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MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

held on

THURSDAY, 2ND MAY, 1957

at the

STADTHALLE, BAD GODESBERG

COMPTE RENDU

de la

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de la

SESSION MINISTERIELLE DU CONSEIL

tenue le

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au

STADTHALLE, BAD GODESBERG

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Chancellor ADENAUER

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen, I bid you a sincere welcome to Bonn on behalf of the Federal Government. I also welcome the decision of the Atlantic Council to resume the old practice of holding Ministers' Conferences in the various capitals of the Allied countries, and I take particular pleasure in the fact that the choice of meeting place has this time fallen on Bonn. I think I may take your visit as an indication that in dealing with your problems, your tasks, you are taking into consideration the position of the Federal Republic too. Apart from that, your visit is certain to contribute to heightening the interest of the people of this Federal Republic in the tasks and problems of the Atlantic Alliance.

The NATO Ministers' Conference is taking place at a time marked by threatening notes and statements from the Soviet Union to several of the partners of the Atlantic Alliance.

You know that the decision we took two years ago to join NATO met with a large amount of criticism, and still does, especially on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The Federal Government and the majority of the Bundestag stand by that decision as firmly as ever.

I should like to give you a brief resumé of the reasons for this. The leading Soviet statesmen seize every opportunity to advise people to proceed from realities. Very well then - let us have a look at the realities of our age.

It is only too real a fact that the Soviet Union has been maintaining, since 1945, five million men, with only slight fluctuations, under arms, that twenty-two divisions are stationed in the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany with approximately 7,500 modern tanks - about 3,500 more than two years ago. The only thing I can see in this reality is a constant, latent threat, and I am convinced that any statesman with a sense of responsibility would also at any other time have regarded such an immense military force in a neighbouring country as a threatening reality for his own country. I could add to the figures I just mentioned further impressive statistics on the Soviet air force or submarine fleet, or the Soviet potential in atom bombs - and in the maintenance of a force such as this, Gentlemen, I see a very grave reality.

The second reality is that the Soviet leaders have not relinquished their belief in their mission, viz: to make the world a Communist world. They have said so in a large number of speeches. And still they teach in the Soviet Union, the works of Lenin, who said:

"If the proletariat wages a war to strengthen or spread Communism, then it is justified, and it is a Holy War."

And then again:

"We Marxists always were, and always shall be in favour of a revolutionary war against counter-revolutionary peoples."

Chancellor ADENAUER (Contd.)

We are still waiting for the Soviet leaders to dissociate themselves from such doctrines. It is true that certain Soviet leaders, during the XXth Party Congress, said that, under certain circumstances, this process of subjecting other countries could also be carried out by peaceful methods. They gave us examples of countries into which communism has been introduced in this "peaceful" way, viz. the Baltic States and Czechoslovakia. However, the Soviet forces marched into the Baltic States without meeting any resistance worth mentioning; and the decisive factor in the Czechoslovakian putsch - on the word of communist party literature itself - was the participation of Soviet troops. This process, then, is peaceful only if the people to be subjected offer no resistance!

If, however, a nation defends itself, if it rises against the communist oppressor, then the communist régime is re-established with the aid of tanks and bloodshed and terror. Gentlemen, even if the Soviet Union should follow up its present intimidation campaign with a good-will offensive and bland smiles - we are no more able to forget the example that was set in Hungary than we can forget the seventeenth of June 1953 and what happened then in the Soviet Zone of Germany.

The third reality: To find this one, we need only look at our atlases and history books. Where were the boundaries of the Soviet Union in 1939 - where are they now? In 1940, the sickle cut down Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The attack on Finland misfired. At the end of the war, the Soviet Union, which in former times used to brand any territorial gain as imperialism, annexed parts of Finland, Poland, Roumania, Czechoslovakia, and East Prussia. She penetrated ever further westwards. Wherever Soviet forces were stationed, communist Governments were formed: in Poland, Roumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet-occupied Zone of Germany. There, Gentlemen, you have the third reality.

Berlin was earmarked for 1948. The Soviet occupying power imposed a blockade on the Western sectors, and no gift of prophecy was needed to discern that Berlin was to be the Soviet Union's next victim in her westward march. But this time the Western Powers called a halt. Supplies were sent into Berlin by air, and in April 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty was signed. It was made clear to the Soviet Union - and this is laid down in Articles 5 and 6 of the NATO Treaty - that any attack on a member State or on Western occupation forces and therewith on Berlin, too, would be regarded as an attack on NATO itself. One month after NATO was founded, the Soviet Union lifted the blockade of Berlin. Since then, the sphere of Soviet power has shown no further increase. There you have the fourth reality.

