLICY ADVISORY GROUP
(APAG)

The Atlantic Policy Advisory Group, which was established in 1961, "should provide the North Atlantic Council with studies on long-term policy problems" (enclosed copy of the APAG Terms of Reference, 15th November 1961).*

I believe that the idea was originally conceived by Professor Walt Rostow, who still today is one of the most influential advisors of the President. APAG was to be a quite informal meeting of the men responsible for planning in the foreign offices of the member countries. Quite a number of NATO Governments at that time had no planning officer: one of the effects of APAG has been to push them into creating posts with planning responsibilities.

During the years of its existence, the Group has developed certain practices and a certain style which distinguishes it from experts' groups or political committees composed of delegates who only speak on instructions. The representatives of the larger countries are high enough in rank (Assistant Secretaries General - indeed in the British case the No. 3 of the Foreign Office) to speak both with authority and with a great deal of freedom. The discussions are freewheeling and off the record. The meetings take place in a somewhat isolated location, provided by one of the member countries, which usually provides a country mansion, a hotel, or a similar place which is taken over by the Group for a number of days.

The great advantage of this arrangement is that the participants, usually numbering between 20 and 25 persons, spend all their time in each other's company, including mealtimes and a day's excursion laid on by the host government. The Group also meets with the Foreign Minister of the host government for a discussion on how NATO and world problems are seen from his vantage point. These meetings are usually followed by a dinner offered by the Minister.

The topic of the discussions are determined in advance by the Council following suggestion by the Group. The members of APAG consider that one of the most valuable parts of their meeting is the thorough discussion of the tour d'horizon on the international situation, traditionally made by the representative of the host country. Representatives, especially those of the smaller countries, welcome the opportunity to hear, twice a year, the views of all the other members of the Alliance and to be immersed in a thorough discussion of the various aspects of the world scene. One must realise that even Council meetings at ministerial level do not afford this opportunity because it has never proved possible to get away from the reading of set speeches by Ministers during the bi-annual ministerial sessions. In APAG, however, the free and informal discussions of the Group maintain high standards, and in addition there is opportunity for ample talks between two or more members exchanging ideas over meals or an evening drink; these are felt by those concerned to be extremely useful and often indicative for future policy.

The tour d'horizon also provides the proper setting for the discussion of the topic which the Group has chosen and on which usually a number of national contributions have been sent to the Secretariat ahead of time.

* Secret document sent through Dutch Delegation

The Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs chairs this meeting, two members of his staff take notes - although these notes do not in any way constitute an official record - and the sum and substance of the discussion is presented to the Council in the form of a report which the Chairman makes on his own responsibility. However, in order to be sure that the Report is acceptable to all delegations, the practice has been instituted to send the draft of the Report to the APAG members. They then have a chance to suggest modifications in the text which the Chairman is free to reject or accept for his final Report to the Council.

At their meeting of 5th July, the Council took note of my Report on the APAG's last meeting in Greece where we discussed the balance within the Alliance in the 1970s. This subject was originally suggested by our British friends in APAG and proved to be most timely in connection with the Harmel Exercise. In the Council discussion of 5th July it was noted that the Report contained a number of points particularly relevant to the discussions of Sub-Group 2. The American Permanent Representative, supported by several other ambassadors, made the suggestion that the report be distributed to the members of all Sub-Groups. This will, of course, be done, and I have pleasure in including a copy for you personally. This Report will, I think, illustrate to you the results which are achieved during a meeting of APAG.

As I mentioned to you, I doubt very much whether the chiefs of the planning staffs would find time regularly to meet more than twice a year. Were more meetings to be scheduled, we might easily find ourselves in a position where the No. 2s instead of the Heads of the Staffs would have to attend. Without in any way casting doubt on the qualifications of the No. 2s, it would nevertheless defeat the very object of APAG meetings' taking place without the authority of the No. 1s.

In APAG we see another example of what Ambassador Cleveland meant when he said that we actually do have sufficient machinery in NATO - the question is what use do we make of it?

In the case of the Report of our meeting in Greece, we have some excellent suggestions made by NATO planners about improving the internal balance of the Alliance. The Council has now taken note of the Report and I am sure that it will be read with interest in capitals. What is needed, of course, to give new life to NATO and to open up for it exciting perspectives with a great deal of appeal for our public, would be for the Council to study two interesting ideas in the Report - one on a European defence organisation, and the other on a European organisation for arms production. In other words, we are in the presence of the planning machinery. It has produced a number of interesting suggestions, but we do not have a manifestation of the political will - not even by one government out of the fifteen - to take up these suggestions, study them, and seek their implementation. One might, of course, argue that this was not done because the hope was expressed that Sub-Group 2 would pay a great deal of attention to the contents of the Report; but I doubt that this was the real reason for the Council's inactivity.

I am insisting on this point because we are constantly tempted to search for our salvation by looking at the institutional and mechanical side of the Alliance instead of frankly admitting that our problem lies in the realm of political will and resolution. (I often have the suspicion that the general decline in political will, which we cannot help but note in the West, finds its expression in an ever-increasing desire to make studies of our problems. Of course such studies are indispensable, but are they not all too often the substitute for action?)

