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NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

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NATO SECRET  
SUMMARY RECORD  
C-R(68)15

Summary record of a meeting of the Council held at the  
Headquarters, Brussels, on Wednesday, 27th March, 1968  
at 10.15 a.m. and 4 p.m.

PRESENT

Chairman: Mr. Manlio Brosio

<u>BELGIUM</u>	<u>GREECE</u>	<u>NORWAY</u>
Mr. A. de Staercke	Mr. P.A. Cavalierato	Mr. G. Kristiansen
<u>CANADA</u>	<u>ICELAND</u>	<u>PORTUGAL</u>
Mr. Ross Campbell	Mr. H.P. Sigurdsson	Mr. V. da Cunha
<u>DENMARK</u>	<u>ITALY</u>	<u>TURKEY</u>
Mr. H. Hjorth-Nielsen	Mr. C. de Ferrariis Salzano	Mr. O. Cankardes
<u>FRANCE</u>	<u>LUXEMBOURG</u>	<u>UNITED KINGDOM</u>
Mr. R. Seydoux	Mr. L. Schaus	Sir Bernard Burrows
<u>GERMANY</u>	<u>NETHERLANDS</u>	<u>UNITED STATES</u>
Mr. W.G. Grewe	Mr. H.N. Boon	Mr. Harlan Cleveland

INTERNATIONAL STAFF

Assistant Secretary General for  
Political Affairs: Mr. J. Jaenicke

Executive Secretary: The Lord Coleridge a.m.

Deputy Executive Secretary: Mr. F. Menne p.m.

ALSO PRESENT

Chairman, Military Committee: Lt.Gen. Baron C.P. de Cumont

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I. MALTA

(Discussed in private session)

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II. STATEMENTS ON POLITICAL SUBJECTS

(Discussed in private session)

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III. FOLLOW-UP TO PARAGRAPHS 11-13 OF THE HARMEL REPORT

- (a) Discussion of the list of subjects submitted by the Political Committee at Senior Level in accordance with PO/68/44

Document: PO/68/183

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, following the report by the Chairman of the Political Committee on that Committee's meeting with disarmament experts, he had given a brief summary, at the previous meeting, of the work undertaken by the Senior Political Committee to give effect to the Harmel Report. At his request, the Committee had set out in PO/68/183 a list of subjects to be studied. He expressed the hope that the Council would approve this list as far as the subjects under paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Harmel Report were concerned, take note of it with respect to the already approved subjects under paragraph 13, and instruct the Political Committee to press on with its work with a view to submitting a progress report at the Spring Ministerial Meeting. It would be preferable, however, if the Council did not try to establish priorities. The reason for this was that, as the Political Committee would probably have to deal with several studies at a time, it should perhaps be left some latitude. He took the view that when the Council had set up a Political Committee at Senior level it was with the intention of leaving a certain freedom of decision.

2. The NETHERLANDS and FRENCH REPRESENTATIVES signified their approval to the list as a whole and made some comments on the drafting of Subject I.B.

3. The NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVE considered the list of subjects to be satisfactory on the whole and expressed the hope that the Political Committee would not dwell on details of procedure but immediately get down to the problems of substance. He therefore shared the Chairman's opinion that priorities should not be fixed as this might hold up work. However, he would like the Political Committee to go into a subject

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thoroughly so that in its progress report to Ministers it could make a number of recommendations to serve as a basis for discussion. He suggested that the document submitted by Belgium on balanced force reductions be taken as a starting point. In conclusion, he asked that the Political Committee keep the Council informed of its work.

4. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE also urged that the Political Committee immediately set to work on the basis of the proposed list. He pointed out that the subjects to be examined came within the general framework of two broad headings: disarmament and arms control, and the peaceful settlement of European problems. He therefore saw no disadvantage in several studies being dealt with simultaneously. He reminded the Council that the Political Committee was already in possession of a number of documents - in particular one from the United States and one from Germany - which had been submitted at the meeting with disarmament experts. In conclusion, he thought that the Political Committee could be assisted by experts, especially military ones. However, it did not seem reasonable to strive after conclusions at all costs and he would be satisfied with a simple progress report.

5. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE expressed support for the Chairman's proposals; in other words, he was prepared to allow the Political Committee to establish its procedures and working methods without first drawing up an order of priority. So that the four major subjects for study could be considered simultaneously, he suggested that the same procedure should be followed as for the Harnel Report - namely, that rapporteurs should prepare a draft which would be commented on by national authorities. He hoped that in this way Ministers could be given a number of texts which had already been examined in national capitals since it was important that some progress should have been made by the time of the June meeting.

6. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE agreed with the German Representative that the Political Committee should be asked to expedite its work; however, he did not look for positive results by the June Ministerial Meeting. He was therefore prepared to accept the proposed list, which could serve as an agenda for the Political Committee without establishing any priorities.

7. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE, expressing support for these comments, said that he could agree to the proposed list on condition it was not considered as exhaustive. He was also prepared to leave it to the Political Committee to decide on its method of work on condition that it took into account past experience and sought the assistance

of experts and, if necessary, of the the Military Authorities. However, he would like the report for Ministers in June to be as detailed as possible. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the Council would keep some watch over the Committee's work with a view to giving timely guidance.