Surely nobody is so naive as to consider it a pure coincidence that from the very moment when NATO was founded Bolshevism ceased to meet with success in the West. I, at any rate, am convinced that we owe the peace and security in which we have carried out the reconstruction of Europe and of the Federal Republic, to the shield of NATO. And it is only under the protection of that shield that the development was - and is - possible which, via the Coal and Steel Community and the OEEC, will lead to the Common Market and Euratom.

Chancellor ADENAUER - (Contd.)

The firm attitude taken by NATO has convinced the Soviet Union that any further advance would entail military countermeasures by the Atlantic Alliance.

Two years ago, the Federal Republic acceded to the North Atlantic Treaty. We undertook to set up our own forces to defend our territory and the West because we considered it a matter of axiom that the Federal Republic, as a sovereign State, should contribute to the common defence of her territory and the West with her own forces.

Here and there, one hears the opinion that NATO is impotent against the large number of Soviet divisions. That opinion, Gentlemen, is erroneous. Assuredly, NATO is an unserviceable instrument for a war of aggression. But it is not meant to be an instrument of attack; it is an instrument of defence against attack, and it fulfils that task in full measure. I need only point to the size of the potential that is indispensable to waging a modern war and on which our defensive power is founded: fifteen nations with a total population of 450 million have joined together in NATO. The domain of the NATO countries accounts for more than two thirds of world steel production, about two thirds of the world's coal and electricity, and far above half the world's crude oil production.

These facts imbue us with faith and assurance. I had a proposal made in London, at the last Conference of Western European Union, that our economic and defence potential be reviewed again, and I am grateful to NATO for having seconded that proposal. It is my conviction that the result of this inquiry, too, will strengthen still further our assurance and our faith in our defensive power.

The Federal Government is prepared to make its full contribution. We must strengthen our security and ward off the apocalyptic fate of a modern war. That a modern atomic war would bring an apocalyptic fate not only on the population of this Federal Republic and the West, but upon the whole of mankind, including the peoples of the Soviet Bloc, we all know.

It is with growing concern that we observe the attitude of the Soviet Government to this weightiest of all problems with which history has confronted our generation. I am afraid the leaders of the Soviet Union still fail to see it in all its immensity. How else can I explain their calling our attention and that of several of our Allies with seeming concern, but in truth in a threatening manner, to the consequences of such a war, while at the same time omitting to enlighten their own people, placating them instead with the untrue assertion that a third world war could only lead to the annihilation of the bourgeois world and the victory of communism.

Chancellor ADENAUER - (Contd.)

As you know, the Government of the Soviet Union considered it expedient, shortly after carrying out a series of extremely far-reaching nuclear weapon tests, to draw the attention of this Federal Republic, also, to the dangers of an atomic war. In its note to the Federal Republic, however, it deliberately ignores certain facts:

- (1) that such a war can be unleashed only by a Soviet attack;
- (2) that I had already had the Soviet Government informed that the Federal Government neither possesses atomic weapons nor has ever expressed any desire for atomic equipment; and
- (3) that in the Protocols of 1954 to the Brussels Treaty, the Federal Republic has voluntarily undertaken not to produce atomic, bacteriological, or chemical weapons. She has subjected herself voluntarily to a strict, permanent control in this field, and over and above this, to controls in the field of certain conventional weapons as, for instance, heavy bombers and long-range guided missiles.

Let the Soviet Union, which, despite that undertaking, allegedly feels threatened by our attitude, assume the same obligation as we did in 1954. I am convinced that every nation would follow her example, and the danger of an atomic war would be a thing of the past. But the Soviet Union is not prepared to do that. On the contrary, she brings to naught every disarmament proposal made by the West, merely because she does not want to agree to inspection and control of armaments. Years ago, I was uttering warnings against the dangers inherent in the development of atomic weapons, and today, I reiterate this serious warning to the Soviet leaders:

"If your concern about the danger of an atomic war is serious, then agree to the worldwide, effective international control of atomic disarmament proposed by the West. Do **stop** resisting such international control."

