

## Meeting of Parliamentarians from NATO Countries—Paris, July 1955

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THE idea of establishing closer relationship between NATO and national legislatures has received considerable support, both in official and unofficial circles, since the creation of the Organization. The Norwegian Foreign Minister, Dr. Lange, raised the matter as far back as the Ottawa session of the North Atlantic Council in 1951 and during the last two years parties of parliamentarians from Denmark, France, Italy, Norway and the United Kingdom have visited NATO Headquarters in order to inform themselves of the problems faced by NATO and the progress it has achieved in various fields of activities. What it is hoped to accomplish through these visits is to widen the base of public support for the Organization and, particularly, to develop useful contact, at the parliamentary level, between North American and European members of the Alliance. The value of these aims was particularly recognized by the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, formed on May 14, 1954, by members of both Houses of the Canadian Parliament, irrespective of party affiliations.

The new element, however, contained in a resolution adopted this year by the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association shortly after the opening of the Canadian Parliament, was to organize concurrent visits to NATO Headquarters of Parliamentarians from all NATO countries. As a result of this Canadian proposal, which was brought to the attention of the Secretary-General of NATO on January 18, the Chairman of the Norwegian Foreign Affairs Committee, who had been issuing invitations to a number of NATO countries to send Parliamentarians to a meeting in Paris in the spring or early summer of 1955, decided to co-ordinate arrangements on behalf of the Norwegian *Storting* with the Chairman of the Canadian group, Senator W. McL. Robertson, and it was finally agreed that only one meeting of Parliamentarians would be held in Paris commencing on July 18, the date suggested by the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association. Invitations were accordingly issued to all NATO Parliaments or Parliamentary Associations to send representatives on that date.

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It is against this general background that about 175 Parliamentarians, representing the fifteen NATO countries, met at the Palais de Chaillot in mid-July. The first problem that had to be met before the Conference convened was to set up the necessary administrative machinery to enable it to function harmoniously and with the maximum efficiency. No precedent, of course, existed in this respect since Parliamentarians visiting NATO Headquarters had hitherto been mostly concerned with obtaining a greater knowledge about the Organization and its accomplishments. The proposed Conference, on the other hand, wished to initiate a discussion of NATO affairs and the role that might be played by Parliamentarians in furthering the work of the Organization. From the outset it was recognized that, the Conference having been called by the Parliamentarians themselves and not by the Organization, the actual conduct of the Conference was the sole responsibility of the Parliamentarians. On the other hand, in accordance with its policy to encourage visits from Parliamen-