8. The COUNCIL

- (1) approved the list submitted by the Political Committee in PO/68/183 as far as the subjects under paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Harnel Report were concerned, bearing in mind the comments made and the amendments proposed(1) in discussion and on the understanding that this list should not be exhaustive;
  - (2) took note of this list as far as the already approved subjects under paragraph 13 of the Harnel Report were concerned (see PO/68/108);
  - (3) instructed the Political Committee to press on with its work with a view to submitting a progress report at the Spring Ministerial Meeting.
- (b) Consultation on East/West bilateral contacts regarding European security, disarmament and similar matters relating to paragraphs 11-13 of the Harnel Report

9. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at the last meeting following a report on some conversations that had taken place and some ideas that had been exchanged in the Group of Ten or bilaterally between Ministers and senior officials of NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, more general questions had been raised concerning the possibility of consultations on East/West bilateral contacts involving some fundamental issues such as European security, disarmament and related matters. The point had been made that, while these contacts might have been useful soundings to ascertain the position of the Eastern countries on such important matters, this very fact showed how necessary it was to have early and extensive consultation in the Council, within the framework of the Harnel Exercise, on these vital problems. The Council would doubtless agree that there was no contradiction in letting the Senior Political Committee proceed, under the Council's guidance, with its programme of work relating to paragraphs 11-13 of the Harnel Report, while the Council

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(1) Subsequently circulated as Corrigendum to PO/68/183.

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itself concentrated on particularly important matters. Far from duplicating work, these parallel activities, he thought, would be a useful means of reaching, at Council level, an early understanding of the political problems involved.

10. The BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE stressed that the latitude desired since 1966 by member Governments of the Alliance in order to engage in exploratory contacts with the governments of the East on the various aspects of détente was and had to be compatible with the fact that the Alliance continued to be the centre of gravity and forum for clarification of these initiatives. Moreover, as had been explicitly recognised by the Harmel Report, the object of consultations was not to sway the policy of sovereign states. This being so, he was confident that the talks between Belgian and Polish experts dealing with certain problems of force reductions would prove to be all the more useful if discussed and encouraged by the Alliance. In connection with some comments following the Netherlands Representative's report on the conversations between his Foreign Minister and the Yugoslav Government, he wondered whether the contacts should be preceded by consultations or whether it would not be preferable for member Governments to continue their activities while regularly informing the Council, which was the forum where positions could be clarified and advice given. For his part, the latter method seemed better and, in this connection, he recalled that his Delegation had submitted two texts to the Political Committee: a summary of conversations between the Belgian and Polish experts, which had been conducted without commitment on either side, and a report on the guiding principles observed by the Belgian experts in the pursuit of their contacts. He added that the latter text had been slightly amended following exchanges of views within the Political Committee. He would circulate the new text as well as the replies of the Polish Government, to whom the two texts had been communicated. In conclusion, he voiced the hope not only that general consultation would continue but also that in accordance with the resolutions approved by Ministers it would be recognised that each government had the right to engage in exploratory contacts which committed neither itself nor the Alliance. It was in this spirit that his Government intended to develop the contacts established with the Polish Government.

11. The NETHERLANDS REPRESENTATIVE fully supported the above statement. He recalled that the method of consultation had been clearly described in paragraph 7 of the Harmel Report: "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 other's problems and objectives. To this end the practice of frank and timely consultations needs to be deepened and improved." With regard to Dr. Luns' visit to Yugoslavia, he wished to raise three important points: first, there was the delicate problem whether it was dangerous to agree to the status of the German

Democratic Republic being discussed during contacts with East European governments. Dr. Luns had pointed out to his hosts that there had been no change in NATO policy towards the German Democratic Republic. However, the Netherlands Government felt that it would be useful for the Alliance to examine the advisability of taking soundings to see how far it would be possible, in the event of a conference on European security being organized, to eliminate the main obstacle to a settlement, which was the German Democratic Republic. In this connection, he had been especially interested by the various contacts recently established by the Federal Republic of Germany and by its new approach to relations with countries of the East.

12. The second point to be clarified concerned the rôle of the Group of Ten and the possibilities for its member countries to engage in exploratory conversations which, without committing any of them, would help to identify the problems. He recalled that this Group which was composed of members of the Alliance (Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands), of Warsaw Pact countries and of neutral countries, had come in for favourable comment in the Council's report on East/West relations (C-M(66)84(Final)) paragraph 28. He added that the three NATO countries on the Group were mindful of the need to co-ordinate their action and that the contact established by the new Danish Minister for Disarmament and the Developing Countries with the Belgian and Netherlands Governments, as well as with the Secretary General of NATO, testified to the fact that such co-ordination existed in the Group of Ten as much as in the Committee of Eighteen. This being so, the experts on the Group of Ten might usefully compile a list of topics suitable for discussion at a conference on European security. He realised, however, that in the opinion of some governments this went beyond the limits of what could be done by governments without the agreement of the Alliance.

13. This brought him to his third point, which concerned the limits to be imposed on each member's activities when that member pursued NATO objectives in the course of contacts with the countries of the East. As long as the rules of consultation were observed, he did not find the objections justified. He pointed out that the Group of Ten was composed of small and medium-sized countries whose position was less difficult than that of the bigger countries and which thereby could, by exchanging ideas without becoming committed or involved in decisions, help to improve the situation. He even thought that this action could speed up the process of independence on the part of the satellite countries and that if it contributed to a slackening of the Soviet Union's political hold on them it would make for progress in East/West relations. In conclusion, he stressed that in its contacts with the governments of the East, his Government had always been extremely cautious but added that no-one could have a monopoly of détente.

