

17 JUL 1967

CONFIDENTIAL

THE DANISH DELEGATION

Paris, 12th July, 1967.

TO NATO

1) ASG. PA
2) PA Ref

Dear Monsieur Spaak,

At the meeting on 4th July of Sub-Group II of the Special Group you were good enough to invite comments on the suggested draft outline of your report, circulated on 3rd July.

Since I made a few remarks on your draft - remarks which may not have been sufficiently clearly formulated, due to the rather short notice, which we had - I gladly take this opportunity to expand a little on my ideas, which although offered in a personal capacity and without instructions, correspond, I hope, broadly to the general thinking of my government.

The Danish government attach great importance to the Harmel-exercise, and not least to the topics dealt with in Sub-Group II. We are all very much aware that the year 1969 is rapidly approaching and of its possible implications as far as our countries' attitude to NATO is concerned. The Danish government, supported by a large part of the Parliament, has no desire whatsoever in creating any unjustified doubt about Denmark's wish to remain in the Alliance; but it should not be concealed that there are elements in the population - as is indeed the case in other countries, which are less enthusiastic. This is particularly true amongst the younger people.

We do not know what weight these trends will carry in the public debate on NATO's future in our country, although we hope and expect that there will be broad support for NATO. But we are convinced that it will be in our interest to be able truthfully to present NATO as a modern and flexible Alliance, which in its philosophy and procedures is taking due account of the developments in East-West relations and which corresponds to the largest possible degree to the hopes and aspirations of our people in international relations. This is certainly not a question of creating a "popular" image of NATO, but of presenting it in a politically realistic way. You will no doubt agree that this is the way politics are conducted in all our countries.

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His Excellency
Monsieur Paul-Henri Spaak
c/o The Belgian Delegation
to NATO

In our debate I therefore ventured to suggest that too much emphasize might have been put in your draft on NATO as an instrument, now as before, in an ideological fight against communism. Similar suggestions, although in different terms, were made by others present. I made this point because it is a fact that in Denmark NATO has been seen mainly as a successful defensive bulwark against Soviet aggressive designs, whereas the idea on NATO as kind of leading a crusade against communist ideology in our country and elsewhere has had little following. There are historical, social and political reasons for this and I realise that the situation may be different in other countries. But these are the facts.

Let me add that this does not by any token mean that we are not aware of a potential communist danger in the world. But we may hold somewhat stronger than some countries of the Alliance that the so-called Eastern threat to Europe has shown sign of gradually receding for reasons which have been widely discussed in the Organisation. We readily admit the great important part played by NATO in this process.

We are also aware that new dangers are appearing in the East, but the popular appreciation of this fact is somewhat influenced by the unhappy hostilities in Vietnam and it is not readily accepted that NATO has a role to play in that distant theatre. The global aspect of these matters are difficult to grasp.

However, the main point is that in Denmark NATO is seemed primarily as a defensive alliance for the NATO area, which is gradually developing into an instrument - the use of which is not yet quite clarified - for assisting in the process of a détente in East-West relations, which we think is not only necessary, but justified by international events. This is an aspect of NATO, which I hope might be given prominence in the report from the two rapporteurs for Sub-Group I, but I take it that there will be co-ordination between the rapporteurs of the four Sub-Groups.

Linked to this I pointed to the problems around article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty. I fully understand the frustration of those who over the years have tried to blow some life into that article. On the other hand I think we should be justified in pointing out that NATO is in fact engaged in a number of activities, which fall under article 2. I may mention the work of the Scientific Committee and the current debates on the technological gap. These may not be spectacular initiatives, but should on the other hand not be completely ignored.

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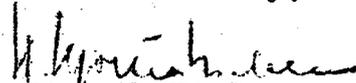
I also mentioned the short reference in your draft report to the Atlantic Community. In a sense I cannot but agree that real progress in this field has been at least temporarily halted by the attitude of one country, but this does not mean the end to our hope that an Atlantic Community may some day emerge, although we do not yet see even the possible outline of it. But I venture to suggest that this problem might be treated in a more positive and pragmatic manner. Even small steps may be of value. The concept is of great importance in my country, and at the same time I am wondering about the impact on the other side of the Atlantic of any blunt statement, ruling out all hope of a favourable outcome.

Similarly, some further reference to the so-called French problem and its impact on the cohesion within the Alliance would seem to me to be useful and appropriate in the present situation. -

Our interest in joining the E.E.C. together with the United Kingdom and other likeminded countries is too well known to have to be repeated. I fear, like many, that matters will not develop so quickly that any firm conclusion can be drawn at the time when your report is drafted, but on the other hand I feel that a report which did not deal with the matter - preferably in terms indicating the benefits accruing from a larger Europe - would be unfortunate, especially because our Sub-Group II was in its terms of reference specifically asked to consider "the prospects for Inter-European co-operation within the Alliance". Other means might be suggested than just a common membership of E.E.C. for all NATO members, but also in this area we might consider the small steps and proceed with a great deal of pragmatisme. I gather that these remarks are not at variance with the sense of the last paragraph of your draft.

I hope that these few remarks will serve to clarify and amplify what I tried to say at our meeting and, furthermore, that they illustrate our positive approach to the problems.

With kind regards
Yours sincerely,


H. Hjørth-Nielsen
Ambassador

Permanent Representative