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ATLANTIC POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Note by the Chairman

The fifteenth meeting of the Atlantic Policy Advisory Group was held at Airlie House, Warrenton, Virginia, USA, from 14th to 17th April, 1969.

2. The attached report was prepared by the Chairman on his own responsibility, in accordance with established practice. The draft was circulated for comment to the members of the Group.

3. The Group focussed in its tour d'horizon - which was introduced by regional experts from the planning staff of the US State Department - on events in East Asia and the Middle East.

4. APAG had before it German, UK and US papers on the main subject of its meeting, "The Future of the Alliance in relation to long-term trends in Europe and North America". These served as a basis for the discussion which is summarised in the attached report.

5. The Belgian Representative, on behalf of his Authorities, confirmed the invitation extended to the Group at the previous meeting to convene in Belgium on 15th to 19th September, 1969. As the Group felt that it had not yet exhausted the comprehensive subject before it, the suggestion was made to continue its discussion at the Autumn meeting 1969. The discussion of the subject originally suggested for Autumn 1969, namely "Interests of the Atlantic countries in the developing world: prospects for fulfilment of these interests and means of advancing them further", would thus be postponed to a later meeting. The UK Representative invited the Group to hold its Spring meeting of 1970 in the UK in April of that year.

6. The Council is invited:

- (a) to take note of the attached report;
- (b) to approve the proposed arrangements for the next meeting.

(Signed) Jörg KASTL

OTAN/NATO,
Brussels, 39.

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ATLANTIC POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF FIFTEENTH MEETING, 14TH-17TH APRIL, 1969

THE FUTURE OF THE ALLIANCE IN RELATION TO LONG-TERM TRENDS
IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

1. In analysing the main subject before it, the Group - basing itself on the papers submitted - examined four broad subjects:

- long-term trends in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe;
- trends in Western Europe;
- trends in the US and Canada;
- key elements for the future of the Alliance.

2. Reviewing possible trends in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe which might have consequences over a longer term, the Group felt that the situation showed considerable fluidity and many uncertainties concerning the internal situation and foreign relations of these countries and that this made predictions particularly difficult.

3. It was recognised that pressures exist inside the Soviet Union which seemed to call for significant changes: certain groups, particularly amongst the elites consisting of intellectuals, artists, and managers, are dissatisfied with the present state of affairs. The Soviet Union, being a multinational entity, may also undergo pressure from national minorities in its population, a development which might increasingly become a matter of concern for Soviet leaders.

4. But are these pressures strong enough, it was asked, to lead to important political changes in the foreseeable future? It was felt that the basic problem was rather one of economic progress and development than of political change. Soviet leaders find themselves faced with the need to assure economic growth, to raise the standard of living and to make the Soviet economy and society more efficient in economic terms. They are equally faced with the problem of how to achieve this without losing strict party control over Soviet society or at least of achieving this with a minimum of political concessions. No doubt Soviet leaders would wish to maintain party control unimpaired over a more productive and efficient economy, the achievements of which could compare with the capitalist world. They are aware that they have to learn from the West and that certain reforms and decisions are necessary. The word "liberalization" often used in this context was considered as misleading, as it might imply a degree of freedom which Soviet leaders would not be willing to grant; and it would therefore be more appropriate to speak of possible economic reforms.

5. Various views were expressed as to the likelihood of the introduction of significant economic reforms and their possible consequences: while some members of the Group perhaps felt that the Soviet leaders would rather try to retain full party control than to permit far-reaching reforms which might weaken such control, others thought that reforms were inevitable, however reluctant Soviet leaders would be to accept them. Views were also divided as to the consequences of reforms: some members felt that they could but lead to a weakening of the ideological and political control, to the reduction of the importance of ideology and even to a freer society. Even small steps in this direction might have considerable consequences. On the other hand, it was pointed out that economic progress and modernisation could well be achieved through the introduction of new and more rational scientific, industrial and administrative processes without causing significant political changes and a degree of liberalization of the régime.

6. The Soviet leadership would in any event be very cautious to move, and would try to introduce only the indispensable minimum of pragmatic measures which would still be manageable. These might well prove sufficient to satisfy existing pressures. Although the possibility of sudden and perhaps explosive changes could not be excluded, the process of adaptation would most likely be slow and perhaps a matter of decades. If changes took place, they would most probably be the result of developments inside Soviet society and not so much of direct influences coming from the outside world. It was emphasised that in the USSR it would be easier for the Party to retain control, as it has deep roots in the social system and in Russian chauvinist beliefs - a fact which distinguishes the situation in the Soviet Union from that of other Eastern European countries.