14. The DANISH REPRESENTATIVE said that if bilateral contacts were recognised as essential for the development of détente it could not be denied that it was difficult to engage in talks with the countries of the East without going into questions which divided East and West. On the contrary, his Government felt that if no restrictions were imposed on the topics to be discussed, this would best serve attempts to identify areas of disagreement and to ascertain the ways and means of reducing differences of opinion regarding both substance and procedure, it being understood that the main concern would continue to be the vital interests of the Alliance and its members. Moreover, as his Government has always been at great pains to avoid any action that might jeopardize these interests and to keep its Allies informed, it would not be in favour of any rule imposing prior consultation.

15. He then went on to say that his Government was at present preparing to start talks with the Polish Government along the same lines as Belgium. He explained that the initiative had been taken in spring 1967 by the Polish Government when it had requested talks on disarmament problems. In February, 1968, the Polish Ambassador to Denmark had suggested that three topics be examined: the denuclearised zone, the mutual renunciation of the use of force, and the European security conference. This had been followed on 11th March by an official invitation to send experts for talks to begin in Warsaw on 13th May. With regard to the European security conference, he recalled that his Government had always taken the view that this topic should not be avoided since a negative attitude could be exploited by Communist propaganda as a sign of intransigence. Whilst the initial soundings indicated that the USSR was not willing to agree in the near future, his Government thought the question should remain open, it being understood that such a conference could not take place unless it was carefully prepared and the participation of the United States and Canada accepted. In conclusion, he confirmed that there was full co-ordination between Denmark and the other two members of the Alliance in the Group of Ten and that his Government would keep the Council informed of developments in its contacts with Poland.

16. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that his country had never questioned the value of, and necessity for, bilateral contacts, which alone could lead to a climate conducive to the settlement of basic issues, and he had always advocated the extension of East/West cultural, political and economic relations. However, his Government felt that problems concerning not merely some members of the Alliance but also the entire Alliance should not be the subject of even preliminary contacts unless the Council had previously weighed their advantages and disadvantages.



He had appreciated the details given about the scope of the exchanges of views between the Netherlands Foreign Minister and the Yugoslav Minister on the status of the German Democratic Republic. Nevertheless, he stressed that without prior consultation any intervention in a province affecting the vital interests of a member of the Alliance might be interpreted as an overture on behalf of the Alliance, and this could only weaken the chances of reaching a settlement when the circumstances justified hopes for a solution. His Government would therefore wish the Netherlands to consider ways and means of clarifying the situation and, in particular, of confirming that there was no change in the Alliance's consistent solidarity on the question of the recognition of the German Democratic Republic. With regard to the more general problem of the European security conference, while his Government was in no way opposed to this, it suspected that the Soviet formula concealed an attempt to maintain the status quo. It therefore felt that the matter should be approached with great caution and in successive stages to ensure that the real objective was negotiations and not the pure and simple acceptance of the present situation. He added that this position had already been made known to the Council and, whenever the opportunity had arisen, to the governments of the East European countries.

17. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE noted that the extremely frank statements that had been made showed how political consultation continued to be a golden rule. He himself felt that, in accordance with the central principle of present-day diplomacy which tended to treat questions of substance as if they were questions of procedure, the notion of a European conference had assumed greater importance than it warranted. Nevertheless, his Government was prepared to agree to the convening, at the appropriate time, of a preparatory conference or, rather, a series of preparatory conferences on the various subjects related to European security. As was the rule with East-West relations, the numerous difficulties had to be approached as the Italian Representative had put it, with caution and in successive stages and, from this standpoint, all countries, irrespective of their size, had a rôle to play. To enable the value of each initiative to be assessed in the light of common criteria, he proposed that the following two questions be asked in all cases:

- did the initiative in question have a bearing on a fundamental issue?;
- did it engage the interest and attention of all those expected on both sides to formulate and guarantee any arrangement for European security?

18. With regard to the experiment being conducted by the Belgian Government with Poland, he had been struck by the fact that the Poles were very anxious to know whether the Belgian Government was speaking on behalf of the Alliance, and this, he thought, highlighted both the importance that should be attached by all to these talks and the value of consultation. In general, he felt that at the present exploratory stage discussions between East and West should be limited to matters of procedure. Some proposals emanating from the Communist side were in fact propaganda manoeuvres, and it should be remembered that the Soviet Union used anything concerning European security as a means of maintaining the cohesion of the Warsaw Pact. From this standpoint, it was in its interests to act as if it wanted wide-ranging exchanges of views between East and West, but it was not at all clear that it was in the interests of the Alliance to assist it in this respect. For this reason, he thought it more realistic to envisage a series of meetings where each problem would be treated separately.

19. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE reminded the Council that the basis of the discussion was the highly interesting report on the East/West contacts on disarmament and European security which had been submitted by Belgium to the Political Committee, the conclusions of which the Federal Government could in part approve. However, he wished to comment on some of the methods used in the course of these contacts. He recalled that in general the Council was informed of talks which had already been held and of proposals which had already been made. While he saw no objections to contacts being made independently, he thought it important that the Council should not only be informed but also consulted as far as proposals and suggestions were concerned. The fact that decisions were not contemplated was not, to his mind, a sufficient reason to shelve consultations. He pointed out that the Netherlands Representative had quoted paragraph 7 of the Harmel Report, which read "the practice of frank and timely consultations needs to be deepened and improved", but this paragraph also contained the following sentence: "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". He wondered whether the Allies were at present really acting in accordance with the recommendations of the Harmel Report, which included the following words: "the chances of success will clearly be greatest if the Allies remain on parallel courses". Turning to the problem of European security and Germany, he recalled that the preparation of a settlement in this field was the subject of paragraph 12 of the Harmel Report, which referred to 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". As far as

his Government was concerned, that time had not yet come. In this connection, he quoted the statement by the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic to the Bundestag on 7th December, 1967: "we do not consider it sensible to chase the idea of a European security conference, a security conference which - especially on the basis of the information which we have received up to now - would in any case be designed to serve the special purposes of one group of European States, or would, in practice, have this result. Some day there will undoubtedly be a conference on questions of European security and a peace order. However, this conference must be well prepared, and the time must be ripe for it." Since the time was not yet ripe for such a conference, he did not see the use of discussing the procedural problems, which in any case did not represent the main difficulty. He felt it was more important to examine matters of substance within the framework of the Alliance and in bilateral contacts with the countries of the East.

20. He then turned to the question of the status of the German Democratic Republic, on which the Netherlands Government felt there should be soundings during East/West bilateral contacts. He drew attention to the fact that any discussion on the status of the German Democratic Republic and on its possible participation in a European security conference necessarily presupposed the adoption of positions regarding the status of the Federal Republic. His Government did not feel that the time had come to raise this delicate question. Speaking generally, he felt that in the last analysis his country must always be free to decide whether to accept concessions which, after all, would clearly depend on circumstances and, on the prospects of a conference when the time would come to call such a conference. It therefore asked that no attempt be made at the present stage to take a stand on a problem which not only was not the most urgent one but which, above all, represented for one of the members of the Alliance a national issue of vital interest which it was customary to respect.

21. The BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE fully agreed with the German Representative that as a general principle it should be accepted that information should be followed by consultations. He went on to say that in the course of the contacts between Belgian and Polish experts the interest shown by the latter had followed a devious course, so much so that for certain periods his Government had been under the impression that contact had been broken off. This was why it had never been able to consult the Council. Very recently, when the Poles had resumed negotiations and it had appeared possible to start discussion in a limited field, his Government had asked him to inform its partners and to consult with them. However, he felt it would be most unfortunate if these consultations should hold up the talks. He was prepared to subscribe to the principles advocated by the United States Representative in order to judge the value of initiatives taken in the other camp. He would even add a

third principle: did it appear that the conversations were being used as a pretext to introduce an unacceptable political position? Turning to another point made by the United States Representative, he said that he wished to make it clear that his Government had never claimed to speak for the Alliance and that it hoped very much that the Council, bearing in mind the principles governing consultations, would make an overall assessment of the major problems which could be used as a basis for the conduct of negotiations. To sum up, his Government hoped that its action would be neither disapproved nor discouraged.

22. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that his Government had always supported the development of bilateral contacts with the East as a means of creating a climate of confidence. It was in this spirit that it had welcomed the exploratory talks which clearly were of a preparatory and preliminary character. Such conversations would lose much of their value, he thought, if the Council were to insist on being consulted in advance on every aspect of the negotiations. He considered that the contacts entered into by three member governments were promising first, because by making it possible to obtain a better knowledge of the intentions of the countries of the East and of the points on which there were differences with the West, they would help to put an end to the stagnation of East/West relations and, secondly, because without such contacts the collective examination of possibilities would lack the necessary up-to-date input reflecting East European realities. He therefore considered that the policy pursued by the three countries in question was in line with paragraph 7 of the Harmel Report, it being understood that the report laid stress on these contacts more as a means of furthering the détente than as a way of seeking a final settlement. Paragraph 12 of the same Report, which laid down guidelines for the Alliance as a whole, was very explicit in describing the limits within which each member country could act. These two paragraphs could be used as basic guidelines for the future, with paragraph 7 setting out the rules for bilateral or multilateral contacts and Paragraph 12 laying down directives for the Political Committee. In this way, it would be possible to make the required distinction between the preparation of a settlement and the preliminary contacts necessary for all the problems to be tackled at a European security conference. Finally, he asked that attention be given to paragraph 11 of the Harmel Report which dealt with the special responsibilities of three members of the Alliance for the problem of German reunification and its relationship to a European settlement. In conclusion, he wished to state that he was fully in agreement with the suggestion whereby the Western member countries of the Group of Ten would submit the results of their preliminary contacts to the Council and to the Political Committee.

23. The NETHERLANDS REPRESENTATIVE said he wished to clarify a few points. In reply to the German Representative, he stressed that no suggestion or proposal had as yet been made by either side, contacts having been restricted to bilateral talks on the major obstacles opposing a European settlement. He added that, if a conference was to take place, it would be useful to discuss its procedural aspects beforehand. However, in the course of informal contacts with the Yugoslav Government, Dr. Luns had for the moment limited himself to examining the possibility of holding a meeting of experts. As the Yugoslav Government had agreed to this, the Netherlands would like to hear the Council's opinion. Nevertheless, it was important to avoid giving the impression that these contacts had not been conducted freely, particularly as a result of the important changes which were at present taking place in Eastern Europe and which could pave the way to a settlement of European problems.

