

Private Meeting of Permanent Representatives:Harmel Exercise

Time: 12th July, 16.00 hours

the Secretary General's Conference Room.

In opening the meeting, the Secretary General said that he had three comments to make:

- (a) the meeting was not a meeting of the Council but simply a private meeting of permanent representatives for a personal exchange of views on the Harmel Exercise;
- (b) it had been called at the suggestion of Ambassador Hjorth-Nielsen, who wished to express certain thoughts regarding the work of the special group^{and} of the four sub-groups to date;
- (c) he (the Secretary General)^{had} welcomed this suggestion, because at the end of the following week he would be attending a meeting of Rapporteurs in Bonn. He would neither chair nor participate in any substantive way in this meeting, because he deemed it important as Chairman of the special group to maintain a position of impartiality, but he had agreed to attend the meeting, because he thought it would be interesting to hear what the Rapporteurs had to say. If Permanent Representatives wished him to say anything to the Rapporteurs on their behalf, he would be glad to do so, provided he had a clear mandate. He invited Ambassador Hjorth Nielsen to open the discussion.

Ambassador Hjorth Nielsen said that the Danish Government believed that the Harmel Exercise was potentially capable of producing very significant results. The Danish Authorities had been following the development of the Exercise very closely, because they believed that it would have an important bearing on the discussion that was bound to take place in Denmark in 1969 about the future of NATO. They hoped that the Exercise would present a positive picture and that, in particular, NATO would be shown to be a modern, flexible instrument for Atlantic policy. If successful, the Exercise should suggest improvements in the Organization. On the other hand, it would have to take into account the political realities of the moment. His Authorities had been rather disappointed in the way the study had developed to date. The procedure seemed somewhat chaotic, though this might be the necessary result of the attempt that had been made to divide the work into four parts, which tended to overlap. Progress in the four sub-groups

had been uneven, and there seemed to be a need for much better co-ordination. Though Sub-group I had worked best of the four sub-groups, it had not yet even begun to tackle the most important subject on its Agenda, the German problem. Sub-group II had made little progress, and the Danes had not been happy with the rather theoretical way in which they had conducted their work. In particular, the European and Atlantic aspects of the Alliance had not been brought out so clearly as his Authorities had hoped. In so far as sub-group III was concerned he was not in a position to pass judgement. The Rapporteur of sub-group IV had put forward a number of concrete suggestions, but his Delegation doubted that many Governments would be willing to subscribe to them and wondered whether it might not be useful to take political realities into account to a greater extent. He (Ambassador Hjorth Nielsen) feared that the special group might find itself in the fall saddled with fixed positions on the part of the Rapporteurs, which, moreover, might be overlapping and contradictory. Under these circumstances, it was questionable whether the special group would be in a position to present to Ministers in December the short concise report containing concrete proposals that the circumstances called for. He had two concrete suggestions to make:

which ones?

- (a) he hoped that countries would prevail upon Rapporteurs to recognise the relevant political realities; and
- (b) he hoped that delegations would make as many contributions to the Exercise as possible, and that these would be in written form.

In addition he would like to raise a question. In the 1956 Exercise, a very extensive series of hearings of high officials and experts from capitals had been held; a similar procedure had been agreed on for the present Exercise, with the proviso that the special group should specifically sanction such hearings, but thus far no hearings had been held or scheduled.

The Secretary General said that, in so far as he had been able to ascertain, the present schedule of the work of the four sub-groups was the following:

- (a) the draft report for sub-group I would be completed by the beginning of September and a meeting would be held on the 18th and 19th September;
- (b) the draft report of sub-group II would be completed at an unspecified date and a meeting held on 9th and 10th October;

- (c) the draft report of sub-group III would be completed by the end of July and a meeting held in Washington at the end of September;
- (d) a meeting of sub-group IV would be held on 14th September to consider a new draft report.

Commenting on the schedule outlined by the Secretary General, Mr. Farley said that it was his understanding, in so far as sub-group III was concerned, that the Rapporteur's draft report would not be circulated until mid-September and that the meeting of the sub-group would take place only early in October. He would engage to verify this information.

Ambassador Campbell said that his Authorities had come to conclusions almost identical with those of the Danish Authorities about the utility of the work of the sub-groups, the need for better co-ordination, and the end product of the Exercise. In his opinion, the work of the Exercise really boiled down to a study of East/West relations, with a special accent on the European security aspects of the matter, and a study of the rôle of the Alliance, if any, outside the Treaty area. Thus sub-group II could cover very little ground not covered by sub-group I or IV, and sub-group III might be considered as performing a task subsidiary to that of sub-group I. On the question of East/West relations, there was a large measure of agreement among the Allies; on the other hand, with respect to the rôle of the Alliance outside the Treaty area there were widely varying views. Nevertheless, the work of sub-group IV need not be divisive, provided Allies were willing to lower their sights as to the object of consultation as it related to the outside areas. His Netherlands colleague had said very perceptively that what was wrong with the Alliance was its lack of appeal to the young. He (Ambassador Campbell) felt that this was a phase of its lack of appeal to public opinion in general, a weakness which his Authorities looked to the Harmel Exercise to correct. The Canadian Foreign Minister, had recently outlined before the Canadian Senate what he viewed as appropriate tasks for NATO in the Seventies. These were:

- (a) NATO's combined military strength should be continued as a form of insurance against the possibility of a recurrence of Soviet hostility, but at the same time it must be stressed that the maintenance of such strength was not incompatible with the improvement of relations with Eastern Europe;
- (b) NATO should continue to be a stabilising force in Europe;
- (c) NATO should provide a security framework within which the

-4-

Federal Republic of Germany could continue to improve its relations with Eastern Europe;

- (d) NATO should constitute a framework for the orderly consideration of balanced force reductions;
- (e) NATO should provide a forum for consultation and the harmonisation of views on ~~the~~ relations with Eastern Europe.

