

19th May 1967
(10.30 a.m.)

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting of Rapporteurs of Sub-Groups of
the Special Group on Future Tasks of the
Alliance, under the Chairmanship of the
Secretary General

Among those present:

Mr. J.H.A. Watson (UK)
Mr. Paul Henri Spaak (Belgium)
Mr. Foy Kohler (US)
Dr. Patijn (Netherlands)
Amb. Grewe (Germany), representing Mr. Schütz

The Secretary General proposed that the meeting discuss four points:

- (i) what kind of interim report should be presented to Ministers at Luxembourg?
- (ii) how much freedom should Rapporteurs be given in drawing up their reports?
- (iii) how should the work of the four sub-groups be co-ordinated in substance?
- (iv) what should be the timetable for the work of the sub-groups and Special Group?

In connexion with the first point, the Secretary General had distributed to the Rapporteurs a copy of a draft Interim Report; in connexion with the fourth, he suggested that Rapporteurs should present their reports during the first half of October, so that the Special Group would have until the end of November to carry on its work.

Referring to the Secretary General's four questions, Mr. Spaak expressed the views that the interim report should be a procedural one; that the Rapporteurs' reports should be personal rather than represent the views of the sub-groups as a whole, although these should be taken into account to the extent possible; that an attempt should be made to find agreement on the basic question of the exercise, viz the definition of the policy of detente; and that the Secretary General's proposed timetable seemed reasonable.

The Secretary General solicited the views of those present also as to the advisability of including a reference to the exercise in the communiqué of the Luxembourg meeting.

Mr. Spaak said that, in his opinion, it was not yet time for the Ministers to engage in a discussion of the substance of the exercise and consequently any public mention of the exercise should be perfunctory.

Referring to the Secretary General's draft Interim Report, Mr. Kohler commented that it was the kind of report he thought should be made. He wondered whether it would not be desirable, however, to attach the reports made by the sub-groups thereto. With respect to Mr. Kohler's suggestion, the Secretary General said that he was open-minded. Nevertheless, in his opinion, nothing should be annexed to the report that would provide the Ministers with an excuse for discussing substance at their Luxembourg meeting.

In so far as the Secretary General's second question was concerned, Mr. Kohler believed that the report he would eventually submit would represent a consensus only, as it would not be possible to obtain unanimity. On the question of co-ordinating the work of the four sub-groups, he thought it would be possible for Sub-Group 3 to limit its activities in such a way as to stress the political-military aspects of the problem and thereby avoid, to the extent possible, encroaching on the studies of other sub-groups. On timing, he thought it should be possible to meet the Secretary General's proposed schedule.

Mr. Watson characterised the Secretary General's draft Interim Report as just the sort of report he had hoped the Secretary General would produce. He reported that his German colleague and he had drawn up a progress report describing what they had been doing, and suggested that the International Staff might look at it, compare it with similar reports from other sub-groups, and recommend how far the language should be adopted. On the question having to do with the nature of the sub-groups' reports, he thought it desirable to preserve the idea that the members of the sub-groups, like the Rapporteurs, were experts rather than government spokesmen. As he envisaged development of the exercise, the sub-groups would "propose" and the Special Group or Ministers "dispose". With regard to co-ordination of the work of the four sub-groups, he expressed agreement with

Mr. Spaak's view that agreement on a definition of detente was fundamental to the work of the exercise. Under the circumstances, he proposed that all Rapporteurs meet, perhaps in September, under Mr. Spaak's chairmanship, in an attempt to ensure that all the reports were based on the same basic assumptions. With respect to the Secretary General's proposed timetable, he envisaged no difficulties in so far as the work of Sub-Group 1 was concerned. The Secretary General endorsed Mr. Watson's suggestion that the Rapporteurs meet informally and expressed the hope that Mr. Spaak would consent to chair the meeting. He thought, however, that July, rather than September, might be ~~a~~ the best ~~better~~ date for the meeting.