24. The NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that he fully supported the comments by the Belgian Representative to the effect that member countries must be given the necessary latitude and that this was compatible with the Alliance's task of providing a centre of gravity. In his view, it was bound to be useful to pursue the bilateral contacts on a continuing basis since this was the most suitable way of tackling the problems at issue. At the same time, he urged that the Council should hold talks with a view to multilateral negotiations on problems which, as the Harmel Report acknowledged, "require by their very nature a multilateral solution." However, he felt that, although these talks should in the first instance take place in the Council, they might also be held by other bodies. So as to ensure that the talks would always be held in good time, he suggested that the European security conference be considered a permanent item on the Council's Agenda. As regards the problems to be brought up in contacts with Eastern bloc countries, he agreed with the Danish Representative that no topics should be rejected, it being understood that the United States and Canadian participation was still essential for any European security conference.

25. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE drew attention to three closely related points: all the member countries had contacts with Eastern bloc governments; they were all convinced of the need for consultations on the problems to be discussed during these contacts; and they all agreed that preparations for a European security conference should be made as part of the follow-up studies under the Harmel Report (paragraph 12). However, he appreciated the value of the informal soundings taken by the Netherlands Government in the Group of Ten regarding the Eastern bloc and non-aligned countries' attitude towards a possible conference on European problems and the agenda and procedures for such a conference. It was clear that the Netherlands Government was taking care not to commit the

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Alliance and respected the principle of joint consultations. Since, however, these consultations were part of the follow-up to the Harmel Report, they must cover both basic and procedural issues - which, moreover, it was often difficult to consider separately. At the same time, he felt that it was impossible to arrive at definite conclusions until a thorough review had been carried out. He was therefore unwilling to be involved forthwith in a definite timetable. The United Kingdom position regarding a European security conference had already been stated on several occasions, and in particular during a recent visit, when the Soviet Authorities had suggested that the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union should have bilateral talks on this question; in reply, his Government had made it quite clear that it would not begin talks on a conference or a conference agenda without consulting NATO. In his Government's view, these consultations should be held as part of the follow-up to the Harmel Report. In conclusion, he wished to inform the Council that Mr. Stewart was shortly due to carry out a programme of visits to East European countries in response to the invitation extended to his predecessor. He would visit Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary between June and September. To sum up, his Government was in favour of continuing exploratory talks on condition that certain developments were not encouraged and that European security problems were not brought up independently of consultations with the Alliance.

26. The FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE noted that during the discussion this question had been broached from two stand-points: that of procedure and that of the substantial issues involved. In so far as procedure was concerned, his Government's position was very closely akin to that of Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands, being based on paragraph 7 of the Harmel Report. The way the Eastern bloc countries were responding to the contacts showed that this was the right procedure, particularly since these contacts were being developed at a time when Eastern bloc countries were critically reviewing their systems of government and their relations with their neighbours and Western countries. As regards the substantial issues, the question of the status of the German Democratic Republic, which had been referred to on several occasions, raised a problem of expediency, and the French Government had a number of reservations in this connection. This question could not not be discussed with the Eastern bloc countries until certain appropriate conditions had been met, and it would appear that this had not yet been done. While it was true that no country had a monopoly in the matter of détente, certain countries had special responsibilities for the very complex German problem, as was recognised in the Harmel Report. On the question of a European security conference, he said that his Government had no objection to this in principle, and, indeed, felt it to be desirable. However, the conference should be held only if it appeared likely to succeed, and this was not obviously so at present.

27. The GREEK REPRESENTATIVE urged that one essential point should be borne in mind, namely, that the Warsaw Pact countries were constantly attempting to weaken the Alliance by approaching certain of its members individually to ascertain whether there were any basic issues on which they disagreed with their partners. He therefore stressed the importance of maintaining a united front on these basic problems. Although no decisions could be taken as a result of these bilateral contacts, he felt that they might nonetheless produce a climate of opinion which could be dangerous in some cases. He recommended that during bilateral discussions an attempt should be made to probe the smaller Warsaw Pact countries' real feelings about Soviet policy, e.g. the Polish Government's position on disarmament problems. He pointed out that the communiqué of the Dresden meeting referred to an increase in Warsaw Pact forces. In conclusion, he expressed the view that it would be useful to help certain countries, such as Rumania and Yugoslavia, to develop an independent foreign policy.

28. The CHAIRMAN, summing up the discussion, stressed that two important points had emerged: first, in the follow-up to the Harmel Report, the Political Committee should give special attention to basic issues; second, the bilateral contacts should be continued in an atmosphere of mutual confidence. Although, theoretically speaking, a distinction could be drawn between exploratory discussions and genuine negotiations, in practice it was often difficult to establish precisely where the former ended and the latter began. He therefore felt that the Alliance should have confidence in the responsible attitude of member Governments in contact with the Eastern bloc countries. He had taken note of Representatives' comments on the problems to be dealt with bilaterally or multilaterally in accordance with the guidance in the Harmel Report. Speaking generally, he noted that, while the Council recognised that the most important multilateral problem at the present time was that of European security, it also felt that the special interests of certain of its members should be borne in mind. Finally, he considered that in view of the new ideas injected by the Harmel Report and the reports by various Governments, there was adequate justification for a series of consultations which, it would appear, were necessary in order to pave the way for future negotiations. He was convinced that the work which should be speedily pursued as a follow-up to the Harmel Report would contribute to make the problems created by bilateral contacts less acute.

29. The COUNCIL:

took note of the above statements and of the Chairman's conclusions.

