

Although no major crises had arisen in Europe, the Soviet Union continues to oppose a settlement of the cardinal issues between East and West. Such a settlement, which must safeguard the legitimate interests of all concerned, remains one of the essential objectives of the alliance. At the same time, ministers also noted that the Soviet Union continues to devote an increasing share of its economic and technical resources to military purposes.

In this situation, ministers emphasized their determination to maintain the unity of the alliance and to ensure its collective defence.

The Council noted with regret that no progress had been made towards overcoming the division of Germany. The accusations levelled against the Federal Republic of Germany do not make a solution any easier. Rejecting these accusations, the Council reaffirmed that a just and peaceful solution to the problem of Germany can be reached only on the basis of the right of self-determination. They also reaffirmed that the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is the only German government freely and legitimately constituted and therefore entitled to speak for Germany as the representative of the German people in international affairs. With regard to Berlin, the alliance stands by the terms of its Declaration of December 16, 1958.

Turning to problems outside the Atlantic area, ministers noted that tension had diminished in some parts of the world. But in Southeast Asia conflicts continued. With regard to Vietnam, the United States Secretary of State reaffirmed that the United States, while determined to fulfil its commitments, remained ready to enter without preconditions into negotiations to end the war. He recapitulated the views of his Government as to the bases for a peaceful settlement. The United Kingdom Secretary of State for Defence outlined British policy on the subject of Rhodesia and expressed appreciation for the support received from allied governments. He stressed the need for further concerted action by members of the alliance. Consultations will continue not only on these problems but also on those to which several ministers drew attention, arising out of the policies pursued by the People's Republic of China.

Ministers reaffirmed the concern of their governments for the social and economic welfare and continuing progress of the developing countries.

Ministers reaffirmed that the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control remained one of the principal objectives of their governments. They expressed their regret that so little progress had been made towards this end. They viewed with concern the potential danger of the spread of nuclear weapons in various parts of the world. They agreed that this problem should be kept under constant review and that the search should be continued for ways of averting the danger. Ministers welcomed the recent decision to convene periodical meetings in NATO in order to intensify the examination of detailed technical aspects of arms control and for the exploration of new possibilities for progress in disarmament.

Ministers noted with satisfaction the progress made in studies of the inter-