

the need for an understanding between the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR on a negotiated settlement of their mutual relations which would take account of the special features of the situation in Germany.

8. Ministers took note of a report on the situation in the Mediterranean prepared on their instructions by the Council in Permanent Session. They noted that the evolution of events in the area gives cause for concern and justifies careful vigilance on the part of the allies. They recommended that consultations on this question should continue, and they invited the Council in Permanent Session to keep the situation under review and to report fully thereon at their next meeting.

9. As a result of their review of the international situation and its positive and negative aspects, ministers emphasized that these developments in Europe and the Mediterranean all affect the alliance directly or indirectly, and have a bearing on the possibilities of reducing tensions and promoting peace.

10. Ministers noted that the initiatives which had been taken by allied governments had already achieved certain results which constituted some progress in important fields of East-West relations. Nevertheless their hope had been that more substantial progress would have been recorded in bilateral exploratory contacts and in the on-going negotiations, so that active consideration could have been given to the institution of broad multilateral contacts which would deal with the substantial problems of security and co-operation in Europe. They affirmed the readiness of their governments, as soon as the talks on Berlin have reached a satisfactory conclusion and in so far as the other on-going talks are proceeding favourably, to enter into multilateral contacts with all interested governments to explore when it would be possible to convene a conference, or a series of conferences, on security and co-operation in Europe. In this event, the Council would give immediate attention to this question.

11. In the meantime, the Council in Permanent Session will continue its study of the results which might be achieved at any such conference or series of conferences, and of the appropriate exploratory and preparatory procedures, including the proposals that have already been advanced. The allied governments will also pursue energetically their bilateral exploratory conversations with all interested states on questions affecting security and co-operation.

12. Ministers recalled that any genuine and lasting improvement in East-West relations in Europe must be based on the respect of the following principles which should govern relations between states and which would be included among the points to be explored: sovereign equality, political independence and territorial integrity of each European state; non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of any state, regardless of its political or social system; and the right of the people of each European state to shape their own destinies free of external constraint. A common understanding and application of these principles, without condition or reservation, would give full