Gentlemen, as you know, the Federal Republic has, apart from the questions I have just mentioned, questions which bring uneasiness to all mankind, a very special interest, viz. the reunification of Germany.

However much we long for the day on which the Soviet Union raises the barrier at present separating us from our compatriots in the Soviet Zone, there is a two fold necessity on which we must insist: a reunited Germany must be free, and it must have security so that the condition today prevailing in the Soviet Zone may not be imposed throughout the whole of Germany by attack or threat.

May I express my gratitude for the understanding that you have shown - and are still showing - for the question of reunification. It is indeed not merely a German problem. The elimination of the line dividing Germany would be a decisive contribution to the easing of tension in Europe and throughout the world.

Just a few words on the proposals that have been made to make Germany neutral. Those proposals may be well meant, but they do not go to the root of the evil. We are not in any way easing tension by neutralising Germany. In this age of supersonic speed and dwindling distances, a neutral zone in the heart of Europe would seem to be to serve no purpose. Regional tensions may well be alleviated by a demilitarized zone. But it is not regional differences or friction between neighbouring States that are the root and cause of the present tension. We all know that the antagonism causing us so much unrest embraces whole continents, in fact, half the globe. A condition of this kind cannot be eliminated by local measures. A neutral Germany has the best prospect, in case of war, of becoming a battlefield.

They say that our membership of NATO is rendering the reunification of Germany more difficult. I must emphatically repudiate that assertion as untrue. As proof, I refer to Mr. Khrushchev and to the news letter published by the Soviet Embassy here, entitled "Soviet Union heute", No.12 of 20th April.

When I was in Moscow, Mr. Khrushchev said to me, "We did not take a favourable view of your joining NATO, but you have joined it, and we are realists and accept the fact."

And in the news letter entitled "Soviet Union heute" of 20th April, published by the Soviet Embassy in Bonn, it is said that the Soviet Union cannot desire the separation of the Federal Republic from the Western Community, since such a course would not reduce tension, but increase it.

Let me conclude my political remarks with a repeated emphatic appeal to the Soviet Union: it lies in the hands of the Soviet Union alone to bring peace to the world; she need only agree to the controlled atomic disarmament that has been proposed, and the whole world could devote itself to works of peace.

I should not like to close this address without thanking the Secretary General of NATO, Lord Ismay, who will, within a few days, be retiring from office. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, as it stands today, is largely due to his indefatigable work, his impartial attitude, his conciliatory activities, and his successful efforts to bring about close co-operation between the military and civilian agencies of our Alliance. We think we are entitled to hope that his successor, M. Paul Henri Spaak, will continue this good work with his characteristic energy.

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen, I wish you success at your meeting in Bonn, and I hope that its results will contribute to the further strengthening of our Alliance and thus to securing the peace.

M. MARTINO

Messieurs, mon premier devoir consiste à exprimer un sentiment que, tous, j'en suis sûr, nous ressentons en ce moment : dire merci à M. le Chancelier Adenauer. Au nom du peuple allemand, il nous a accueillis en faisant preuve d'une courtoisie qui marche de pair avec la cordialité, et dans les paroles qui viennent d'être prononcées, nous avons senti la participation vivante de l'Allemagne démocratique aux idéaux pour lesquels nous nous trouvons ici réunis.

Cette session du Conseil revêt une signification particulière dans l'histoire de l'Alliance atlantique. Notre convocation dans cette ville, qui a lieu en application de la suggestion avancée par le Comité des Trois Ministres de tenir de temps à autre des réunions mobiles de ce genre afin de démontrer que le centre vivant de l'Alliance réside dans chacun des pays membres, symbolise deux faits importants et encourageants : en premier lieu, le renforcement de notre Alliance par la mise en valeur de son contenu politique, que nous tous désirons et poursuivons; en second lieu, le développement de notre Alliance par une participation de plus en plus active de l'Allemagne démocratique.

Nous souhaitons du fond du coeur que l'Allemagne démocratique déjà rétablie dans l'exercice de ses responsabilités internationales, puisse aussi, au plus tôt, être rétablie dans son unité légitime par l'exercice de la liberté de décision de son peuple et dans un cadre de concorde et de compréhension réciproque.

