

Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Session of the North Atlantic Council (Brussels, 4 and 5 December 1969)

Caption: At the Ministerial Session of the North Atlantic Council held in Brussels on 4 and 5 December 1969, the Allied Governments accept the possibility of shortly holding a general conference, or a series of conferences, on cooperation and security in Europe which will be attended by the North American members of the Alliance.

Source: Ministerial Communiqués 1960-1969. 4th-5th December 1969, Brussels, North Atlantic Council, Chairman: Mr. M. Brosio. [ON-LINE]. [s.l.]: NATO, [22.08.2005]. Available on <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/comm6069.htm>.

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Chairman: Mr. M. Brosio.

1. The North Atlantic Council met in Ministerial Session at Brussels on 4th and 5th December, 1969. The meeting was attended by Foreign, Defence and Finance Ministers.
2. Since the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty twenty years ago, the members of the Alliance have dedicated their efforts to the preservation of their freedom and security and to the improvement of East-West relations in the aim of reaching an ultimate peaceful solution of outstanding problems in Europe. They will continue to do so.
3. By approving in December 1967 the Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance, the Allied Governments resolved to maintain adequate military strength and political solidarity to deter aggression and other forms of pressure and to defend the territory of member countries if aggression should occur; and to examine suitable policies designed to achieve a just and stable order in Europe, to overcome the division of Germany and to foster European security.
4. On the basis of these two concepts of defence and the relaxation of tensions, the Ministers issued the Declaration attached to this Communiqué in which they set forth their views on the future development of relations between Eastern and Western countries.
5. Ministers welcomed the opening of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. They acknowledged the work in progress with regard to arms control on the sea bed, as well as the interest shown both by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and the United Nations in measures to deal with chemical and biological warfare. On all these questions the Council held detailed consultations which proved most useful in preparing the ground for the negotiations taking place elsewhere. The Ministers invited the Council in Permanent Session to continue to examine these problems, and reaffirmed the importance of any genuine disarmament measure, consistent with the security of all states and guaranteed by adequate international control, for the reduction of tension and the consolidation of peace in Europe and the world.
6. The Ministers also studied a report by the Secretary General on the situation in the Mediterranean. Recalling the Communiqués issued on 27th June, 1968 and 16th November, 1968, they expressed the concern of their governments with regard to the situation in that area. The Ministers reaffirmed the value of full consultations among the Allies on this question. Accordingly, they requested the Council in Permanent Session to pursue with the greatest attention its examination of the situation in the Mediterranean and to report to Ministers at their Spring Meeting.
7. In April 1969, Ministers called attention to the role the Alliance might play in tackling common environmental problems that could imperil the welfare and progress of modern societies. Consequently, the Council in Permanent Session established a Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society. The new Committee, beginning with its first meeting on 8th December, will address these urgent problems with the aim of stimulating action by members of the Alliance, either singly, jointly or in international organizations. The Ministers at their Spring Meeting will receive the Committee's first report on the newest task of the Alliance.
8. Ministers of countries participating in NATO's integrated defence program met as the Defence Planning Committee on 3rd December, 1969. As an introduction to their discussions the Secretary General and the Chairman of the Military Committee gave overall appraisals of the state of defence planning within the Alliance. Ministers thereafter reviewed the work accomplished since their previous meeting on 28th May, 1969, and gave directions for future work.
9. They agreed that the effectiveness of NATO's defensive posture continues to be an essential stabilizing factor in support of the search for meaningful détente. Therefore, until agreement can be reached on East-

West mutual force reductions, balanced in scope and timing so as to maintain the present degree of security, NATO will continue to ensure that there is no reduction in its overall military capability.

10. In reviewing Force Plans for 1970, Ministers were conscious of the necessity to maintain adequate and readily available forces both conventional and nuclear, in accordance with the NATO strategy, for the defence of the mainland of Europe and the whole NATO area. They took note of the positive outcome of consultations with the Canadian Authorities, concerning their forces for NATO, which were initiated following the Defence Planning Committee meeting of 28th May, 1969. Ministers committed forces for the year 1970 and endorsed a number of remedial measures necessary to maintain adequate forces in Central Europe; in addition further remedial measures are under consideration.