Ambassador Birgi expressed the view that the special group was faced with two separate problems:

- (a) how to deal with the reports of the four sub-groups and
- (b) what should come out of the Exercise.

In the first instance, ~~the~~ study of the future tasks of the Alliance ~~should~~ should take place within the special group and should not be related to public opinion and considerations. Moreover, it was inappropriate at the present stage to indulge in too much speculation as to what was likely to come out of the Exercise or to try to judge the work of the Rapporteurs. The Allies had asked certain distinguished individuals, in whom they placed special trust, to say in all candour what they thought about the questions which had been referred to them, only when the special group had ^{made} their reports should an attempt be made to reconcile the views of Governments with those of the Rapporteurs.

Mr. Farley said that he was sympathetic to the views expressed by Ambassadors Hjorth Nielsen and Campbell. It seemed clear to him that the task was becoming increasingly complicated and it was not yet apparent how the special group would succeed in getting through the present, centrifugal phase of the Exercise and reaching the final, centripetal stage. Two of the four Rapporteurs had been acting in a highly personal manner, one of them ^{even} somewhat arbitrarily, and while this was perfectly proper, given their Terms of Reference, it made more difficult the road to the final stage. He wondered whether others envisaged the Rapporteurs ^{coordinating} ~~conducting~~ their work, even to the extent perhaps of combined drafting. If they were not to draft the final report, it was not too soon to think about who should do it. As matters were progressing it seemed likely that it would be November before all sub-group reports were in hand. Under the circumstances, his Authorities thought that a meeting of the special group should be held as soon as all draft reports were available. The Secretary General commented that, when the United States Delegation had, on an earlier

occasion, raised the question of holding a meeting of the special group, he had argued the inadvisability of putting too much pressure on the Rapporteurs and sub-groups. Nevertheless, this consideration would not prevent a meeting of the special group when the draft reports were ready.

Mr. Pesmazolgu said that his Authorities had somewhat different ideas from some of those that had been expressed as to the objective of the Exercise. In the Greek view, the task of the special group was not to resolve the complex of East/West relations or the German problem, for example, but to examine these problems and see what influence they had on the functioning of the Alliance and whether, as a result of such examination, Allied policy should be modified. The Rapporteurs had to come to grips with some very basic questions and, as a consequence, required a lot of time. If it were impossible for them to finish their task in time for a report to be submitted to Ministers in December, he did not see why the report should not be submitted as well to the Spring Ministerial meeting. It was no doubt true that the Alliance had little appeal for the young, but this seemed to him a failing ~~in~~ common to all Alliances. In the Greek view, it was up to leaders of the Alliance to guide public opinion in such a manner as to influence it in favour of the Alliance, rather than to allow youth to dictate to the leaders the policy they should follow.

Sir Bernard Burrows expressed the view that one of the difficulties with the Exercise was that some of the Rapporteurs were more governmental than others. While this was not necessarily bad, it made the sort of meeting scheduled for 21st July all the more necessary. It should be the object of that meeting to see how much common ground there was between Rapporteurs and to try and steer the four reports in such a way as to make them to the extent possible, consistent with each other and with political realities. It would probably be necessary for the special group to select from the four reports of the sub-groups those parts that seemed most valid and to put them together to make a coherent final report. As to the sort of results that should emerge from the Exercise, he agreed in general with the views expressed by Ambassador Campbell and specifically with the idea that the rôle the Alliance could and must play, above all, was that of shaping a settlement with the East. He would not, however, downgrade the rôle of the third sub-group to the same extent as Ambassador Campbell had done. In his view, given the need for relaxation of tension, it was important to study the means by which it could be brought about without downgrading the security of the Alliance, and this was the specific task of the

-6-

third sub-group. Governments should neither be surprised nor depressed if they should not find new and glamorous tasks for the Alliance. The basic tasks of the Alliance remained to enhance the security of the member nations and to improve East/West relations. From the public relations point of view, it was necessary only to determine how these basic tasks could best be presented to public opinion.