IV. FOLLOW-UP ON PARAGRAPH 14 OF THE HARMEL REPORT  
(List of Military and Political Questions)

Document: PO/68/186

30. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at its last two meetings the Council had discussed the problem of the Soviet presence in the Mediterranean and it had been decided that he should prepare a list of political and military questions. This had been done in the meantime and PO/68/186 on the subject had been circulated to Permanent Representatives on 25th March. As had been pointed out in that document, he intended to send a list of military questions, with such modifications as the Permanent Representatives might wish to propose, to the military authorities before 1st April.

31. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE announced that he accepted the political questions subject to Section V being broadened to allow for other situations to be met. He suggested that the two paragraphs should be replaced by:

"Study of possible action by NATO, or its member governments, to meet this situation, including the political and economic aspects and possible military action."

32. With regard to the military questions, he indicated that instructions would be received before the end of this week.

33. The GREEK REPRESENTATIVE felt that there was a need for further clarification in Section V and that the study of possible modifications of forces should be made in the light of the answers from the military authorities. He proposed to amend the first paragraph of this section to read as follows: "In the light of answers by the military authorities study whether an increase in forces should be considered or whether they should be modified in accordance with the new political and military instruction". The second paragraph was acceptable in its present form. He further proposed that in the second paragraph of Section III of the political questions the wording "may involve" was too vague and should be replaced more positively by "involved".

34. The Greek Representative then emphasised the need to examine what action countries should take individually to restrict Soviet influence in the Mediterranean.

35. The CHAIRMAN thought that this was best covered in Section V.



36. The FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE expressed concern at the number of proposed alterations to the questions which was only a general list and in any case was not binding. He felt it was necessary to avoid wording the questions in line with the answers that were wanted, and would be reluctant to approve questions requesting answers without having full knowledge of the background.

37. The LUXEMBOURG REPRESENTATIVE, referring to paragraph C of Section I, thought it would be interesting to know the extent of NATO economic activities in the Mediterranean countries. He proposed that a table of these activities be drawn up and that a balance of the respective economic forces should be studied afterwards with a view to deciding on the best action to be taken.

38. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE thought it would be better to concentrate on assessing the position and to regard as a separate issue the ways and means of meeting this situation. He proposed, consequently, that Section V should be dropped altogether from the list of political questions. If this proved unacceptable to the Council he would then support the broadened United Kingdom proposal.

39. He considered PO/68/186 was a useful outline of the problems and agreed with the French Representative that too much attention to detail should be avoided.

40. Referring to the military questions, he announced his position on these would be made known shortly, but in any event before 1st April. It seemed to him that the main problem with the military questions was that they followed the traditional pattern of general war. As the Soviet forces were not large enough to challenge the United States Sixth Fleet he assumed that the Russians had motives of a more obtrusive character.

41. The United States Representative expressed the opinion that a draft assessment of the political state of affairs and trends should not prove to be too big a task. Much relevant material, including reports already prepared by the military authorities, was already available. He agreed, of course, that the Soviet threat would have to be closely scrutinised before drawing up the final report.

42. During preparation in Council he thought it important to take into account three different audiences:

- (1) The NATO public. Growing attention to the Mediterranean theatre by parliamentarians and the press indicated that the results of the spring Ministerial Meeting would come in for close examination. Without wishing to prejudice or downgrade independent action, he felt that a response with a multilateral flavour was needed.

- (2) Soviet decision-makers. The next Ministerial Meeting would also be followed by the Soviet Union which would hope to detect disharmony in NATO. It was essential, he considered, to put a premium on finding a new solution as well as stressing the common concern of the Alliance. It would be quite inadequate to simply suggest that previous solutions were sufficient for this new problem.
- (3) Non-NATO and non-Warsaw Pact countries, particularly in the Mediterranean area. Attempts should be made to minimise the effects of counter-measures in order to dispel fears that NATO might be embarking on a "gun-boat" policy in the Mediterranean. At the same time it should be emphasised that NATO was not forcing a common front vis-à-vis the Arab countries and fully respected the integrity of all countries.

43. He noted that the Ministers at their next meeting were going to be faced with a political dilemma, as if they only agreed on the common assessment they would be criticised in their own countries for discovering what everybody already knew. In these circumstances, therefore, it was imperative to have suggestions to meet this new situation.

44. In conclusion, he suggested that one response to the increased Soviet presence was a commensurately better organization of NATO's capacity to watch the Soviet build-up in the Mediterranean. Improved surveillance offered considerable military advantages and might also help to respond to political requirements.

45. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE announced that it was of great importance to his country to find measures to counteract the Soviet presence in the Mediterranean. He noted that Section V seemed to be the centre of interest and proposed that the following additional paragraph should be inserted between the two present ones:

"Study whether the use of these forces as factor of a political action with a view to counteracting, or at least restricting, the effects of the presence of Soviet forces, should be considered."

46. He was concerned that not enough consideration had yet been given to the Soviet presence as an element of political pressure and of psychological influence.

47. With regard to the military questions he wondered whether the hypothesis of a withdrawal of the United States Sixth Fleet should not be added to the suggested studies.

48. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE, in answer to the question about the United States Sixth Fleet, stated that Section II, paragraph (e) of the military questions provided an adequate framework to cover the hypothesis mentioned by the Italian Representative.

49. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE, agreeing with his view, withdrew his question.

50. The FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE indicated that the current discussion was making the questions become much more explosive in character. At the moment a particular situation was being considered but this should not rule out any prospect of changes occurring in the future.