11. They discussed measures required to implement the NATO strategy of forward defence based on flexibility in response, and arrangements for the reinforcement, in times of tension, of NATO's ready forces. They also noted a preliminary report on a comprehensive study which is being undertaken of the relative capabilities of the forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact and gave instructions for the continuance of the study. In addition, Ministers reviewed the status of other defence planning studies including those for improved defence of the flanks.

12. The Ministerial Meeting also provided the Defence Ministers comprising the Nuclear Defence Affairs Committee (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States) with the occasion to review work in progress in the Nuclear Planning Group during the past year and planned for the future. The Nuclear Defence Affairs Committee agreed that Canada, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States will compose the Nuclear Planning Group starting 1st January, 1970.

13. Acting on the recommendation of the Nuclear Defence Affairs Committee, the Defence Planning Committee adopted two policy documents originated by the Nuclear Planning Group at their meeting in the United States last November concerning general guidelines for nuclear consultation procedure and for the possible tactical use of nuclear weapons in defence of the Treaty area. These documents are based upon NATO's strategy of flexibility in response which was adopted in December 1967 and which remains unchanged.

14. The next Ministerial Meeting of the Defence Planning Committee will take place in the Spring of 1970.

15. The Spring Ministerial Meeting of the Council will be held in Italy on 26th and 27th May, 1970.

Annex

Declaration of the North Atlantic Council

1. Meeting at Brussels on 4th and 5th December, 1969, the Ministers of the North Atlantic Alliance reaffirmed the commitment of their nations to pursue effective policies directed towards a greater relaxation of tensions in their continuing search for a just and durable peace.

2. Peace and security in Europe must rest upon universal respect for the principles of sovereign equality, political independence and the territorial integrity of each European state; the right of its peoples to shape their own destinies; the peaceful settlement of disputes; non-intervention in the internal affairs of any state by any other state, whatever their political or social system; and the renunciation of the use or the threat of force against any state. Past experience has shown that there is, as yet, no common interpretation of these principles. The fundamental problems in Europe can be solved only on the basis of these principles and any real and lasting improvement of East-West relations presupposes respect for them without any conditions or reservations.

3. At their meeting in Washington in April 1969, Ministers had expressed the intention of their governments to explore with the Soviet Union and the other countries of Eastern Europe which concrete issues best lend themselves to fruitful negotiation and an early resolution. To this end, the Council has been engaged in a detailed study of various issues for exploration and possible negotiation. Ministers recognized that procedure

merited closer examination and, accordingly, requested the Council in Permanent Session to report to the next Ministerial Meeting.

4. Ministers considered that, in an era of negotiation, it should be possible, by means of discussion of specific and well-defined subjects, progressively to reduce tensions. This would in itself facilitate discussion of the more fundamental questions.

Arms Control and Disarmament

5. Ministers again expressed the interest of the Alliance in arms control and disarmament and recalled the Declaration on mutual and balanced force reductions adopted at Reykjavik in 1968 and reaffirmed in Washington in 1969. The Members of the Alliance have noted that up to now this suggestion has led to no result. The Allies, nevertheless, have continued, and will continue, their studies in order to prepare a realistic basis for active exploration at an early date and thereby establish whether it could serve as a starting point for fruitful negotiations. They requested that a report of the Council in Permanent Session on the preparation of models for mutual and balanced force reductions be submitted as soon as possible.

6. Ministers of countries participating in NATO's integrated defence program consider that the studies on mutual and balanced force reductions have progressed sufficiently to permit the establishment of certain criteria which, in their view, such reductions should meet. Significant reductions under adequate verification and control would be envisaged under any agreement on mutual and balanced force reductions, which should also be consistent with the vital security interests of all parties. This would be another concrete step in advancing "*along the road of ending the arms race and of general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament.*"

7. These Ministers directed that further studies should be given to measures which could accompany or follow agreement on mutual and balanced force reductions. Such measures could include advance notification of military movements and maneuvers, exchange of observers at military maneuvers and possibly the establishment of observation posts. Examination of the techniques and methods of inspection should also be further developed.

