

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



CANADA

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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No. 66/26 MAINTAINING THE UNITY OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

Report to the House of Commons on June 10, 1966, by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin.

...In accordance with our practice, I wish to report to the House on the NATO ministerial meeting which took place this week in Brussels. Also in accordance with practice in other years and with the consent of the House I should like to table two copies in French and two copies in English of the final communiqué of this meeting...

The discussions at this meeting covered a wide range of problems, but our attention was necessarily concentrated on issues directly related to the French decision, while remaining within the alliance, to withdraw from the integrated military structure.

The nature of the main problems that we had to discuss, which were internal to the alliance, made necessary an unprecedented organization of work. The meetings on Monday, June 6, were among the foreign ministers of the 14 countries, to which the Government of France had sent communications. It also proved necessary in the case of the regular ministerial meetings for the 14 ministers to hold meetings several times separately in order to work out among themselves a common position on issues under negotiation with the French. This, too, was an unprecedented procedural development and one which could have created difficulty. That it worked smoothly I regard as evidence of the goodwill of all members of the alliance. I am also encouraged to think that it reflected their genuine desire to develop forms of relationships which would make possible continuing co-operation in the future.

Never in my experience has there been a NATO meeting where the exchanges were franker, and perhaps where the problems were more difficult. This was hardly surprising. Ministers found, when they reached Brussels, that both among the 14 and as between the 14 and France they were divided on two important questions: the 14 had differing and strongly held views as to whether a new site should be chosen for the North Atlantic Council, and previous efforts to find a formula to cover negotiations between France and the 14 over the future role of French forces in Germany had proved abortive.

These two issues of the meetings -- the site of the NATO Council and the negotiating procedures for French forces in Germany -- involved for us a common concern. At stake in each case was the continued unity of the alliance. We avoided open breaches. Orderly procedures for examining our differences were agreed upon. Time was gained. I do not deny that we have difficult problems ahead of us. The 14 proved to themselves that they could hold to a common position, and France found that its allies were ready to compromise in order to preserve the unity of the alliance.

...Reporting on these very vital meetings, I do not want to give an exaggerated impression of the achievements of the meeting. In concrete terms, we succeeded in working out a procedure for conducting negotiations on the several problems involving all members of the alliance which are posed by the French decision to withdraw from the integrated military structure. Moreover, the intensive and delicate discussions which led up to this agreement, and which lasted for two days, were marked by efforts on both sides to resist any formula which they considered might prejudice their position in the negotiations which would ensue. This confirmed what we already knew -- that it will prove extremely difficult to find a way to reconcile at the same time the requirement of the 14 that French forces remaining in Germany should undertake a militarily significant role with French insistence on the principle that their forces should not be integrated.

The question at issue here is the extent of the military co-operation which the French Government will be prepared to provide as a substitute for participation in the integrated military structure; for it is necessary to have a concerted planning in peace-time if there is to be effective response in emergencies and concerted action in war. The outcome of these complex and crucial negotiations cannot be forecast, but they are at least fairly launched.

The other issue faced at Brussels concerned the future site of the North Atlantic Council. This was the main issue which divided the 14. There were some who felt keenly that a decision had to be taken immediately to move the Council from Paris. With SHAPE, the military headquarters, obliged to leave French territory, they argued the case for the collocation of the military and civil headquarters.

A decision to move the Council from Paris would be an important political action. I argued: would it have been right to have taken such a step before testing French intentions; before discovering whether co-operative military arrangements could be worked out between the French and the 14 who have decided to maintain the integrated military structure; even before President de Gaulle had visited Moscow, even before the French foreign minister had reached Brussels and had a chance to show, in consultation with his colleagues, whether satisfactory arrangements could be worked out with France? How could we hope to work out such arrangements with France, the Canadian delegation argued, if our first action as the 14 was to anticipate that our negotiations with the French would fail?

These are the questions I put to my colleagues. No matter how valid some of the arguments for moving the Council might be, we maintained it was too early to take a decision. Eventually, after the fullest discussion, the 14 ministers agreed to defer consideration of the question until October.

The French Foreign Minister later spoke in the ministerial meeting of the position taken by the 14. He said the French Government would be pleased if the 14 decided that the Council should remain in Paris but, if it were decided to move the Council, France would understand the reasons. This statement, which is noted in the communiqué, helped to clear the atmosphere. When we do approach this problem again in the autumn, President de Gaulle will have visited the Soviet Union and we shall have a clearer idea of the limits of military co-operation between France and the 14. Then, in reaching our decision, facts rather than expectations can guide us.

