

Clearly any Soviet intervention directly or indirectly affecting the situation in Europe or in the Mediterranean would create an international crisis with grave consequences.

7. So long as the Soviet leaders adhere to a policy of force, these new uncertainties will remain. The Allies are convinced that their political solidarity remains indispensable to discourage aggression and other forms of oppression. Above all, they stand wholly determined to meet their common responsibilities and, in accordance with the North Atlantic Treaty, to defend the members of the Alliance against any armed attack.

8. The Allies participating in NATO's integrated defence programme have, therefore, been obliged to re-assess the state of their defences. They consider that the situation arising from recent events calls for a collective response. The quality, effectiveness, and deployment of NATO's forces will be improved in terms of both manpower and equipment in order to provide a better capability for defence as far forward as possible. The quality of reserve forces will also be improved and their ability to mobilize rapidly will be increased. Renewed attention will be directed to the provision of reinforcements for the flanks and the strengthening of local forces there. The conventional capability of NATO's tactical air forces will be increased. Certain additional national units will be committed to the Major NATO Commanders. Specific measures have been approved within these categories of action for improving the conventional capability of NATO's forces. Ministers agreed that the co-ordinated implementation of these measures and the provision of additional budgetary resources to the extent necessary to support them would form part of the NATO Force Plan for 1969-1973 which will be submitted in January 1969. They also acknowledged that the solidarity of the Alliance can be strengthened by co-operation between members to alleviate burdens arising from balance of payments deficits resulting specifically from military expenditures for the collective defence.

9. A year ago Ministers affirmed in the Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance that, while maintaining adequate military strength and political solidarity to deter any aggressor, the Alliance should work to promote a policy of *détente*. The Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia has seriously set back hopes of settling the outstanding problems which still divide the European continent and Germany and of establishing peace and security in Europe, and threatens certain of the results already achieved in the field of *détente*. Indeed, in view of the action of the five members of the Warsaw Pact, the scope and level of Allied contacts with them have had to be reduced.

10. More specifically, prospects for mutual balanced force reductions have suffered a severe setback. Nevertheless, the Allies in close consultation are continuing their studies and preparations for a time when the atmosphere for fruitful discussions is more favourable.