

Thurman

Mr. Chairman,

We are very grateful to the Foreign Minister of Belgium for taking personally part in this meeting and for initiating the discussions on the future tasks of the Alliance.

What I am going to say will be more or less a "paraphrase" of what he said in his remarkable opening speech both from the point of view of procedure and from the substance.

2. I would like to stress that my Delegation had given full support to the resolution adopted in December 1966 for studying the future tasks of the Alliance. We consider this exercise as a further step in our constant efforts within the Alliance to adapt our Organisation and our cooperation to changing circumstances in order to maintain our solidarity and cohesion as well as the vitality of the Atlantic Alliance. We equally consider that what we are trying to do is part of a continuous process. In 1956, the Council had made a similar attempt and had approved the report of the Committee of Three. We know by experience how much what we are doing since then on the basis of this report was useful and necessary and how much it has contributed to our solidarity. This report continues as a framework of our activities and cooperation in several fields, notably in the field of political consultation which, in view of the developments in the world situation and in Europe, has acquired today a greater importance and significance. We have, likewise, in the meantime, taken many steps for improving and streamlining our cooperation in the field of defense.

3. At present, the problem is to make a general analysis of the political events which have occurred since the Treaty was signed, to ascertain their influence on the

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Alliance and to explore ways of adapting the Alliance to its tasks in the future. There is no need to stress that we firmly believe in the continuous necessity of the alliance and in its liveliness.

4. We would like to stress that we agree with the twin concepts of the purposes of the Alliance. The task of the Alliance is on the one hand to provide effective protection for our security by adequate deterrent and defense, and on the other to achieve a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe guaranteed by a balanced and viable system of European security.

5. We consider that the Alliance cannot carry out its mission without striving to attain both of these objectives. There can be no détente and no political settlement in Europe in an environment of insecurity. Similarly there can be no effective defensive alliance without a political aim and the determination to achieve this aim. These two purposes are not contradictory but indissolubly linked.

6. Détente to a very large extent is an indication of NATO's sobering effects upon the Soviets. It is liable to give way to a situation of extreme instability and danger if the military structure and the solidarity of the Alliance is weakened. If the threats to Europe look now to be vague and of lesser concern to some members of the Alliance than to others it has to be admitted that this is mainly due to the stability which the collective defense produced in Europe.

7. It is an established fact that the military capability of the Soviet Union has increased substantially during the last four years. They have not reduced their forces in Eastern Europe. The role of their forces is to maintain their grip on Eastern Europe and create favourable political situations elsewhere, which may, if opportune militarily exploited.

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8. There is no evidence that Soviet interests go beyond the maintenance of status quo in Europe to any form of settlement that the West could accept. From the existing evidence it could be safely assumed that what the Russians would like is to create conditions that would lead to the dissolution of the Alliances while they maintain status quo in Eastern Europe.

Since the States of Soviet controlled Eastern Europe are not free to terminate of their own accord the military and ideologic dominance of the Soviet Union, this situation would necessarily entail Soviet predominance in Europe. Therefore, the abandonment of NATO would terminate the Alliance of the Western Europe with United States while the Soviet would keep theirs intact.

9. Such a change in the power structure is bound to influence Soviet policy and Soviet aspirations. Status quo in the East and a weakening in the West will ultimately lead to the sort of situation which NATO tried to avoid in 1948-49.

Such a situation would not only create a vacuum in Europe that bilateral Alliances between European States and America would not be able to fill, but also irresistibly attract the intervention of the Soviets.

10. It is for these reasons that our first concern should be to keep our Alliance strong. Our collective security through defense and deterrence should be maintained. This requires adequate military capabilities, including strategic nuclear forces, tactical nuclear forces, and conventional forces which in turn necessitate an effective and workable military integration.

11. If the long term aim of the Alliance is to achieve a just and lasting peace in Europe, we must make sure that détente serves this long term aim and contribute to the elimination of barriers which divide Europe and Germany within a system of European security.

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12. We cannot achieve this aim by unilateral initiative and through and uncoordinated policy. The reason is simply that the objectives of the Soviet Government and of the Eastern European countries are different from ours. And that in order to carry out these objectives they have a common policy. Unilateral initiatives therefore will weaken our cohesion and allow the Soviet Union and its allies to influence the evolution in Europe so as to facilitate the attainment of their goals. If our efforts and activities are dispersed and uncoordinated the result would be not only to weaken the détente in Europe but even the cohesion of the Alliance and our security. It is only through the harmonization of our policies and a clear concept of the settlement we are trying to reach, that we can strengthen the détente and create conditions in which we can gradually arrive at an agreement on vital East-West issues. Therefore we must take a special care for studying among ourselves problems related to a general settlement in Europe and a European security system and the approaches to be made in East West negotiations.

13. In considering inter allied relations we should also bear in mind, of course, the necessity to avoid disputes between member countries and to settle them as quickly as possible when they arise. It is unconceivable that we can harmonize our policies with regard to crucial issues if we are divided by conflicts. It is for this reason that the report of the Committee of Three include a section on the peaceful settlement of inter member disputes. In looking towards the future we should take into account this problem and consider if necessary the means of strengthening our procedures for dealing with disputes of this kind.

14. The question of putting forward concrete arms control measures should be carefully examined within the Alliance. This is important not only from the point of view of détente but also from the point of view of security. We agree that a machinery should be established for the continuous examination and evaluation of all the aspects of this question. We should be aware of

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the fact that any proposal in this field will have political and military repercussion not only within the framework of Europe but also from the angle of the balance of forces in regions adjacent to NATO area. Therefore we support the idea that all problems relating to disarmament and arms control should be carefully and continuously examined with a view of reaching a common attitude before any proposal or suggestion is formulated.

15. The situation in the Mediterranean had been mentioned. Indeed recently the need for examining closely some events which affect the flanks of NATO have become more obvious. We will welcome a full discussion of the political and military implications of these events, bearing always in mind the necessity to avoid giving the impression that NATO is intervening directly.

16. As to the question of consultation on developments outside the NATO area, we believe that our objectives should be the identification as far as possible of the common interest of member countries. The degree of consultation and harmonization might, of course, vary according to the degree in which such developments are liable to affect the security of NATO.

17. It might perhaps be advisable to establish certain groups to study developments outside the NATO area. But even if we agree on this, we think that these groups should be open-ended and should not be for public knowledge.