51. He agreed with the United States Representative over leaving out Section V as it seemed logical to carry out an analysis first and only then to try and find solutions.

52. Consequently, he supported the United States proposal. If this was not accepted he would agree to the United Kingdom suggestion, subject to "if need be" being added.

53. In the event of neither of these two proposals being accepted, he would have to place a reservation.

54. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE announced that he would accept either the original questions in Section V or the United Kingdom proposal as amended by France.

55. The TURKISH REPRESENTATIVE informed the Council that he had not yet received instructions from his Authorities about the political and the military questions. He hoped, however, that if necessary the military questions could be sent off to the military authorities two or three days after 1st April.

56. Referring to the Greek Representative's remarks about Section V, he considered this to be a pertinent point and commenting on Section I, paragraph (a) of the military questions, he felt that it was worded in such a way as to indicate preference for a particular solution. It was essential, he emphasised, to leave the full range of options open to the experts answering these questions.

57. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE stated his support for the United Kingdom proposal with the French amendment. He thought that this broader language could also be employed in the military questions and referred to Section III which seemed to suggest the answer that should be given.

58. A certain contradiction appeared to exist, he pointed out, between the apparent détente in Europe and the present escalation in the Mediterranean.

59. In the military questions he fully agreed with the Turkish Representative that other responses to the threat existed in addition to the ones mentioned. It should be left open to the military authorities to devise the appropriate countermeasures.

60. The GREEK REPRESENTATIVE expressed his disagreement with the view that contradiction existed between the new military situation in the Mediterranean and détente in Europe. He stressed that the Harmel Report clearly stated that there should be an appraisal of the military capacity of the enemy, and it was exactly this that was being undertaken. It was generally accepted that local wars were quite possible, and nothing precluded a NATO country from becoming involved in one. Consequently he favoured the retention of Section V of the political questions and Section III of the military questions.

61. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE agreed with the Greek Representative and pointed out that security problems were specifically covered by the Harmel Report. The new situation in the Mediterranean was dangerous and measures had to be considered to meet it, which were in no way contradictory with a détente in Europe. He did not wish his earlier suggestion for Section V to be given any interpretation of belligerency.

62. The NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVE was of the opinion that Section V should be left out, as the first phase should deal with making an assessment. At a later stage an examination should be made of the best ways to overcome this problem. If the United States proposal was not accepted he would agree to the United Kingdom one with the French amendment.

63. The DANISH REPRESENTATIVE expressed his support for the more flexible proposal of the United Kingdom and was opposed to submitting "loaded" questions. He noted with pleasure the proposal to divide this study into the two stages of assessment and conclusion.

64. The BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE announced the importance his Government attached to preparing this Alliance report and thought that it should be started as soon as possible. He had noted that some concern had been expressed about not enough questions being included, but considered this was not essential as during the study all important aspects would emerge. He agreed with the United Kingdom proposal and French amendment and was in favour of keeping the subject as broad as possible.

65. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the list was merely a compilation of the questions previously raised in the Council and was in no way intended to preclude further discussion. The questions did not imply an increase in forces but were concerned with a new organization with a political meaning.

66. He noted the modified rôle of this study implied through the proposals concerning Section V, but considered it important to retain this heading in one form or another as it was here that guidance would be given to the Ministers.

67. It was now essential, he thought, to decide on the kind of report for the Ministerial meeting at Reykjavik, and whether it should be just an appraisal of the situation or whether directives should be proposed for the Ministers to take.

68. It should also be decided how the Report was to be made and whether it was necessary to wait for the military answers before beginning work. He felt that a drafting group to assess the situation could be set up consisting of representatives from the delegations with assistance from the International Secretariat.

69. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE pointed out that Section V was basically different from the other questions for which considerable material already existed enabling a draft assessment to be made. This Section, however, could not be answered by a drafting group, and he felt the best way to handle it was through informal consultations with the Council.

70. The CHAIRMAN of the MILITARY COMMITTEE announced that there was not much time available if military advice was to be given in time for the next Ministerial Meeting. He proposed, therefore, to ask for SHAPE to undertake a study of Section I of the military questions and to bear in mind the general considerations in this connection affecting the Alliance in peace and in war.

71. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE agreed that the Military Committee should proceed on this basis and in these circumstances he would not propose any additional military questions.

72. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE expressed agreement with the Military Committee proposal and could agree not to press now the United Kingdom amendment for Section V, since this Section would be retained for further study by the Council. When this matter was examined later by the Council it should be studied in the light of the proposed amendment.

73. The GREEK REPRESENTATIVE announced his agreement with the Military Committee proposal and suggested that Section II, paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of the military questions should also be studied. He was also in favour of Section V being studied in the draft assessment of the situation.

74. With regard to the United Kingdom amendment to Section V being retained for later discussion, he wished to reserve the position of his Government.

75. The FRENCH and ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVES agreed with the proposals made by the United States, United Kingdom on Section V of the political questions and the Military Committee on Section I of the military questions.

76. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Council retained responsibility for Section V of the political questions and Section III of the military questions. Parallel discussions should take place on them informally between delegations and they should be on the Council's Agenda in three weeks' time with Section V amended as proposed by the United Kingdom and France.

77. The International Secretariat, in collaboration with the delegations, would draft a paper assessing the first four sections of the political questions, keeping in mind the suggestions made at this meeting and using material already available.

78. The Military Committee should request SHAPE to study Sections I and II (a), (b) and (c) of the military questions but that the military study should not delay the political side.