Rien ne pourrait documenter avec une évidence égale les progrès qu'a accomplis la communauté des peuples démocratiques de l'Europe dans son effort pour éloigner la guerre. La consolidation et l'élargissement de l'OTAN - dont la réunion d'aujourd'hui constitue une manifestation frappante - donnent la preuve que les peuples de l'Europe démocratique ont su, dans leurs rapports réciproques, faire table rase des causes principales de friction. Les voici solidaires, désormais, dans la défense, non seulement de leur intégrité physique, mais aussi de leur âme commune, ce fruit d'une histoire millénaire, qui les porte à rechercher le progrès politique et social de tous dans la paix et dans la liberté. Sur le sol de cette Europe si longtemps déchirée, pour la première fois peut-être dans l'histoire du monde, nous donnons l'exemple d'une alliance qui, depuis huit ans, ne laisse pas d'imposer des sacrifices matériels aux peuples pour en consacrer l'union en vue de la paix. Le fait historique de cette paix, toujours menacée et toujours sauve, dément à lui seul les interprétations captieuses auxquelles s'est trouvée en butte notre Alliance atlantique. Les résultats du présent nous dictent notre programme pour l'avenir : sauver la paix, sans renoncer à la liberté, sans renier la justice.

Plus de dix ans se sont écoulés depuis la fin de la guerre et nous voici dans la neuvième année de notre Alliance. Nous pouvons regarder en arrière avec satisfaction, en envisageant ce que nous avons su éviter grâce à notre volonté ferme; et nous sommes tout à fait conscients de ce que nous devons encore faire pour avancer vers notre objectif commun : un monde plus uni encore par sa fidélité à la loi du respect mutuel, un monde où la violence sera considérée comme un crime aussi bien dans l'ordre national que dans

M. MARTINO (suite)

l'ordre international, ou toutes les forces s'orientent sans arrêt vers la collaboration réciproque.

Que nous demande-t-on, au fait ? D'abord, de rester unis. Il faut élargir, partant, la sphère de cette unité et en renforcer le contenu. Il nous serait impossible de sauvegarder notre potentiel militaire, qui a une fonction exclusivement défensive et qui exige, à la fois, ténacité, constance, vigilance, si nous laissons surgir ou subsister entre nous des fractures, allant au-delà de désaccords marginaux ou secondaires. Si nous ralentissions, ne fut-ce qu'un instant, notre effort pour cimenter l'esprit de concorde entre nous, une crise grave - j'entends une crise morale - pourrait paralyser notre défense collective.

Le but que nous poursuivons à cette fin se place dans la ligne du développement naturel de notre Alliance. Nous devons exercer une vigilance alerte, constante, sur nos rapports réciproques afin d'éviter que se produisent dans l'avenir au sein de l'Alliance des situations qui puissent en menacer la cohésion.

Mais notre tâche ne s'arrête pas là. Toutes les voies doivent être ouvertes à notre coopération. Le sentiment de la sécurité doit émaner pour nos peuples, non seulement de la force militaire, mais aussi de l'efficacité de notre système politique. Prouvons que nos institutions offrent un libre essor à l'épanouissement de la personne humaine, et nous en consoliderons les bases et nous en ferons nos meilleures armes de défense contre tous ceux qui voudraient les abattre pour frayer le chemin au despotisme. Mais les institutions démocratiques sous-entendent, à la fois une collaboration confiante et des échanges incessants entre les peuples qui les adoptent. Si, pour une raison quelconque, nous délaissions ce côté essentiel de nos rapports, nous saperions les bases politiques de l'Alliance militaire, nous lui ôterions le meilleur de son prestige, c'est-à-dire la force de suggestion que donne une civilisation supérieure, digne d'être défendue jusqu'au bout.

Des actions simplement négatives ne sauraient mener loin. Il faut des actions positives: pour être viable, notre Alliance doit être une création continue.

Cette détermination de ne négliger aucun effort pour sauvegarder l'Alliance Atlantique, loin de s'opposer à la recherche d'accords préluant à un aménagement meilleur et plus stable de l'Europe, constitue la condition préliminaire d'une action de ce genre. Il existe une situation précaire dans notre ancien continent: sa manifestation la plus grave, la plus inquiétante, se trouve justement ici, en Allemagne. Toute action visant à résoudre pacifiquement les problèmes dont dépend un ordre plus juste et plus durable est considérée par nous, non seulement utile, mais nécessaire. Nous n'en demeurons pas moins convaincus que tous les efforts déployés au cours de ces dix dernières années pour la sécurité et la paix seraient finalement réduits à néant si la recherche d'une action de ce genre devait mettre en crise le système de notre Alliance. Nous pouvons et nous devons rechercher des voies nouvelles vers la paix sûre et durable, mais en nous appuyant sur ce que nous avons construit jusqu'ici.

