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The first Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council to be held at the new Brussels headquarters ended on 14th December, 1967.

2. Ministers approved the report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance, prepared in conformity with the decisions taken on 16th December, 1966 on the initiative of the Belgian Foreign Minister. The report is annexed to this communiqué.

3. The Council examined developments in the international situation since their last meeting. Ministers reviewed the efforts made by their governments to improve East/West relations and noted the extensive bilateral contacts made in recent months. They expressed the hope that these efforts might lead to progress in the settlement of outstanding European problems. Ministers also discussed long-range policy questions, especially those covered in the report on Future Tasks of the Alliance.

4. The Council discussed proposals presented by the "North Atlantic Assembly" of Parliamentarians at their recent meeting for closer co-operation between themselves and the Council. The Secretary General was authorised to study ways and means for this purpose and to submit suggestions to the Council.

5. Ministers emphasised the importance of promoting progress in disarmament and arms control, including concrete measures to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. They reaffirmed their view that, if conditions permit, a balanced reduction of forces on both sides could constitute a significant step towards security in Europe.

-2-

6. The Council recalled the views expressed in the declaration on Germany issued on 16th December, 1966. Ministers emphasised that the peaceful settlement of the German question on a basis which would take account of the German people's fundamental right to re-unification was an essential factor for a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe. In reviewing the present state of the German question, Ministers were informed by their German colleague about his Government's increased efforts to improve relations with Eastern European countries and to promote East/West détente. He emphasised that it was in this spirit that his Government was also trying to handle the problems arising from the division of Germany. Considering the difficulties of reaching an early solution, Ministers agreed that at present the only realistic possibility for progress remained the step-by-step approach advocated and applied by the Federal Government. With regard to Berlin, the Ministers confirmed their declaration of 16th December, 1958.

7. Ministers noted the Secretary General's report on his "Watching Brief" and invited him to continue his activities in this sphere. They expressed their appreciation of the important rôle played by the Secretary General in reducing the recent crisis concerning Cyprus and Greek-Turkish relations. They expressed satisfaction with the agreement between Turkey and Greece on the steps being taken to resolve the crisis, taking advantage, as appropriate, of the actions of the United Nations. They reaffirmed their conviction that Turkey and Greece should, in the spirit of the solidarity of the Alliance, continue their efforts to facilitate a peaceful and rapid solution of the Cyprus problem.

8. Ministers considered the report on Technological Co-operation prepared in response to the Resolution adopted on 14th June, 1967 on the initiative of the Foreign Minister of Italy. They invited the Council in Permanent Session assisted by competent organs of the Alliance to continue its studies on the Alliance's rôle in the field of technology, including the possibilities for applying defence technology to civil needs. The aim is to encourage co-operation between member countries and to contribute towards narrowing the technological disparities which may exist between these countries. Ministers also invited the Council in Permanent Session to develop the most efficient and economical ways for co-ordinating the various activities of the Alliance in the field of defence technology.

-2-

9. Ministers considered and approved a report on Civil Emergency Planning. Stressing the vital importance of such planning, they noted the progress which had been achieved and the tasks which remained to be accomplished.

10. Ministers met as the Defence Planning Committee on 12th December 1967, to review the work accomplished since their previous meeting on 9th May 1967, and to give directions for future work.

11. They agreed that one of the foundations for achieving an improvement in East/West relations and a peaceful settlement in Europe must be NATO's continuing military strength and capability to deter aggression. In this connection they noted that the Soviet Union continues to expend increasing resources upon its powerful military forces and is developing types of forces designed to enable it to achieve a significant military presence in other parts of the world. They also observed that during the past year there has been a marked expansion in Soviet forces in the Mediterranean.