Dr. Patijn said that he saw no difficulties with respect to the presentation of the draft Interim Report. As to the question of what to say about the exercise at Luxembourg, he wondered whether the Ministers might not simply note in their communiqué that a study of this kind was going on but would not be completed for some time. He felt quite sure that he could never achieve unanimity or even a consensus in his sub-group, so that his report would necessarily be a personal one, although the views of various delegations, ~~could be~~ identified as such, ^{could be included.} As to co-ordination, he agreed that there would probably be a great deal of overlapping on such questions as political consultation and suggested that the International Staff might help out by preparing a meeting of Rapporteurs to co-ordinate positions on this subject. It seemed essential to him that various views on political consultation be conciliated before the sub-groups' reports were sent to the Special Group. In the field of aid to under-developed countries, a subject with which his sub-group was concerned, it would be very useful to have advice from outside sources, in particular, the OECD. He would be quite prepared to go to the OECD for their views rather than asking officials of that Organization to come to him. It would also be very useful, in his view, if he were allowed to go to certain capitals, particularly Washington and the capitals of the Scandinavian countries, to solicit the views of Foreign Ministry officials; he wondered whether this might be done. The Secretary General, in reply, pointed out that Ambassador de Staercke had already set a precedent

in this latter respect before the exercise began. Ambassador Boon expressed the view that it should be agreed Rapporteurs could go to capitals but no mention of this should be made in the Special Group.

The Secretary General observed that proposals had now been put forward for co-ordinating positions on both consultation and detente. There was, however, an important difference, because detente was indivisible but consultation, being essentially procedural, might be handled in different ways for different subjects.

Speaking for Mr. Schütz, Ambassador Grewe said that the Secretary General's draft Interim Report seemed to be the type of report called for in the circumstances. He thought, however, that it might be adapted to include excerpts from the Rapporteurs' preliminary reports and might also be shortened. With respect to the relationship between the Rapporteurs and their sub-groups, he was of the opinion that this question did not now arise but would have to be settled at a later stage. The Council, meeting as the Special Group, could give document C-M(67)11, establishing the Special Group and sub-groups, any reasonable interpretation; it should never be interpreted, in his view, in such a way that the reports would have to be agreed upon in the sub-groups word by word. On co-ordination, he supported Mr. Watson's suggestion.

Mr. Spaak observed that his position in Sub-Group 2 was very close to that of Dr. Patijn in Sub-Group 4. He doubted that it would be possible even to get a consensus. Thus it seemed important to him that the Rapporteurs should be free to report as they saw fit. He agreed with Mr. Watson's suggestion that the Rapporteurs should meet to agree on basic premisses and would be glad to chair such a meeting. He thought they should examine political detente and military detente separately; in order to do so, however, the Rapporteurs of Sub-Groups 2 and 4 would need to know the views of Sub-Groups 1 and 3. He wondered therefore when Messrs. Watson and Kohler would be ready. The Secretary General pointed out that it was of equal importance for the Rapporteurs of Sub-Groups 1 and 3 to have the views of Sub-Groups 2 and 4. It was very important, ^{he cautioned,} that this meeting not be given any publicity.

The Secretary General then read, on a confidential basis, ^{the} a portion of a draft communiqué prepared by his staff to cover the exercise on the future tasks of the Alliance. He noted that the language was very non-committal and wondered if the Rapporteurs agreed that some such language was appropriate. Mr. Spaak replied that, in general, without approving each word, he thought the language read by the Secretary General satisfactory. At such time as the Ministers were in a position to agree on the conclusions of the exercise, NATO should make a major public relations effort, but for the present an attempt should be made to avoid dealing in public with the substance of the matter. Dr. Patijn expressed the view that the language was along the right lines, but might be reduced in length. Mr. Kohler found it "about right". Mr. Watson thought that the British Ministers would wish to include some evidence that NATO was not standing still. Mr. Kohler added that reference should be made to the fact that NATO ^{would} ~~should~~ continue after 1969. Ambassador Boon expressed the view that his Authorities were likely to share the idea that it was necessary to say something of substance in the communiqué but he personally thought the less said the better.

The Secretary General said that only the question of the agenda of that afternoon's meeting of the Special Group remained to be discussed. He thought the Special Group should discuss the sort of Interim Report to be presented and perhaps the timetable, but not the role of the Rapporteurs, the question of co-ordinating the position of the four sub-groups, or the content of the Luxembourg communiqué. As no-one disagreed, he concluded that his proposals found general favour and adjourned the meeting.

24/5/67