Nous étayons cette conviction non seulement par l'expérience de ce que nous avons évité, mais aussi par la conscience de

M. MARTINO (suite)

ce que nous sommes et de ce que nous voulons. Nous voulons et devons maintenir la paix, mais non céder à l'oppression d'une forme de vie en antithèse avec notre vocation. Cette oppression a fait de nouveau ses preuves, pendant les dernières semaines, quand les peuples européens ont été menacés de mort et de destruction au cas où ils oseraient, fût-ce même timidement, se munir des instruments de défense que l'évolution de la technique militaire a rendus désormais indispensables. Il s'agit là d'une précise manifestation de volonté visant à nous intimider et à faire en sorte que les peuples alliés ne puissent exercer leur droit à la défense avec une efficacité véritable. Va-t-on prétendre que la seule arme légitime contre le canon, c'est la fronde ? Il n'y a qu'une réponse contre une telle prétention : la volonté tranquille, sans crainte et sans jactance. Nous avons un devoir et, par là, un droit d'harmoniser aux situations changeantes l'Alliance Atlantique pour qu'elle ne devienne ni stérile politiquement, ni vaine militairement. Rien ne demeure immuable, sur le plan politique comme sur le plan de la technique militaire; notre Alliance se viderait bientôt de son contenu si, faute d'agilité, nous nous laissons dépasser par les circonstances. C'est alors que l'intimidation s'avérerait payante et que nous nous trouverions vraiment les mains vides devant les vexations d'autrui. La conscience de notre bon droit nous dit qu'il faut aller de l'avant. Nous ne négligerons pas pour autant de montrer notre bonne volonté entière devant toute action en mesure de maintenir et de consolider la paix.

Nous vivons dans un monde qui se métamorphose du jour au lendemain; le mouvement, c'est la loi même de l'existence. Ce n'est donc pas chez nous que l'on trouvera des partisans de l'immobilité. Bien des choses, ajouterons-nous, doivent changer pour que les peuples conquièrent la certitude de leur vie et de leur progrès, pour qu'ils chassent le cauchemar d'une guerre qui serait mortelle pour tous. Nous avons tous le devoir et le droit de demander que chaque changement marque un progrès, non une régression, vers la consolidation de la paix, et que ce changement soit obtenu par des méthodes pacifiques. A quoi bon vouloir la paix comme fin, si on ne la veut pas comme moyen ? C'est donc en toute sincérité que nous voyons dans la paix la seule possibilité pour les peuples de résoudre leurs problèmes de vie et de développement, aussi sommes-nous bien décidés à éviter quelque action que ce soit en antithèse avec cette fin. Mais ce serait agir contre la paix, estimons-nous, si sous l'influence de la peur, nous ne renforçons pas les liens de notre Alliance; celle-ci représente une pièce maîtresse dans l'équilibre actuel du monde, auquel nous devons cette paix, incertaine peut-être, mais qui vise à un ordre plus stable dans l'avenir. Si un tel élément d'équilibre allait s'écrouler, ou chanceler seulement, de puissantes forces de dissolution se développeraient en Europe : jusqu'à quel point, nul ne saurait le prédire. Nous remplissons, partant, une obligation primordiale, envers nos peuples et envers le monde, quand nous assurons à notre pacte de solidarité cette force, au premier chef morale et politique, dont il a besoin pour jouer son rôle dans la réalité de l'heure présente.

Nous savons bien qu'en décourageant l'agresseur par la certitude d'une défense collective, nous ne mettons en oeuvre qu'une mesure d'alerte; au-delà, il faut bien envisager la possibilité de rechercher des ententes à même de dissiper les plus dangereuses causes de désaccord. Nous avons nettement devant les yeux cette fin suprême et nous ne reculerons devant aucun sacrifice afin d'y parvenir. C'est en désarmant, non en se chargeant d'instruments de guerre, qu'on peut aborder au havre de la paix sûre. Mais le

M. MARTINO (suite)

désarmement ne saurait constituer une opération unilatérale. L'humanité anxieuse éprouverait un soulagement immense si les gouvernements responsables se montraient capables d'atteindre un accord, même modeste, sur le contrôle et la réduction des armements. Ce premier succès enflammerait les espoirs, multiplieraient les foyers de confiance dans un univers qui désire obscurément des raisons de croire. Après cela, tout deviendrait plus facile, et l'on pourrait marcher sur la bonne voie.