Germany and Berlin

8. The Ministers welcome the efforts of the governments of the United States, Great Britain, and France, in the framework of their special responsibility for Berlin and Germany as a whole, to gain the co-operation of the Soviet Union in improving the situation with respect to Berlin and free access to the city. The elimination of difficulties created in the past with respect to Berlin, especially with regard to access, would increase the prospects for serious discussions on the other concrete issues which continue to divide East and West. Furthermore, Berlin could play a constructive role in the expansion of East-West economic relations if the city's trade with the East could be facilitated.

9. A just and lasting peace settlement for Germany must be based on the free decision of the German people and on the interests of European security. The Ministers are convinced that, pending such a settlement, the proposals of the Federal Republic for a modus vivendi between the two parts of Germany and for a bilateral exchange of declarations on the non-use of force or the threat of force would, if they receive a positive response, substantially facilitate co-operation between East and West on other problems. They consider that these efforts by the Federal Republic represent constructive steps toward relaxation of tension in Europe and express the hope that the governments will therefore take them into account in forming their own attitude toward the German question.

10. The Ministers would regard concrete progress in both these fields as an important contribution to peace in Europe. They are bound to attach great weight to the responses to these proposals in evaluating the prospects for negotiations looking toward improved relations and co-operation in Europe.

Economic, technical and cultural exchanges

11. Allied governments consider that not only economic and technical but also cultural exchanges between interested countries can bring mutual benefit and understanding. In these fields more could be achieved by freer movement of people, ideas, and information between the countries of East and West.

12. The benefit of the Alliance's work in the field of human environment would be enhanced if it were to become the basis of broader co-operation. This could, and should, be an early objective, being one in which the Warsaw Pact governments have indicated an interest. Further co-operation could also be undertaken, for example, in the more specialized field of oceanography. More intensive efforts in such fields should be pursued either bilaterally, multilaterally or in the framework of existing international bodies comprising interested countries.

Perspectives for negotiations

13. The Ministers considered that the concrete issues concerning European security and co-operation mentioned in this Declaration are subjects lending themselves to possible discussions or negotiations with the Soviet Union and the other countries of Eastern Europe. The Allied governments will continue and intensify their contacts, discussions or negotiations through all appropriate channels, bilateral or multilateral, believing that progress is most likely to be achieved by choosing in each instance the means most suitable for the subject. Ministers therefore expressed their support for bilateral initiatives undertaken by the German Federal Government with the Soviet Union and other countries of Eastern Europe, looking toward agreements on the renunciation of force and the threat of force. Ministers expressed the hope that existing contacts will be developed so as to enable all countries concerned to participate in discussions and negotiations on substantial problems of co-operation and security in Europe with real prospects of success.

14. The Members of the Alliance remain receptive to signs of willingness on the part of the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries to discuss measures to reduce tension and promote co-operation in Europe and to take constructive actions to this end. They have noted in this connection references made by these countries to the possibility of holding an early conference on European security. Ministers agreed that careful advance preparation and prospects of concrete results would in any case be essential. Ministers consider that, as part of a comprehensive approach, progress in the bilateral and multilateral discussions and negotiations which have already begun, or could begin shortly, and which relate to fundamental problems of European security, would make a major contribution to improving the political atmosphere in Europe. Progress in these discussions and negotiations would help to ensure the success of any eventual conference in which, of course, the North American members of the Alliance would participate, to discuss and negotiate substantial problems of co-operation and security in Europe.

15. The Ministers affirmed that, in considering all constructive possibilities, including a general conference or conferences, they will wish to assure that any such meeting should not serve to ratify the present division of Europe and should be the result of a common effort among all interested countries to tackle the problems which separate them.