7. Some attention was given to the rôle of the military leaders in the Soviet Union which over the last years and in particular in the Czechoslovak crisis, seemed in the view of some members to have played a greater rôle. It was however felt very difficult to assess the full importance of the political rôle of the military leaders in the Soviet Union.

8. The relationship between the Soviet Union and its Eastern European Allies, as well as the situation in Eastern Europe, was seen as a very complex one which confronted the Soviet Union with difficult problems and dilemmas. Soviet leaders would certainly wish to maintain a strong ideological and power position in Eastern Europe and would prefer to see orthodox Communist régimes there remaining under full Soviet influence. It was felt that not only orthodox Soviet Communists but also other leaders in the Soviet Union were interested in keeping up Soviet power in Eastern Europe, and that this desire was shared by virtually all in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, only Poland, Bulgaria - and in the first place - the Soviet Zone seem reliably to support Soviet interests and there are considerable nuances and differences as far as the other Soviet Allies are concerned. It is

therefore difficult to speak of Eastern Europe as an entity and the situation in the individual countries must be considered on a case-by-case basis. The differences of structure, of history, intensity of national feeling and of individual problems call for a varying approach in the analysis of their position.

9. On the whole, however, it was thought that the margin of manoeuvre for these countries was rather narrow and that developments there would be greatly influenced by the Soviet Union and its possible internal evolution. On the other hand, the situation in Eastern Europe might well have important repercussions in the Soviet Union, the more so as the Soviet leadership might no longer be as monolithic as it seems from the outside and strains and pressures could appear within the Soviet party.

10. Although unforeseen developments within Eastern European countries seem possible, radical changes were considered unlikely. It was felt that Europe would remain divided for some time although the "rough edges" might wear off to some extent.

11. The view was expressed that even a movement in the direction of a more efficient and somewhat freer society with a higher standard of living internally would not necessarily favourably influence Soviet foreign policy in respect of relations with the West. East/West agreements on arms control measures might have considerable long-range consequences, not only by preventing a further spiralling of the arms race but also with regard to problems dividing East and West. Doubts were however expressed that such agreements would greatly influence the situation in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union. It was pointed out that the possibility of allocating more resources to non-military uses might well contribute to a stabilisation of the Soviet régime.

12. With regard to East/West relations, it was suggested that a better balance in contacts of the West with the Soviet Union on the one hand and with the other Eastern European countries on the other, would be important. Western efforts for a détente had in the past been interpreted by the Soviets as aiming at weakening the Soviet position in Eastern Europe. It might therefore be advisable to involve the Soviet Union from the beginning in long-range efforts contemplated for improving relations and a détente. This should not, of course, imply a Soviet veto over the West's relations with individual East European countries.

13. With regard to Soviet foreign policy, the point was made that Soviet pressure for advancing towards the "warmer seas" such as the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, was likely to increase in the foreseeable future, as would the Soviet naval presence in other parts of the world. This might cause serious problems as far as the Alliance's sea lanes are concerned. It was furthermore pointed out that the Soviets were unlikely to give up their recently acquired influence in the Middle East and would continue their efforts to weaken the West's position there.

14. Turning to longer term trends in Western Europe, the Group's discussion centred around the problem of European unity and the rôle of Europe in the world. It was felt that, although predictions were particularly difficult here, there would be neither stagnation nor rapid progress towards political unity or a truly supranational entity in Europe. Very likely economic and technological co-operation will continue to increase considerably in a variety of fields, and possibly in new areas, including defence procurement, within the next decade. The countries of Western Europe will thus become more and more inter-dependent among themselves and with North America. The UK and other countries might join the Common Market.

15. This increasingly close co-operation would not necessarily lead to equally close unity or to a European federation, it was felt, nor to a full co-ordination of foreign policies, although more spectacular movement in such directions could well be possible and some members of the Group were more optimistic in this respect.

16. The view was expressed that in general, European countries had become much more inward-looking, even provincial and preoccupied with their internal and social problems; they were increasingly reluctant to play an active political rôle on the world scene. This might be so even after the achievement of a closer political unity amongst them.

17. This somewhat pessimistic view was not shared by all members of the Group, who thought that the trend towards the establishment of larger units was basically very strong in the world today. Some, however, stressed that this inward-looking trend did exist in spite of the admittedly very substantial foreign aid programmes of European countries and the interest shown by their development programmes for the Third World. The only exception from the more inward-looking attitude might be the active efforts undertaken to improve East/West relations which find wide public support in Europe.