If two of the principal achievements of the meetings emerged out of conflict, the third important element -- the emphasis on improving East-West relations -- developed without opposition. Here, I am pleased to report, agreement was complete. All ministers recognized the need to increase bilateral contacts with the countries of Eastern Europe. They saw this as having value in itself and as a necessity for the creation of an atmosphere propitious for the negotiations which must eventually take place on the German settlement. The ministers decided that a report on the possibilities for developing East-West relations should be prepared for their future use.

This unanimity of approach was most encouraging. It demonstrated the extent to which the members of the alliance share a common political outlook, agreeing on the aims of policy and on the prospects for making progress. All members reiterated that a European settlement was our basic objective. But the road to that settlement will be long. It is the intractability of the problems, rather than any lack of will to pursue solutions, which makes progress inevitably slow.

The proof of the measure of agreement and the motives underlying it are expressed in the final communiqué. By the standards of earlier communiqués I regard this communiqué as forward-looking....

The Brussels meeting can, I think, be described as fruitful in the sense that, a week before the meeting began, it seemed that we were headed for a confrontation between France and the 14 which threatened to lead to a complete breach. But a confrontation was avoided and a sense of shared interest prevailed. All countries agreed -- and this is important -- that the maintenance of the Atlantic alliance is as necessary today as ever. They further confirmed that, to this end, its members are pledged, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, to maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

Our problems are not resolved... -- indeed, the crucial issues have yet to be faced -- but necessary preliminary decisions have been taken. For this we have the alliance and the NATO Council machinery to thank. Once again, this time in new and in many ways more difficult circumstances, the value and the resilience of the alliance were demonstrated. We did our best to avoid unnecessary decisions which could have destroyed the alliance at this stage. We discussed many other problems, including Cyprus, but I have outlined today the essential ones because they involve the unity of the alliance. What the future holds for the 15 has yet to be determined but at any rate, as I have said, we have bought time.

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The Council met in ministerial session in Brussels, June 7 and 8, 1966.

2. The Council reviewed the state of the alliance. After a frank exchange of views, ministers agreed that the maintenance of the Atlantic alliance is as necessary today as ever, in order to safeguard the freedom and the common heritage of their peoples founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. The first aim of the Atlantic alliance is the common defence of all member countries; to this end its members are pledged, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, to maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

3. Ministers agreed to examine, in the light of the principles and obligations of the Treaty, and in a co-operative manner, the problems raised by the French memoranda of last March, in order to reach as soon as possible solutions acceptable to all concerned and which assure continued security. At this meeting the Council:

(a) noted the statement made by Mr. Luns on the discussions which had taken place on June 6 among 14 ministers;

(b) agreed to transfer the military headquarters of NATO from France;

(c) extended a unanimous invitation to the Benelux countries to provide a new site for SHAPE;

(d) agreed that some simplification of the command structure should be carried out. This will be achieved in the first instance in the Centre by combining under a single commander and in one headquarters the staffs now divided between the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, Central Europe, and the Commanders-in-Chief of the Land and Air Forces in Central Europe. This headquarters will be moved to a new location either in Benelux or Germany;

(e) agreed that further studies will be necessary in order to establish the precise requirements and the possibilities of hospitality in the different countries, noted that the Benelux countries, the Federal Republic, the Secretary-General and the NATO military authorities had been requested to undertake these studies forthwith; and further noted that, as soon as the required information was available, final decisions would have to be taken as a matter of urgency.

(f) extended a unanimous invitation to Italy to provide a new site for the NATO Defence College;

(g) agreed that the Standing Group will be abolished and replaced by appropriate alternative arrangements, including an integrated international Military Staff;

(h) noted the statement by Mr. Luns in connection with the site of the Council and also the statement of the French Foreign Minister on this subject.

4. With regard to the procedures for negotiation, ministers agreed that:

(a) the questions which need to be settled jointly between the allies as a consequence of French communications will in the first instance be discussed in the Council in permanent session;

(b) prominent among these questions are the tasks and missions of French forces in Germany, including their co-operation with NATO forces and command arrangements;

(c) other questions such as French participation in NADGE and NATO infrastructure projects will be discussed in the same way;

(d) the Council in permanent session may, of course, make any arrangements it wishes for discussion of these questions. It may, for example, decide to set up smaller groups to deal with some or all of the questions. When the political problems have been discussed and sufficient agreement reached on them, the elaboration of the necessary military arrangements will be referred to discussions between the French High Command and SACEUR;

(e) if the Council in permanent session can make no progress, discussion will be resumed at ministerial level.

5. In reviewing the international situation, ministers discussed the relations of their countries with the Soviet Union and the East European countries.

6. In view of the basic aims of the Soviet Union, the level of its armed forces, and its continuing allocation of a high proportion of economic and technological resources for military purposes, the ministers concluded that it is imperative for the West to maintain adequate forces for deterrence and defence.

7. Ministers had an extended discussion about the main problems affecting European security. They reaffirmed the terms of their declaration of December 16, 1958, with regard to Berlin. They regretted the absence of progress on the important question of German reunification and the continued attempts to discredit the Federal Republic of Germany. Taking note of the positive initiative taken by the German Government in their note of March 25, 1966, ministers reaffirmed that the solution of the German problem is one of the central issues in East-West relations, and they agreed on the necessity of a continued and unremitting search for a peaceful solution that would give satisfaction to the German people's fundamental right to reunification.

8. The defensive nature of the North Atlantic Treaty is indisputable. It is clearly stated in the undertaking by the signatories to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter by refraining from the use of force to settle international disputes. Furthermore, the defensive character of the alliance has been repeatedly proved by the restraint and moderation shown by its members in the last 17 years, even when confronted by provocation and hostile actions affecting

the Treaty area. Owing to the conditions of security created and maintained by an effective common defence of the North Atlantic area, political consultation among partners allows initiatives to be taken which can contribute not only to the stability of East-West relations but also to the general well-being of mankind.

9. If progress is to be made with regard to the complex problems of a European settlement, a determination to resolve the issues must exist on all sides. The peaceful ending of the division of Europe remains a principal purpose of the alliance, the objective being a Europe that will once again be one, and a Germany that will once again be united.

10. Meanwhile, member countries are seeking further to improve relations between the peoples of Eastern Europe and Western Europe, and to diminish mutual suspicions and fears. They are convinced that further tangible results could now be obtained in the cultural, economic, scientific and technical fields.

11. Ministers directed the permanent representatives to continue to examine closely the prospects of healthy developments in East-West relations, and to prepare a full report on these questions for meetings to be attended, as far as is practicable, by the foreign ministers of the various countries. This report, which should deal with all possible initiatives in this field, would cover, *inter alia*, problems connected with European security and German reunification.

12. Ministers expressed their continuous interest in progress towards general, complete and controlled disarmament. They expressed great concern over the problem of nuclear proliferation in its world-wide implications and their determination to continue their efforts to solve this problem. In particular, the governments concerned in the 18-Power Geneva Conference reaffirmed their intention to do their utmost to achieve positive results.

13. With regard to Greek-Turkish relations, ministers took note of the Secretary-General's report on the "watching brief" and confirmed their support for the continuation of his activities in this respect. They welcomed the announcement made by the Foreign Ministers of Greece and Turkey to the effect that "the Governments of Greece and Turkey, inspired by a sincere desire to facilitate a peaceful and agreed solution of the Cyprus problem and to improve their relations, have decided to proceed to contacts and exchanges of views on the Cyprus question and on Greek-Turkish relations. The procedure to be followed during these contacts will be decided in common". The ministers reiterated their appreciation of the continued presence of the United Nations Force in Cyprus and expressed their support of the efforts of the United Nations for safeguarding peace and improving the situation in the island.

14. Ministers reaffirmed their desire to promote economic co-operation in the spirit of Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty. They acknowledged the need to join efforts in order to promote research in the scientific, technical and production fields, and achieve a wider co-operation and exchange of information so that in a world of rapid scientific progress the gap in technological achievement between Europe and North America can be narrowed.

15. All economically-advanced countries, those of East and West alike, have a common responsibility to co-operate in attacking the fundamental problems confronting the developing countries. Progress towards political settlements and disarmament will contribute to this end by releasing resources and energies which are so badly needed for the advancement of human welfare.

16. The Council, agreeing that efforts should be continued to supply Greece and Turkey with defence assistance within the framework of the alliance, in order to help them maintain an effective contribution to the common defence, adopted a resolution recommending wider participation in this aid programme.

17. Ministers received a progress report on the activities of the special committee of defence ministers which was created by the Council in 1965. A further report will be submitted to the Council during the ministerial session in December.

18. In view of the importance of science and technology to the military strength of the alliance and the economic vitality of its members, ministers noted with satisfaction the recently agreed improvements in procedures for co-operation among members of the alliance in research, development and production of military equipment. They encouraged member countries to bring suitable projects forward for co-operative action.

19. They noted that a meeting of defence ministers will be convened in July to review and carry forward the institution of force-planning procedures for projecting and adjusting annually a five-year programme.

20. A meeting of the Council at ministerial level will be held in December 1966.

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