79. The DANISH REPRESENTATIVE stressed the need to have the result of the assessment studies before embarking on discussions over Section V.

80. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE stated that the time factor and the complexity of the problems necessitated concurrent studies.

81. The CHAIRMAN believed that the draft assessment would be ready within the next three weeks and that in the meantime the Council should examine Section V informally with parallel studies taking place. When Section V was discussed in the Council the draft report would be available, and in any case it was not his intention to make definite recommendations in the early stages.

82. The COUNCIL:

- (1) agreed to set up a drafting committee in the International Secretariat, assisted by the Delegations, to make an assessment draft on the first four Sections of the political questions of document P0/68/186;
- (2) noted that this report should be ready within three weeks;
- (3) decided to discuss Section V of the political questions according to the United Kingdom proposal with the French amendment. This should be done first informally and then in the Council in three weeks time, and was subject to the reservation of the Greek Representative;
- (4) requested the Military Committee to study Sections I and II (a), (b) and (c) of the military questions;
- (5) decided to retain responsibility for Section III of the military questions and to discuss it in the Council on a parallel course with Section V of the political questions.

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

V. ATTENDANCE AT A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE FOUR WESTERN NEGOTIATORS AT GENEVA

83. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at its last meeting the Council had not been in a position, due to lack of time, to discuss the question of the attendance at a meeting of the Council of the four Western negotiators at Geneva.

84. As the Geneva Conference had now gone into recess and preparations for a special meeting of the UN General Assembly were under way, this subject was certainly of particular interest.

85. The CHAIRMAN thought that the Council might wish to resume, at a time to be decided upon, what after all had been a normal practice in the Alliance, namely to be briefed orally by the four Western participants at the Geneva Conference.

86. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE considered that this practice was most useful and expressed support for it to be resumed. He announced that the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Conference (ENDC) at Geneva had risen and would resume its work on 24th April at the UN General Assembly for four to

five weeks. The ENDC would not start their work again in Geneva until July and he thought it would be an excellent idea for all four Western negotiators to address the Council, perhaps in May, before the resumption of the Geneva Conference. He found it even more necessary than before to have liaison between the Council and the ENDC due to the very important discussions on disarmament in the Council.

87. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE enquired whether the negotiators used to come individually on previous occasions to make their reports to the Council.

88. The CHAIRMAN indicated that this used to be the custom and that at later meetings the practice of the negotiators coming separately could be resumed. He felt, however, that this particular case was different in view of the new and wider scope of activities to be reviewed.

89. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE agreed with the proposal of the Canadian Representative and looked forward to these discussions.

90. He pointed out that the neavy schedules of the negotiators required co-ordinated arrangements to be made as early as possible for their invitations to attend a Council meeting.

91. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE announced his agreement subject to confirmation.

92. The COUNCIL:

- (1) agreed to resume the practice of receiving oral briefings from the four Western negotiators at Geneva;
- (2) decided to invite all four Western negotiators to brief the Council at a meeting in May.

VI. EXPORT CREDITS GRANTED BY NATO COUNTRIES TO EASTERN BLOC COUNTRIES

Reference: C-M(68)6

93. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE stated that his Authorities had reviewed with the greatest interest the Report by the Committee of Economic Advisers on export credits granted by NATO countries to Eastern bloc countries (C-M(68)6). In their view, this document provided a first-class basis for study and assessment, and had the merit of drawing attention not only to



points of similarity but also to certain discrepancies which had already emerged as a result of the studies by the Committee of Economic Advisers. The most notable of these discrepancies had to do with the relationship between credits to Eastern bloc countries and aid for Third World countries which, it was felt in certain quarters - a view to which Italy did not subscribe - might be compromised by the granting of these credits. While his Authorities did not call for any amendments to the Report, they wished to draw the Council's attention to a number of points. He would begin by quoting a few figures; in 1966, his country had granted the following credits to Third World countries:

    \$ 495 million to the Argentine, \$ 150 million to India,  
    \$ 120 million to Indonesia, \$ 116 million to Brazil,  
    \$ 90 million to the Arab States, \$ 65 million to Turkey,  
    \$ 61 million to Greece and \$ 40 million to Pakistan.

To sum up, as was recorded in the OECD memorandum dated 26th June, 1967, credits totalling \$ 823 million - i.e. more than 1% of the national product - had been granted in 1966. This exceeded the goal fixed by the OECD and UNCTAD. These figures, he felt, showed that aid to the developing countries was in no way affected by the granting of credits to Eastern bloc countries. In any case such aid was authorised by his Government only when it was consistent with a trade policy based on realistic economic assessments. Moreover, these credits were designed to increase exports in certain industrial sectors such as the engineering industry, and thus helped to create markets which encouraged technical development and productivity. A clear distinction therefore had to be made between the provision of aid for the developing countries and the maintenance of national economic activity. Nor would it be possible to use the credits granted to Eastern bloc countries - after an adequate assessment of the trade risks involved - for Third World countries, which would not always be able to use them or ensure their proper amortisation. In conclusion, he said that the growth in trade with Eastern bloc countries was a feature of the trend in East-West relations which Italy - like all its Allies - felt to be conducive to political stability.

94. The COUNCIL:

    took note of the above statement.

NATO UNCLASSIFIED

VII. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

95. Friday, 29th March, 1968, at 10.15 a.m.

OTAN/NATO,  
Brussels, 39.

NATO SECRET