

UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION
TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

PARIS XVIe

18 April 1967

Dear Secretary General,

It seems to me that as Secretary General of this Organisation you must surely have some guidance to offer to the rapporteurs in their work. In particular, your direct experience of the Soviet Union when you were Ambassador there, and your knowledge of England, put you in an unusually favourable position to give me some advice on East-West relations and the part this Alliance should play in the exploitation of the détente. In any case my Ministers, and of course I personally, would like to see your thinking reflected in the report which Herr Schütz and I will be putting up to you.

I spoke about this to Mr. Chapman yesterday. He tells me that in fact you do have some views and suggestions, and are thinking of putting these on paper for us. That would certainly be most helpful. But if you prefer, I am naturally very ready to come and hear them orally at a convenient time. In any case, as our work progresses I hope it will be possible to consult you about it.

I also have a particular question on which I should be glad of your help. This concerns the consultation of other groups. We in London would like at the appropriate stage to consult the parliamentarians associated with this Organisation. It also seems desirable to ask certain distinguished scholars and academic study groups to give us the fruits of their experience. The advice of the students of Eastern Europe

Signor Manlio Brosio,
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Paris.

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(including perhaps men like George Kennan) will be particularly helpful in establishing the intention of the Soviet and East European governments, their areas of doubt and hesitation, and the compromises they may be induced to accept. The advice of the parliamentarians will be more valuable in the questions dealing with theaggiornamento of our Alliance to take advantage of a changing situation. It has also been suggested that certain commercial firms have considerable experience in dealing with Eastern Europe, and may have valuable advice to offer about the hopes and needs of those governments and peoples. All these opinions would be regarded as confidential.

These consultations seem to my government, and to some others, likely to yield valuable results in themselves, without in any way committing us to accept the various views expressed; and also to be useful when explaining to public opinion in our countries what we have been doing. It is difficult for the public to believe that all wisdom is to be found inside governments, and that others who have devoted time and effort to studying these problems have nothing to contribute. It will give added weight to the search for new ideas and new approaches if the public can be told, in general terms, that outside opinions have been obtained and carefully considered.

I am not sure what authority is needed for rapporteurs to act in this sense, or to ask national representatives to do so in their respective countries. If a specific resolution of the special group is necessary, there may be a considerable delay before we can ask academic bodies and figures to work out their replies. Soon they will be dispersing for the

summer. I also hope that this matter of consulting outside opinion is not subject to the necessity for unanimity: though of course it will only be possible to consult outsiders in those member countries of the Alliance whose governments agree.

I would hope to have some preliminary advice from you on this matter at lunch this afternoon.

Yours sincerely

J.H.A. Watson

(J.H.A. Watson)

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4