12. Ministers recalled that at their previous meeting they had given political, strategic, and economic guidance to the NATO Military Authorities for the development of an up-to-date strategic concept and an up-to-date five-year force plan covering the period up to the end of 1972. They adopted the revised strategic concept submitted by the Military Committee following the first comprehensive review of NATO's strategy since 1956. This concept, which adapts NATO's strategy to current political, military, and technological developments, is based upon a flexible and balanced range of appropriate responses, conventional and nuclear, to all levels of aggression or threats of aggression. These responses, subject to appropriate political control, are designed, first to deter aggression and thus preserve peace; but, should aggression unhappily occur, to maintain the security and integrity of the North Atlantic Treaty area within the concept of forward defence.

13. Ministers also noted the force commitments undertaken by member nations for the year 1968, and for the first time adopted a five-year NATO force plan, covering the period 1968-1972. They gave directions for the development in 1968 of a force plan for the period 1969-1973 in accordance with the procedures for five-year rolling planning adopted in December 1966.

14. Ministers devoted particular attention to the security of the flank regions of Allied Command Europe.

15. They decided to transform the "MATCHMAKER" Naval Training Squadron into a Standing Naval Force Atlantic of destroyer-type ships. This force, continuously operational, will enhance existing co-operation between the naval forces of member countries.

16. France did not take part in the discussions referred to in paragraphs 10 to 15 and did not associate herself with the corresponding decisions.

17. The regular Spring Ministerial Meeting for 1968 will be held in Reykjavik.

ANNEX to
COMMUNIQUE
ML(67)3

FUTURE TASKS OF THE ALLIANCE

Report of the Council

A year ago, on the initiative of the Foreign Minister of Belgium, the governments of the fifteen nations of the Alliance resolved to "study the future tasks which face the Alliance, and its procedures for fulfilling them in order to strengthen the Alliance as a factor for durable peace". The present report sets forth the general tenor and main principles emerging from this examination of the future tasks of the Alliance.

2. Studies were undertaken by Messrs. Schütz, Watson, Spaak, Kohler and Patijn. The Council wishes to express its appreciation and thanks to these eminent personalities for their efforts and for the analyses they produced.

3. The exercise has shown that the Alliance is a dynamic and vigorous organization which is constantly adapting itself to changing conditions. It also has shown that its future tasks can be handled within the terms of the Treaty by building on the methods and procedures which have proved their value over many years.

4. Since the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in 1949 the international situation has changed significantly and the political tasks of the Alliance have assumed a new dimension. Amongst other developments, the Alliance has played a major part in stopping Communist expansion in Europe; the USSR has become one of the two world super powers but the Communist world is no longer monolithic; the Soviet doctrine of "peaceful co-existence" has changed the nature of the confrontation with the West but not the basic problems. Although the disparity between the power of the United States and that of the European states remains, Europe has recovered and is on its way towards unity. The process of decolonisation has transformed European relations with the rest of the world; at the same time, major problems have arisen in the relations between developed and developing countries.

5. The Atlantic Alliance has two main functions. Its first function is to maintain adequate military strength and political solidarity to deter aggression and other forms of pressure and to defend the territory of member countries if aggression should occur. Since its inception, the Alliance has successfully fulfilled this task. But the possibility of a crisis **cannot be excluded as long as the central political issues in Europe, first and foremost the German Question, remain unsolved.** Moreover, the situation of instability and uncertainty still precludes a balanced reduction of military forces. Under

-2-

these conditions, the Allies will maintain as necessary, a suitable military capability to assure the balance of forces, thereby creating a climate of stability, security and confidence.

In this climate the Alliance can carry out its second function, to pursue the search for progress towards a more stable relationship in which the underlying political issues can be solved. Military security and a policy of détente are not contradictory but complementary. Collective defence is a stabilising factor in world politics. It is the necessary condition for effective policies directed towards a greater relaxation of tensions. The way to peace and stability in Europe rests in particular on the use of the Alliance constructively in the interest of détente. The participation of the USSR and the USA will be necessary to achieve a settlement of the political problems in Europe.

