

Opening Remarks by the
Secretary General at
Press Conference - Monday, 17th April, 1967
10.30 a.m.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome this new opportunity to meet with you. I invited you to come this morning because I want to keep you informed on the progress of our study on the Future Tasks of the Alliance, and I thank you for coming in response to my invitation.

As you may recall, last December, the Ministers passed a Resolution in which they directed the Council "to study the future tasks which face the Alliance ... in order to strengthen the Alliance as a factor for a durable peace." This morning I had the honour of opening the first phase of this study.

To carry out the directives of the Ministers, the Council constituted itself into a Special Group. After extended discussions, this Group decided to divide the study into four parts, each part being entrusted to a sub-group under the guidance of a national rapporteur. Last Thursday, you were informed by a NATO Press Release of the subjects to be studied and of the names of the rapporteurs.

This morning - just half an hour ago - I had the pleasure of welcoming the rapporteurs and members of the first two sub-groups on East-West relations and on Interallied relations - and to-morrow will meet the other two sub-groups - on General Defence Policy and on Relations with other
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countries. In these two days, these four sub-groups will be holding their organizational meetings.

I am particularly pleased by the quality and distinction of the Rapporteurs who were chosen by their governments:

For the first sub-group, we have two rapporteurs - a former British Ambassador who is at present an Assistant Under Secretary of the Foreign Office - Mr. J.H.A. Watson, and the German Secretary of State - Mr. K. Schütz.

For the second sub-group, we have one of the most remarkable European statesmen, ~~A former Secretary General of NATO~~ - the Belgian Minister of State, Paul-Henri Spaak.

For the third sub-group, we have a former American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, who is at present Deputy Under Secretary of State - Mr. Roy Mohler.

And for the fourth sub-group, we have a Dutch Professor of International Political Relations at the University of Utrecht, a former senior officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a former ^{member of Parliament} ~~Deputy~~ - Mr. G.L. Patijn.

As these sub-groups enter into the heart of their subjects, we also expect the participation of other representatives from capitals. Moreover, we may call on known authorities in the fields of our study who are outside governments. Thus we shall seek the most qualified judgments, both official and private, in order to obtain a fresh view on what the Alliance can undertake in the future.

Now no-one should expect that vast reforms and

/transformations ...

transformations of the structure of NATO as such will come out of this study. It is not its purpose. NATO continues to serve two essential functions: it permits the western Allies to stand together and form an effective military *and political* defence; *(of the Free World)* and at the same time it provides an instrument for consultations and harmonization of policies, intended to *(and ultimately to solve the political problems of Europe)* ensure peace and better understanding between East and West.

The purpose of this study is essentially political. It seeks to define how the allies view the present and the future and in what ways they can promote the cause of peace. I need not remind you that the Alliance is composed of 15 sovereign countries. NATO provides the forum where the allies exchange views in an effort to harmonize their actions. So this exercise can not be expected to provide a definite *and binding* line of policy for *each* ~~the~~ member countries in every field. It is intended to offer the wider and firmer basis, on which the fifteen allies may pursue their common objectives. Thus it is with the policy of détente about which so much is said and written. Each ally has bilateral relations with the Soviet Union and the other eastern countries, and it is through these bilateral channels that relations are improved. NATO offers a place where the allies can compare their experience and thereby ensure that a dangerous competition for the favours of the East does not develop.

I think that this is a very important exercise; it is a gesture of deep confidence in the ability of the Allies to face a frank discussion of the vital issues confronting them and thus demonstrating their cohesion.

I think it particularly significant that this effort of self-examination will be carried out just about a year

before ...

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before the 20th anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1969. It shows all 12 member countries united as before on the fundamental purposes of the Alliance, and looking with realism and hope towards the future. The continued cohesion and vitality of our Alliance will depend on its ability to respond, as in the past, to the needs and changes of the times.