Ambassador de Staercke said that, he understood the arrangements for the completion of various phases of the Exercise somewhat differently from the Secretary General. As he had been given to believe, all Rapporteurs would be ready to hand in their reports during the last half of September. 2 - 3 weeks would be required to study them, and the sub-groups would meet in the first half of October to discuss the reports and consider the manner of their presentation to the special group. A meeting of the special group would then take place during the first two weeks of November in Brussels. He thought it was useful to have the reactions of apprehension that had been expressed in the course of the present meeting, but he urged that delegations also make positive contributions to the progress of the Exercise. It had been stated that the procedure was somewhat chaotic; he wondered whether it was possible to escape chaos in this sort of Exercise. In so far as the question of hearings was concerned, delegates should be aware that the present Exercise differed significantly from that of 1956. The present one being an interrogative Exercise lent itself to philosophical considerations and the opinions of high officials might be less important than they had been in 1956. Mr. Farley said that his Authorities had instructed him not to press for a mid-October meeting of the special group, but they nevertheless had doubts about the wisdom of postponing the meeting until the beginning of November.

Ambassador Boon thought that the main underlying question was ^{the Exercise} what/should and could ~~the Exercise~~ do for the Alliance. In this respect, he feared that the differences of opinion among the several members of the Alliance were more than mere nuances. Because of these differences, the result of the Exercise was likely to be the lowest common denominator and very far from what those nations with the most ambitious hopes for it wished. The Canadian Representative had said that the study of East/West relations would have a unifying effect, but he was not sure that such would be the case. In his view, detente was a fact only to a limited extent; to a large extent it was simply an illusion. It was important to avoid fostering the idea in the public opinion of the several Allies that detente had gone farther than, in fact, it had.

Ambassador Campbell had also said ~~the time~~ ^{that the attempt} to create a rôle for NATO outside the Treaty area was potentially divisive and that consequently Allies should lower their sights. Unfortunately, no matter how much Allies attempted to escape playing a rôle in the world outside the Treaty area, circumstances forced such a rôle upon them. The more Allies refused to involve themselves in questions concerning non-treaty areas, the more NATO would become an anachronism. If the present content of the Alliance were satisfactory, why had the Harmel Exercise been undertaken at all? The Exercise would only make sense if something were added to the present content, and he would leave open the question of what should be added.

Mr. Schricke observed that one had only to look at the Agenda of any meeting of the Political Advisers Committee or Council to realise that the custom of consultation existed, even though a theory of consultation might be lacking. He would not comment on whether or not detente was an illusion. Nevertheless he would point out that the thing most difficult for public opinion to understand was that the Alliance had a rôle in the process of detente. The word "Alliance" suggested the use of military force and the argument that NATO could be an instrument for detente seemed to most people, at least to the French, illogical.

Ambassador Campbell expressed the view that it might be useful to take up with Rapporteurs the question of their freedom of publication. The Exercise was reaching the stage at which Rapporteurs step out of the picture. The special group must be assured that Rapporteurs would publish nothing which might run counter to the final report of the special group. Ambassador de Staercke pointed out that rapporteurs had no right to publish anything in connection with the Exercise. The Secretary General agreed, adding that it might nevertheless be appropriate to mention the question casually to the Rapporteurs, so that there should be no possibility of misunderstanding. Ambassador Birgi pointed out that Governments should also refrain from expressing their views in advance of the special group report.

Mr. Oncken commented that he understood that it was the intention of the meeting to take place on 21st July to attempt to overcome the differences between Rapporteurs and to see how possible difficulties vis-a-vis the special group might be anticipated and overcome. He thought the Secretary General should report the results

of the present meeting to the Rapporteurs. He would point out to his colleagues that, as the meeting had been concerned with substantive questions, it might be regarded as having been, in effect, a meeting of the special group. In so far as the German problem was concerned, the German Rapporteur was fully aware of the opportunity offered him to deal with this problem and of the desirability of making certain points clear in this connection.

Ambassador Hjorth Nielsen thanked his colleagues for their views, which he found very helpful. He said that he would write to Mr. Spaak, stressing the point that the European and Atlantic aspects of the Alliance were fundamental in the Danish view and that every effort should be made to examine them as fully as possible in sub-group II.

In conclusion, the Secretary General said that, while the present meeting had undoubtedly anticipated some of the discussion that would take place in the special group, it could not be regarded as being a meeting of that group. If representatives agreed, he would have an analysis prepared of the discussion which had taken place and present it to the Rapporteurs in the most objective way. Of course the views of delegations would not be identified as such. He would discuss both procedure and substance with the Rapporteurs and ask them to co-ordinate their positions to the extent possible. With regard to procedure for the future, the only question was the date of the next meeting of the special group. He would suggest that, for the present, it be left at the beginning of November. It might be that before that date some Governments would wish to have another meeting of the same kind as the present one. Much had been said of the salient character of the work of sub-groups I and IV. He would point out, however, that the work of sub-group III had to do with the very basis of the Alliance and, consequently was also of great significance. In so far as the work of sub-group II was concerned, events were having a negative effect on some of the possibilities of forming a European caucus, and consequently the work of that sub-group was becoming increasingly complicated. He thought it useful to keep in mind the question raised by Ambassador Hjorth Nielsen of having hearings in connection with the Exercise. As to the final presentation of the report, this question might be put aside for the moment. He would agree with the suggestion that the more papers delegations put forward the better. With regard to the warnings that had been made about observing political realities, he would note the difficulty that there was no general agreement as to what the realities were.

13/7/62 y