6. From the beginning the Atlantic Alliance has been a co-operative grouping of states sharing the same ideals and with a high degree of common interest. Their cohesion and solidarity provide an element of stability within the Atlantic area.

7. As sovereign states the Allies are not obliged to subordinate their policies to collective decision. The Alliance affords an effective forum and clearing house for the exchange of information and views; thus, each of the Allies can decide his policy in the light of close knowledge of each others' problems and objectives. To this end the practice of frank and timely consultations needs to be deepened and improved. Each Ally should play its full part in promoting an improvement in relations with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe, bearing in mind that the pursuit of détente must not be allowed to split the Alliance. The chances of success will clearly be greatest if the Allies remain on parallel courses, especially in matters of close concern to them all; their actions will thus be all the more effective.

8. No peaceful order in Europe is possible without a major effort by all concerned. The evolution of Soviet and East European policies gives ground for hope that those governments may eventually come to recognise the advantages to them of collaborating in working towards a peaceful settlement. But no final and stable settlement in Europe is possible without a solution of the German question which lies at the heart of present tensions in Europe. Any such settlement must end the unnatural barriers between Eastern and Western Europe, which are most clearly and cruelly manifested in the division of Germany.

9. Accordingly the Allies are resolved to direct their energies to this purpose by realistic measures designed to further a détente in East-West relations. The relaxation of tensions is not the final goal but is part of a long-term process to promote better relations and to foster a European settlement. The ultimate political purpose of the Alliance is to achieve a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe accompanied by appropriate security guarantees.

10. Currently, the development of contacts between the countries of Western and Eastern Europe is now mainly on a bilateral basis. Certain subjects, of course, require by their very nature, a multilateral solution.

11. The problem of German reunification and its relationship to a European settlement has normally been dealt with in exchanges between the Soviet Union and the three Western powers having special responsibilities in this field. In the preparation of such exchanges the Federal Republic of Germany has regularly joined the three Western powers in order to reach a common position. The other Allies will continue to have their views considered in timely discussions among the Allies about Western policy on this subject, without in any way impairing the special responsibilities in question.

12. The Allies will examine and review suitable policies designed to achieve a just and stable order in Europe, to overcome the division of Germany and to foster European security. This will be part of a process of active and constant preparation for the time when fruitful discussions of these complex questions may be possible bilaterally or multilaterally between Eastern and Western nations.

-4-

13. The Allies are studying disarmament and practical arms control measures, including the possibility of balanced force reductions. These studies will be intensified. Their active pursuit reflects the will of the Allies to work for an effective détente with the East.

14. The Allies will examine with particular attention the defence problems of the exposed areas e.g. the South-Eastern flank. In this respect the current situation in the Mediterranean presents special problems, bearing in mind that the current crisis in the Middle-East falls within the responsibilities of the United Nations.

15. The North Atlantic Treaty area cannot be treated in isolation from the rest of the world. Crises and conflicts arising outside the area may impair its security either directly or by affecting the global balance. Allied countries contribute individually within the United Nations and other international organisations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the solution of important international problems. In accordance with established usage the Allies or such of them as wish to do so will also continue to consult on such problems without commitment and as the case may demand.

16. In the light of these findings, the Ministers directed the Council in permanent session to carry out, in the years ahead, the detailed follow-up resulting from this study. This will be done either by intensifying work already in hand or by activating highly specialized studies by more systematic use of experts and officials sent from capitals.

17. Ministers found that the study by the Special Group confirmed the importance of the role which the Alliance is called upon to play during the coming years in the promotion of détente and the strengthening of peace. Since significant problems have not yet been examined in all their aspects, and other problems of no less significance which have arisen from the latest political and strategic developments have still to be examined, the Ministers have directed the Permanent Representatives to put in hand the study of these problems without delay, following such procedures as shall be deemed most appropriate by the Council in permanent session, in order to enable further reports to be subsequently submitted to the Council in Ministerial Session.