

117. While the Department was weighing the various elements in the problem and requesting National Defence to prepare a military appreciation of the issues involved, Mr. Wilgress was reporting from London on the U.S. memorandum to the NATO Deputies. It was his view that it primarily reflected "the pressure of military thinking rather than a careful balancing of politico-economic factors as well as purely military considerations". He believed that Canada should emphasize the point that the inclusion of Greece and Turkey would substantially alter the basis of the North Atlantic Community which underlies the treaty itself. He forecast that, Italy excepted, the other smaller European powers more likely to take a position of active opposition or passive acceptance, to the U.S. proposal, while the United Kingdom would not offer sustained opposition. The Department shared the High Commissioner's views about the weakness of the political arguments in the U.S. memorandum. It was somewhat encouraged by news from Washington that the conclusions report Greek and Turkish membership were in no way final, and that the United States "looked forward to the fullest exchange of views within NATO with the object of achieving a solution mutually agreeable to all". It had also learned from Mr. Ford in Moscow that two views were held there by Western diplomats on the interpretation which the Russians might place upon the admission of Greece and Turkey to NATO. The Netherlands and Norwegian Ambassadors were of the opinion that it might be regarded by the Russians as the first step towards turning NATO "into a real encirclement of the Soviet Union". The United States-Italian argument was that the Soviet rulers were already so firmly convinced of the aggressive intent of NATO that they would not be so disturbed by the admission of Greece and Turkey as to create a situation where the advantages of their admission would outweigh hesitations about offending Soviet sensitivities. Mr. Ford took a halfway position. He thought the admission of Greece and Turkey would not be sufficient to force a showdown "unless it were combined with a decision to arm Germany and bring it also into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization". It might discourage hasty action by satellites against Yugoslavia. But the main effect in Mr. Ford's judgment might be "to harden Russian minds against the idea that an accommodation with the West is possible". Mr. Ford concluded that on the whole the positive gains exceeded this disadvantage if it existed. His comments were of particular interest, since the United States had not commented on that aspect of the question in its memorandum.

118. By the end of May the Department had decided to support a suggestion from the United Kingdom that the question should be examined in its military aspect by the Standing Group of NATO a suggestion which the Deputies accepted. Mr. Wilgress was advised to abstain from playing a prominent role in the Deputies' discussions since

"It would be improper for the Canadian Government to take a leading part in urging a course of action which would involve others in extending commitments, although it is quite proper for Canada to comment on any measure which would substantially alter the character of NATO".

The Department had decided that parliamentary approval would be required if the decision to admit the two countries was made, as it would constitute a major commitment for defence in an area in which Canada had not been hitherto directly involved. Such a consideration further underlined the need for great care in reaching a decision, and the inadvisability of the Deputies reaching a hasty conclusion "for the mere sake of trying to meet a given deadline". For that reason Canada favoured examination of the problem at the next meeting of the North Atlantic Council.