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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND CULTURAL RELATIONS

NATO INFORMATION TOURS, 1957

Note by the Director of Information

The term "NATO Information Tours" is submitted for the Committee's consideration as a substitute for the term "NATO Journalists Tours". This change of title is suggested because it expresses more clearly the nature of these tours as now defined, to include persons other than journalists who are considered useful for the dissemination of information about the Alliance.

2. Before passing on to recommendations for 1957, the following general background notes are given as an aide-mémoire for the Committee's information.

- (a) The NATO Journalists Tours started in the spring of 1953 and the twelve tours conducted during that year proved a considerable success. A fairly similar programme was carried out in 1954 and the standard of the participating journalists remained high. Copy resulting from the tours too remained satisfactory. While only European member countries had been visited in 1953, the 1954 programme included the first extensive tour of Canada, which proved an outstanding success.
- (b) 1955 requires some special comments. The year was notable in that it saw for the first time the participation of German journalists. In order to allow the press of the new member nation to catch up with that of the other NATO countries, the Federal Republic was given a relatively large number of places and two special visits to Paris, each of a week's duration and comprising some 40 journalists in all, were arranged to familiarise German correspondents with the details of NATO background, organization, achievements, aims and problems. These visits were very well received and produced good results in the German press.

On the other hand, during 1955, some difficulty was experienced in obtaining, for visits to European member countries, journalists of the calibre necessary to give these tours the character they deserved. The authorities of sender countries reported that their leading journalists no longer saw great value in straight-forward "know your Allies" tours; host countries'

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information services reported that they had not, in all cases, been satisfied with the standard or keenness of participating journalists. Similar views were expressed by NATO escort officers.

- (c) In the light of the 1955 experience, the Committee for Information and Cultural Relations resolved to broaden the terms of "Journalists Tours" to include specialised tours and visits to NATO of persons other than journalists.^(*) Despite the fact that the quality and standing of journalists who took part in the 1956 tours was, on the average, higher than that of the participants in 1955, the Information Division recommends that the 1957 programme be of a much broadened nature and be reappraised in the light of current developments.

3. Recommendations for 1957

- (a) It may prove impossible to finalise the 1957 programme until after the recommendations of the Council's Committee of Three are known and have been approved by the North Atlantic Council. The scale of the programme must depend on the budget granted.
- (b) In the meantime, the following are the Information Division's recommendations based on the premise that the budget will not be less than Frs. 21.6 million.
- (i) That the Canadian Tour be continued broadly along the same lines as in the past with approximately the same participation (17-19 journalists from all European member countries). The previous three tours have proved highly successful and Canada's development continues to provide European journalists with plenty of live copy.
- (ii) That NATO continue its co-operation, with the United States authorities, and that discussions be reopened with the State Department with a view to the United States receiving one regular NATO tour in 1957. This is particularly desirable as the United States is the only country never to have received a NATO Tour, although it has received many NATO journalists under its own auspices.
- (iii) That as many tours as budgetary considerations will permit be arranged

(*) AC/52-D/116

to European member countries for American and Canadian journalists. Through the co-operation of the Canadian and United States Governments in furnishing transport from North America to Paris, participation of these two countries in NATO journalists tours was moderately increased in 1956 with excellent results.

Westbound exchanges, thanks to the annual Canadian tour and to the United States "NATO Leader Programme" have been satisfactorily maintained. Relatively speaking, however, eastbound transatlantic exchanges have lagged far behind the exchanges among the European members of NATO because of the high cost of transatlantic travel. If the United States and Canadian authorities can arrange increased transatlantic travel for Canadian and American journalists during the coming year, it is proposed to organize three European tours for North American journalists during 1957 in the interests of more balanced transatlantic exchanges.

- (iv) That, providing the political situation in the eastern Mediterranean warrants, a journalists tour to Greece and Turkey (alternatively one each to Greece and Turkey) be included in the 1957 programme. Such a tour would arouse sufficient interest with leading journalists to ensure worthwhile participation.
- (v) That two television tours be included in the programme. One of the television tours to visit Canada and the United States.
- (vi) That member countries be invited to submit lists of speakers, educationalists and writers selected as suitable to lecture on NATO topics. These would then be invited to spend a week with NATO at the Organization's expense and would be provided with specially planned familiarisation briefings and discussions which, in due course, would permit each member country to form NATO lecturer panels. One such visit took place in 1956 when ten briefers of the British Atlantic Association spent five days here. The experiment was a success.
- (vii) That one tour be organized for members of the National Information Services who have not yet had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with NATO at first hand. The project is that such officials from all member countries meet in Paris for two days, then be split up in such a manner as to visit those countries furthest from their own, the whole tour to cover some 18 days. Before attempting to extend such tours to Canada and the United States, it would

be best to confine the first one to Europe and assess its value.

- (viii) That some 20 journalists who have taken part in past NATO tours and whose writings have since indicated particularly useful interest in NATO, be invited for a three day stay in Paris to receive top level briefings on NATO's current position and have an opportunity of meeting and talking with the leading civilian and military personalities. This seems a good means of reestablishing contact with some of the more outstanding journalists and to help them in the continuance of their task as proved writers on NATO.
- (ix) That a sum of three million francs be held in reserve for the sponsorship of trips by individual journalists, commentators, editors, speakers, and other personalities whose trips are considered in the interest of the spreading of NATO information and whose travel can not be financed by other sources.

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