

Ministers also reviewed the situation in various areas of the world threatened by internal conflict and external force. They noted developments which continued to be a cause of concern in Southeast Asia, in the Caribbean area and elsewhere.

Ministers reaffirmed their determination to improve and intensify their political consultation on subjects of common concern. They agreed on the necessity of maintaining and strengthening the defensive capability, having regard to the constant advances in science and technology. They also reviewed the implementation of decisions reached at Ottawa regarding fuller information on nuclear questions for national authorities and broader participation by member countries in the Organization and operational planning functions of SACEUR's nuclear forces. Finally, they took note of the progress achieved to give effect to the decisions made at Ottawa to pursue the study of the interrelated questions of strategy, force requirements, and the resources available to meet them. This study is under way.

Ministers reviewed the progress made during the year in improving co-operation in research, development and production of military equipment. They also noted with satisfaction the recent decisions in regard to the establishment of a NATO air-defence ground-environment system.

In the economic field, ministers noted that the economies of the NATO countries have been steadily expanding and, in contrast to what has been happening in the Communist world, the economic systems of the West have shown themselves capable of flexible adaptation to circumstances. This has permitted not only an increase in the standards of living of their own people but has also enabled large-scale assistance to be extended to the developing countries.

The Council, having noted progress made in the implementation of earlier resolutions concerning the defence problems of Greece, reaffirmed its interest in the further effective application of these resolutions.

Ministers agreed to give urgent priority to a study of the military and economic problems of the defence of Greece and Turkey and, if possible, for a report to be made to the spring ministerial meeting of the Council.

Ministers examined a report on civil defence and emergency planning, which are an essential complement to the defence effort.

The next meeting of the North Atlantic Council at ministerial level will be held on the invitation of the Netherlands Government at The Hague from May 12 to 14, 1964.

*Following is the report made in the House of Commons by Mr. Martin on December 21, 1963:*

The ministerial meetings of NATO are *in camera*. It is not possible to give a detailed account of the matters discussed or of the decisions reached. However, to the extent that it is possible to give an indication of our discussions, I may say that this particular meeting took place at the end of a rather unusual year in international affairs.