

Private Meeting of Permanent Representatives  
of Countries Furnishing Harmel Exercise Rapporteurs

Time: 16.00 hours, 24th July, 1967

Place: Secretary General's Conference Room

Attending:

Belgium	- S.E.M. André de STAERCKE, Ambassador
Germany	- Mr. H.K. DROEGE, Counsellor
Netherlands	- H.E. H.N. BOON, Ambassador
U.K.	- Mr. G.E. MILLARD, Minister
U.S.	- Mr. P. FARLEY, Minister

The Secretary General opened the meeting by briefly reporting on the meeting of the five Harmel Exercise Rapporteurs in Bonn, 21st July, 1967. He noted that the Rapporteurs had decided in principle to hold their next meeting in the United Kingdom in early October after their reports had been prepared and perhaps examined by their respective groups, in order that their further discussion might be based on a written text. The exact location of this meeting was yet to be selected by Adam WATSON (U.K.).

The Secretary General then said that he had called the five Permanent Representatives together to consider three points:

- (1) He wished to ask if and how he should advise the Fifteen about the results of the Bonn Rapporteurs' meeting. He proposed to outline the preliminary content of the Rapporteurs' reports but to omit mention of the more delicate subjects discussed.
- (2) He explained that the Rapporteurs had seen a clear need to avoid overlapping among their papers. They had agreed that this problem might be solved by not simply putting the individual papers together following Harmel Exercise Sub-Group members, but instead arranging the material in the final document along lines suggested by the logic of the problem. Such an arrangement might be as follows:

- (a) general introduction (e.g. the first part of Sub-Group II's report);
- (b) defence, to include
  - (i) Sub-Group I's report
  - (ii) the second part of Sub-Group II's report
  - (iii) Sub-Group III's report
  - (iv) balanced reduction of forces;
- (c) Sub-Group IV's report;

or, as proposed by Mr. SPAAK:

- (a) What the Alliance had been and was;
- (b) a statement that it should continue;
- (c) confirmation of the continuing necessity of NATO's military rôle;
- (d) the rôle of the Alliance in the context of détente;
- (e) the military problem in relation to détente;
- (f) Alliance policy over the short and medium range;
- (g) Alliance policy over the long range;
- (h) rôle of the Alliance outside the Treaty area.

This procedure would give the end product an internal coherence and logic otherwise lacking.

- (3) He thought it inadvisable to raise the substance of the Bonn discussions with the Fifteen. This discussion had heavily stressed the inter-relationship between the Harmel Exercise, the commitment of Alliance members to the Treaty after 1969, and the position of France. The view had been expressed that despite the risk of conflict with the French, the Rapporteurs must deal with controversial points in their papers, for example, the need to search for a common policy within the NATO area. The Secretary General said that the timing of the Harmel Exercise, the kind of a report to be issued, how to handle it in the Special Group and, later, at the December Ministerial Meeting, all must be considered with this central preoccupation in mind.

Thus he wished to draw the Representatives' attention to these considerations now in order that governments might reflect on them and that a common line of action might be prepared.

Mr. FARLEY (who had attended the Bonn meeting as the representative of the U.S. Rapporteur), in commenting on the Secretary General's remarks, noted that the Rapporteurs had agreed to reconvene on 11th October, 1967 because they wanted to hear from the sub-groups before taking positions which might tie their hands. He said that those who had been somewhat concerned about possible gaps or contradictions in the reports were now reassured. The important problems all seemingly would be adequately covered, although certain nuances might remain to be smoothed out.

Mr. FARLEY said that he considered the re-arrangement of the report's format as outlined by the Secretary General a useful possibility, but that the matter as yet had not been finally decided. As he understood it, Mr. SPAAK would draft the prospective outline, but it would not directly influence how the reports were to be written. He added that the U.S. was obliged to press for a more tentative conclusion at the moment because Under Secretary ROSTOW would presumably want to pass on the overall outline at the Special Group level.

As regards the French problem vis-à-vis other members, Mr. FARLEY expressed the view that the Scandinavians also might have trouble agreeing to language which committed them to participation in NATO after 1969, owing to domestic pressure for referendums on this question. Issues would unavoidably be raised in all groups which the French would find unpalatable. The Secretary General suggested that the French had agreed to the Harmel Exercise in the first place because they did not take it seriously, it did not appear to offer possibilities to create divisions within the Alliance, and the matter probably had not been put to President de GAULLE personally. Ambassador BOON added that the French had wished to avoid controversy at the December Ministerial Meeting, the last to be held in Paris, and in any case had seen no way at that time to make an issue of the Exercise proposal.

There followed a brief discussion of the points the Secretary General had initially raised. Ambassador de STAERCKE concurred that the Secretary General should make a report to the Fifteen along the lines proposed at next Wednesday's (26th July) Council meeting. Ambassador BOON commented that as long as the authority of the Special Group was protected, he could see no objection to the "re-arrangement" procedure suggested by the Rapporteurs. The Secretary General added that the result would be a mosaic, not a collective report from the Five.

Ambassador de STAERCKE commented that the French question was a delicate one and said he did not favour a specific post-1969 reaffirmation of the Treaty. The Secretary General remarked that since the French attitude toward the Alliance's future was uncertain it was a legitimate question whether or not it is wise to give them the opportunity to affirm or deny their continued adherence. He affirmed that Group members, if they wished, might annex reservations or objections to the Harmel Exercise.

Mr. MILLARD elicited general agreement that a meeting of the Special Group at a high political level in November might be the suitable forum to discuss how to terminate the Exercise without creating difficulties sufficient to force the French out of it. Ambassador BOON remarked that certain NATO members wish to avoid earlier commitments to procedures to which the French might object. Ambassador de STAERCKE said that, by the very nature of things, these members would at some stage be put on the spot. Mr. DROEGE asked whether problems would not inevitably arise at the sub-group level because of the stricture that reports must be agreed. The Secretary General answered that, although by the letter of the instructions sub-group reports were to be agreed, the practice has been to allow somewhat greater freedom in expressing minority views. Mr. FARLEY said that, in this connection, the more individualistic Rapporteurs seemed to be trimming their approach to harmonise more closely with the general view.

The Secretary General then concluded the discussion, stating that he would make a short oral report to the Council, convened as the Special Group, after other NAC business on Wednesday, 26th July, and that he would so inform delegations. His report would deal only with procedures and the general fact of substantive agreement among Rapporteurs without going into substance in any detail and particularly without touching on questions which might raise premature French reservations.

It was agreed that Mr. FARLEY would distribute to the Permanent Representatives of the Rapporteurs' countries Under Secretary KOHLER's paper presented to the Rapporteurs at Bonn, and that the Secretary General would circulate to the five Permanent Representatives his private record of the Bonn meeting.

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