COMMITTEES OF EXPERTS FROM CAPITALS

The origin, Terms of Reference and functioning of the four regional committees of experts dealing with the Third World are of particular interest to the work of the Sub-Group you chair. It is characteristic of the development of political consultation within the Alliance with regard to areas outside the Treaty area, that these committees were not at all created as a matter of course or at the same time. In fact, they arose out of the needs of particular situations and met at first with a great deal of hesitation on the part of some Allies; this was the case for example with the Experts Committee on Africa. Until about two years ago, the existence of these committees was kept secret and only a remark in public, whether made on purpose or inadvertently, by Mr. Rusk, made known that there was in existence a NATO committee dealing with Latin America. Subsequently the existence of other regional committees (Middle East, Far East, Africa) was also admitted. However, no great publicity is given to these committees and their operations continue to be treated with great discretion. Only in recent years have the Scandinavian countries elected to send experts to some of these committees.

The reason for this attitude on the part of the Alliance, or at least on the part of some of its members, has the same origin as the feeling of the Western Allies which M. Spaak described the other day as one of "honte". Those members of the Alliance who carry responsibility in the world outside the NATO area understandably do not have this feeling to the same extent. Nevertheless there is reluctance to have it made known in the Third World that NATO deals with its affairs, even if only to study them and to evaluate the repercussions of events in the rest of the world on the Alliance and on individual NATO members.

In my view the periodic meetings of these committees have proved to be extremely useful in elaborating, slowly but with quiet efficacy, a body of opinion, if not among policy shapers of the Alliance, at least among the senior political advisors of policy shapers. A study of the political implications for the Alliance - the NATO term for experts' recommendations to governments - will show that although these recommendations represent only the lowest common denominator of the fifteen, they constitute, in effect, given the present position of the members of the Alliance, reasonably sound policy. They reflect what the "traffice will bear" - how public opinion in our countries views its obligations to the Third World. I am not saying that the West could not do more to establish world order either by military or economic measures which would fill the vacuum left by the disappearance of the great European colonial empires.

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As I pointed out to you, I do not believe that it would be feasible in view of the burden on these experts, who are senior officials, to meet 'à l'improviste', or much more often than twice a year. If we tried to have frequent meetings, we would once again run into a theoretical acceptance of such a programme, but in fact only these officials' deputies, or even sub-deputies, would be able to attend. We must realise that there is an optimal number of meetings which the key personnel of our foreign offices can be asked to attend.

This is not to say that ad hoc meetings, bringing together officials of this level to deal with particular problems or acute situations should be ruled out; and this leads me to deal with the rôle of the Committee of Political Advisors.

THE COMMITTEE OF POLITICAL ADVISERS
(POLADS)

The Committee of Political Advisers was established when the political business of the Alliance had developed to a point where it was no longer practical to seize the Permanent Representatives themselves of every problem with which the Alliance had to deal. It was created, on the recommendation of the Three Wise Men: "To assist the Permanent Representatives and the Secretary General in discharging their responsibilities for political consultation, there should be constituted under the Council a Committee of Political Advisers from each Delegation, aided when necessary by specialists from the capitals. It would meet under the chairmanship of a member of the International Staff appointed by the Secretary General, and would include among its responsibilities current studies such as those on trends of Soviet Policy."

A glance at the action sheets of the Political Committee will give you an idea of the remarkable variety of subjects, ranging from minor ones to basic political issues, with which it deals. After years of working with the Committee, I am certain of its value to the Alliance. On the other hand, I am also aware of its natural limitations. For one, the political work itself, the new tasks of a politico-military nature and the addition of nuclear problems, as well as the recently-given tasks of adjusting the Alliance after the French initiatives, have placed such a burden on Delegations that the original intention of having the No. 2s of Delegations sit on the Political Committee had to be abandoned. Delegations are, as a rule, represented by their No. 3s, and there is a tendency to go even below this rank because of the work pressure on the senior staff. It is obvious that such a development must have a subtle influence on the nature of the work of the Group.

The greatest limitation of the Political Committee is, however, not due to any excessive workload or to a failure on the part of the men who constitute it. It is rather the result of NATO's constitution. As in the Council, the Political Advisers can only speak upon instruction. While their personal comments are, of course, interesting and valuable, they are quite limited in their effectiveness. This basic fact imprints on the deliberations of the Political Committee a certain pattern which a participating outsider might find unsatisfactory and wish to change into something more lively and free-wheeling. However, a change would be perfectly pointless and would soon run aground because the results of any different form of procedure would necessarily be unacceptable to the authorities back in capitals.

Any proposals to change POLADS' performance, or for another organ designed to replace it, ought to keep this basic fact in mind.

The practice of occasionally holding meetings of the Committee with visiting higher officials from capitals might profitably be increased. The practice would find its limitations in the availability of these men.