18. The generally reduced interest in a world rôle was seen not only as a consequence of the changed power status of the European countries, but also of changed sociological conditions: domestic problems including fundamental social issues, sometimes raised by small but active minorities,

particularly amongst the younger generations, tended to become priority topics. This development was not only - as sometimes stated - a disturbing and dangerous factor but also has positive aspects and could mean a challenge leading to the search for new solutions and improvements in the structure of modern society. This was seen as being of importance for the Alliance and for those possible new tasks which would assure it continued public support. It was also important in respect to the struggle between East and West: the West's capability to cope successfully with its internal problems and to organize its society effectively was an important factor. This focussing on internal problems would not mean that at the same time efforts to maintain external security can be neglected.

19. Similar internal stresses as in Europe exist also in North American society and make their influence felt there. They probably exist in many other countries, including the Communist countries where their visibility is lower.

20. With regard to North America the discussion of the Group centred on the security implications of possible developments in US policy. In spite of American reluctance to accept further security commitments and in spite of possibly mounting domestic discussion and pressures for the reduction of the US rôle in military alliances including NATO, it was considered unlikely that the US would move into a period of neo-isolationism. US involvement in Western Europe with which it is linked through manifold ties, including intellectual ones, and strong economic interests, makes it unthinkable for the US to withdraw. On the contrary, a further strengthening of such vital ties is much more likely. This situation will have a strong influence on security matters vital to the US, including the maintenance of US forces in Europe. These forces were considered by members of the Group as irreplaceable not only for military but even more so for political reasons. In this connection, the point was made that it would not be possible to negotiate balanced force reductions if unilateral reductions took place.

21. The importance of European efforts in the security field was stressed and it was pointed out that full European contribution to the defence of the Alliance would make it easier - at least in the shorter term - to maintain the presence of US forces also against US domestic pressures. It was felt by some that indeed a more balanced effort as between the US and the other members of the Alliance was called for.

22. With regard to the Canadian forces stationed in Europe, it was said that although NATO was widely supported in Canada a partial withdrawal might be held necessary not only for economic reasons but also because it is thought that these forces might have a useful rôle to play in the defence of North America, a rôle which could be filled effectively by Canada.

23. As regards the implications for the future of the Alliance of the trends analysed, the Group felt that it could not exhaust the subject in the time available and that its deliberations on the subject should therefore be continued at the next meeting. The discussions might then focus more specifically on questions of European and general Alliance security. This might include the question of a future European security conference.

24. The future exchange of views might be prepared by a Secretariat paper, containing a list of questions, to be circulated in advance of the next meeting. This paper would be prepared on the basis of the German, UK, and US contributions submitted at the Airlie House Meeting.

25. In concluding its discussions, the Group touched on a few specific issues. As far as closer European co-operation in the defence field is concerned, the point was made that in view of the rapid development of modern defence technology, the extremely high cost of modern armaments and the necessity of long-term planning involving replacement schedules, the need for a more rational use of resources and consequently for the closest co-operation was becoming more and more urgent, particularly in the procurement field.

26. While this was generally recognised, there was no consensus on the possible form of such co-operation: some members of the Group seemed to favour the establishment of new institutions, others stressed that such co-operation should take place on a pragmatic and case-by-case basis and with respect to concrete common projects. An institutionalisation would thus not be necessary, at least not in the beginning or in the earlier stages.

27. No common views emerged either as to whether such co-operation should rest on a distinctly European basis, which in turn might become one of the points of departure for establishing European groupings. While some viewed such groupings favourably as a means to improve the balance in the Alliance, others pointed out that - in spite of the advantages of "Europe speaking with one voice" - the establishment of separate groupings might also in this field become a seriously divisive element. In this connection it was pointed out that the question of co-operation in the procurement field and the wider one of possibly more general European groupings - defence or other - should be seen as separate issues, the latter having wider political implications. In any case, it was felt that this latter question needed further thorough studies. The impact on the Soviet Union of a Europe which in the defence field might seem more independent of the US also calls for study.

28. The question of concrete co-operation on various projects in the defence and procurement field was seen as one of more immediate concern and as one which should therefore be further explored within NATO.

29. One of the reasons for having - within the Alliance - an open-ended rather informal European grouping would be, as one member of the Group pointed out, the need and desirability for Europe to discuss together topics involving special European interests and on which Europe might thus develop a special viewpoint. The question of strategic arms limitation was cited as one example.

30. Special and complex problems might arise with respect to the command structure in the case of the establishment of a European defence grouping - which in any event would pre-suppose the existence of a higher degree of European unity.

31. A decision on such matters would, it was stated, have to be taken by the Europeans themselves. Serious concern was expressed over the possibility of weakening the concept of an indivisible common Alliance strategy and there was a consensus that under no circumstances could there be more than one strategy in the Alliance.