

4. The demands expressed by the Soviet Government have created a serious situation which must be faced with determination.

5. The Council recalls the responsibilities which each member state has assumed in regard to the security and welfare of Berlin and the maintenance of the position of the three powers in that city. The member states of NATO could not approve a solution of the Berlin question which jeopardized the right of the three western powers to remain in Berlin as long as their responsibilities require it, and did not assure freedom of communication between that city and the free world. The Soviet Union would be responsible for any action which had the effect of hampering this free communication or endangering this freedom. The two million inhabitants of West Berlin have just reaffirmed in a free vote their overwhelming approval and support for that position.

6. The Council considers that the Berlin question can only be settled in the framework of an agreement with the U.S.S.R. on Germany as a whole. It recalls that the western powers have repeatedly declared themselves ready to examine this problem, as well as those of European security and disarmament. They are still ready to discuss all these problems.

NATO Final Communiqué, December 18, 1958¹

The North Atlantic Council held its regular Ministerial Session in Paris from 16th to 18th December, 1958.

International Situation

In a comprehensive survey of the international situation, the Council gave first place to the question of Berlin. The member countries made clear their resolution not to yield to threats. Their unanimous view on Berlin was expressed in the Council's Declaration of 16th December.

The Council will continue to follow this question with close attention and will shortly discuss the replies to be sent to the Soviet notes of 27th November.

The member states of NATO sincerely believe that the interests of peace require equitable settlements of the outstanding political issues which divide the free world from the Communist world. A solution of the German question, linked with European security arrangements, and an agreement on controlled disarmament remain in their view essential. The NATO Governments will continue to seek just settlements of these problems, but regret that Western proposals on these questions have so far been ignored by the Soviet Government.

The Council heard reports on the Geneva discussions on the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests, and on measures helpful in preventing surprise attack.

The Council's review of the international situation, on the basis of reports prepared by the Political Committee, covered a wide range of problems.

Special attention was given to the efforts of the Communist bloc to weaken the positions of the free world in different areas.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-53.

Political Cooperation

The Council had before it a report by the Secretary General on political cooperation in the Alliance. The Ministers consider that important progress has been made in this field during 1958. They examined the problems inevitably created by the widening of political consultation. There was general agreement that the existing machinery of NATO is well suited to the needs of the Alliance, and that flexible methods would produce better results than any codification of rules. The Ministers agreed that the preparation of political consultation in the Council could be improved, in particular by more systematic study of long-term political questions. The Council paid tribute to the efforts of the Secretary General in the field of conciliation between member countries.

Economic Questions

The Ministers reaffirmed the importance they attach to the measures taken both individually and collectively by member countries to stimulate economic activity and to ensure continuing expansion without inflation.

The Council noted the difficulties encountered in the negotiations undertaken for the Organization of Economic Cooperation between the European members of the Alliance who are in the Common Market and those who are not.

It considers it necessary that a multilateral association should be established at the earliest possible date and expresses the hope that the efforts now being undertaken with a view to a solution will be successful.

The Council heard a joint statement by the Greek and Turkish Foreign Ministers on the problems of the less developed member countries, and instructed the Permanent Council to undertake a study of this matter.

Military Questions

The Council examined the military situation of the Alliance. After hearing reports by the Standing Group and the Supreme Allied Commanders, the Ministers emphasized the vital need, in view of the continuing increase in Soviet armaments, to sustain without relaxation the effort of member countries to improve the defensive power of the Alliance.

The Council reaffirmed that NATO defensive strategy continues to be based on the existence of effective shield forces and on the manifest will to use nuclear retaliatory forces to repel aggression.

The Ministers examined the report of the 1958 Annual Review and approved its conclusions. The implementation of the plans agreed in December 1957 by the Heads of Government is being actively pursued, and methods for accelerating their realization were agreed.

The next regular Ministerial Meeting of the Council will be held in Washington on April 2nd to 4th, 1959, at the invitation of the United States Government, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty.