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ADDRESS BY MR. BROSIO AT THE OPENING SESSION
OF THE LUXEMBOURG MINISTERIAL MEETING

Mr. Prime Minister,
Mr. President,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

The custom of holding the spring Ministerial Meeting in one of the capitals of the Alliance was designed - and rightly so - to strengthen still further the ties between the members of the Organization. We must admit, however, that this need was not apparent in the case of a country so close as the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. We are all familiar with the regular and almost daily contacts which have been maintained between Luxembourg and NATO over the past eighteen years. And so, Mr. Prime Minister, we deliberately waited to hold our meeting in your country until we had completed the cycle of visits to distant and overseas capitals. It was with great pleasure that we then accepted the invitation of the Government of the Grand Duchy to gather in this fine city.

It is a city steeped in history - its millenary was celebrated three years ago - and strong in its experience of international affairs. It is here in the Grand Duchy, fore-ordained by its geographical situation, that over the past twenty years there have been countless profitable meetings between the former adversaries, Germany and France. It was here, in the years before the war, that Mayrisch, the Luxembourg iron-master, organized Franco-German meetings in his home, that the agreements were negotiated on the return of the Saar and the canalisation of the Moselle and that the foundations were laid for that first bold European venture, the Coal and Steel Community.

In this connection, I must call to mind those eminent champions of this undertaking, Chancellor Adenauer, Mr. de Gasperi and Mr. Robert Schuman, nor should I forget Mr. Bech, who, if not a "Father of Europe", undoubtedly deserves to rank among its "wise Men".

And what a host of other meetings, both formal and informal, have been held in this brave, tolerant and peace-loving country, which has at its head the renowned dynasty of His Royal Highness the Grand-Duke John, with before him the noble example of Grand-Duchess Charlotte, whose long reign over a period of especial difficulty was a blessing for Luxembourg.

For all these reasons we have to rejoice at meeting today in Luxembourg, may I, therefore, Mr. Prime Minister, on the Council's behalf, address to you and the Luxembourg Government my warmest thanks for your invitation and the remarkable reception you have accorded us? I am convinced that the excellence and warmth of your welcome cannot fail to show in our work.

And our work, Mr. Prime Minister, has been well launched by your very perceptive remarks and those of Mr. Krag, President of the Atlantic Council. We are indeed in a period of transition; political situations - like life itself - evolve and change.

It is of course true that the menace which brought our Alliance into existence in 1949 presents itself very differently in 1967. The fact that there has been no crisis in Europe in the last five years has convinced a large segment of our peoples that we are truly at peace and that peace is a normal state of international relations. Alas, the tragic events in the Middle East have given us a sharp reminder of the dangers still lurking on our planet and of the great difficulties still confronting us in bringing about the stable peace that has so far been ours because we have been united and vigilant.

The area in which the fighting has taken place is not within the area of the Treaty. Yet it borders on the Mediterranean and on the territory of our Turkish Ally. Numerous, important and ancient ties link the countries of the Alliance to the countries of the Middle East. As the events have demonstrated so strikingly, what happens in one part of the Arab world has repercussions throughout that world. Thus geography, history, sentiment and interest bind members of the Alliance to this area, and it is with the gravest concern that we have followed the developments of the past month there.

All of us were deeply anxious to see that the fighting be brought to a halt, and this aim has been achieved. But the absence of fighting will not mean peace. Nothing will really be settled in the Middle East. A return to an armistice such as it existed previously will only mean a return to a situation that is inherently unstable and carries within it the germs of future conflict. The time has thus come for the international community to make a major effort to seek a more permanent basis on which the relations of the countries of the Middle East may be established.

Our preoccupation with the Middle East has caused the members of NATO to consult closely on the situation there, as indeed we consult on all important matters affecting members of the Alliance. This is perfectly natural and it will continue to be true of the important diplomatic phase that is about to begin. The primary purpose of our Alliance is the maintenance of peace and, without interfering with the sovereign rights of other countries, the Allies wish to contribute as far as possible to the establishment of a stable peace in an area that is so close.

The lesson to be learnt from the Middle East, Mr. Prime Minister, is that this transitional period is still equivocal. It is no longer a period of open intimidation and pressure, nor is it yet a period of complete understanding and mutual confidence justifying us in lowering our guard. Relations with the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries have improved. The climate in Europe is better, more confident than it has been for many years. Yet none of the fundamental issues which divide Europe are settled, and until these are resolved, we shall have no right to peace of mind, but we shall have to keep up and redouble our efforts to prevent the dangerous tensions from coming any closer to us. To achieve this aim in Europe, we must proceed together. In the past year, we have overcome major internal difficulties, and now we are again progressing as an Alliance. You have referred, Mr. Prime Minister, to the broad studies we are undertaking on the initiative of M. Harmel. We are looking to the future, we are exploring the avenues that will eventually lead to a peace to which we all aspire; and we are doing so with confidence. But NATO's future task continues to be to guarantee security while at the same time striving towards a just and stable peace in Europe. And when I say Europe, I mean Northern, Central and Southern Europe, including the Mediterranean area. By remaining true to these purposes and by preserving its cohesion, the Alliance will also continue to serve a broader purpose: it will act as a major moderating influence in the affairs of the world.