A une seule chose nous disons non : la prétention de ceux qui jusqu'ici ont tâché de nous diviser et de nous affaiblir et qui maintenant voudraient nous obliger par la menace, à déposer notre Alliance, vidée de son contenu, au Musée des Antiques.

Tels sont les sentiments et les convictions qu'en ma qualité de Président j'ai senti le devoir de vous exprimer, en vous adressant mon salut cordial et déclarant ouverts nos travaux.

Lord ISMAY

This is the last occasion on which I shall attend the Ministerial Conference as Secretary General, and I am very grateful to you, Mr. President, for allowing me to say a few words. I am also deeply grateful to you, Mr. Federal Counsellor, for your kind references to my work for NATO.

As I look back upon the five years of my stewardship, I am very conscious that I have left undone much that I ought to have done, but NATO as a whole has outstanding achievements to its credit.

In the first place, the primary purpose of the North Atlantic Treaty has been fulfilled. Peace has been preserved. Soviet expansion westwards has been halted. Not a square inch of territory in Europe has fallen under Russian domination since the signing of the Treaty.

Now, secondly, in the knowledge that the foreign policy of member states must be in harmony if the Alliance is to prosper, there has been an ever increasing measure of political co-operation between the governments. That is largely due, I submit, to their foresight in setting up in Paris a Permanent Council to act as a forum for consultation on all matters affecting the Alliance, and I would like to mention here that a hundred, over a hundred, private meetings of that Council have been devoted to the discussion of political affairs. It would be idle to pretend that there have not been cases of failure to consult, but it is to be hoped that they will become rarer and rarer as time goes on.

Now, the third achievement is that a "shield" of armed strength has been built up. Not at present as strong as we would have liked, but at least a very essential feature of our deterrent. And, in any case, who could have believed ten years ago that sovereign states would entrust their precious armed forces in time of peace to the command of a national other than their own. Who could have believed it ten years ago? Yet that is what has come to pass and thanks to the fact that these national components are trained together in time of peace and would, in the event of war, act under unified command, in accordance with unified and predetermined plans, this tremendously enhances their deterrent value.

And, finally, a degree of unity has been built up in this Alliance, at all levels and in all spheres, and I myself believe that this is our most precious and our most powerful weapon. After all, what surer way could there be of keeping the peace than by making a potential aggressor understand two things. The first thing he must understand is that the Alliance is purely defensive; that there is no possible question of attacking anybody. And the second thing he must understand is that in the event of flagrant aggression upon one of the partners, all the rest would spring to arms in defence of their territory, their freedom and their way of life, and would fight to the last ounce of their strength in comradeship and with all the resources at their command - I deliberately say "all resources". Now and then, during debates about the ethics of the use of this weapon or that weapon, it seems to me that it is not the nature of the weapon that counts against the crime. The criminal is he who sets out to use force with any weapon whatsoever in order to impose his will on other people; and so, I submit, that we are on the right lines - that we can go forward in accordance

ord ISMAY (Contd.)

With the principles already decided. I feel that all of us must acquire more and more the habit of looking at problems from an international rather than a national point of view. I feel that if the exertions and sacrifices demanded of us at times seem burdensome, we ought to remember that the North Atlantic Alliance is not only an obligation which sovereign states have undertaken of their own free will, but also an insurance against the unspeakable horrors of a war which would destroy our civilisation.

And so if I might conclude with a profession of my own

faith:

When the North Atlantic Treaty was first signed, I felt that this was the best, if not the only way, of preserving the peace, and at the end of five years at the centre of things I am more than ever convinced that this is the truth - more than ever. But there must be no relaxation, as you yourself have said, Mr. President. We must be vigilant. There is no easy path to our goal. We must have hope in each other's future, faith in each other's purpose and tolerance towards each other's shortcomings. And above all we must be united, and then all will be well.

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