

Report of the Assembly of Western European Union on the European security in the aftermath of the invasion of Czechoslovakia (15 January 1969)

Caption: On 15 January 1969, the Assembly of Western European Union studies a report analysing European security after the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

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REPORT (1) submitted on behalf of the Committee on Defence Questions and Armaments (2) by Mr. Wingfield Digby, Rapporteur

Draft Recommendation on European security in the aftermath of the invasion of Czechoslovakia

The Assembly,

Recalling its Recommendations 169 and 170 and reiterating its condemnation of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary and Poland;

Noting that its Committee on Defence Questions and Armaments has now heard the views of the NATO civil and military authorities;

Concluding that the continued presence of Soviet divisions in Czechoslovakia has altered the balance of forces in Europe;

Regretting the absence of any Soviet response to the suggestions for balanced mutual force reductions put forward in the North Atlantic Council communiqué of 27th June 1968;

Strongly endorsing the terms of the North Atlantic Council communiqué of 16th November 1968

Stressing the need for a European grouping in NATO,

RECOMMENDS TO THE COUNCIL

A

1. (a) That the effectiveness of NATO forces be improved by allocating further national units to NATO command; by bringing units up to strength; by adapting deployment to the NATO forward strategy, in particular by returning United Kingdom and French forces to Germany; by improving the conventional capability of the forces; and by improving training, equipment and supplies;

(b) That political considerations should not inhibit NATO formations from carrying out exercises near the iron curtain on a similar scale to those conducted by Warsaw Pact forces;

(c) That it urge France to reconsider its withdrawal from the NATO military organisation; and that it urge France to define precisely the conditions in which its forces and facilities would be available if peace were threatened;

(d) That it seek multilateral arrangements to offset the effect on the balance of payments of WEU countries of all their NATO defence expenditure — arms procurement; training or stationing of forces abroad;

2. That it reiterate the warning of the North Atlantic Council communiqué of 16th November 1968 that "any Soviet intervention directly or indirectly affecting the situation in Europe or in the Mediterranean would create an international crisis with grave consequences";

3. That it encourage an improvement in the international situation, and when this is sufficiently assured, that

it recommend direct discussions between the authorities of the Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact on balanced mutual force reductions in preference to bilateral negotiations between individual countries.

B

1. That it repeat the declaration that the North Atlantic Treaty is considered to be of indefinite duration; and note with satisfaction the French position that unless events in the years to come were to bring about a radical change in East West relations, the Alliance must continue as long as it appears to be necessary;
2. That the European view of defence problems be henceforth discussed and clearly defined through regular meetings of the WEU Council attended by Foreign, Defence and Finance Ministers, to which the countries most closely concerned should be invited, especially to discuss items on the agenda of the North Atlantic Council prior to ministerial meetings of that body;
3. That European production of armaments be fostered and European procurement of armaments in the United States be brought into balance with United States procurement in Europe. That these objectives be achieved by better use of the existing institutions such as the WEU Standing Armaments Committee.

Explanatory Memorandum (submitted by Mr. Wingfield Digby, Rapporteur)

Introduction

1. A report was adopted by the Committee immediately after the invasion of Czechoslovakia on 20th–21st August 1968, expressing the belief that the balance of forces in Europe had been significantly changed by this demonstration of massive strategic mobility by the Soviet forces. It called for the adoption of certain policies by WEU countries, particularly an increase in the proportion of NATO forces to be maintained in readiness on the mainland of Europe, bringing existing units up to full strength and the improvement of their strategic mobility.⁽³⁾
2. In his explanatory memorandum Mr. Edwards specifically said that the Committee should give closer attention to the consequences of the invasion for the organisation of western defence after it had heard the views of the NATO political and military authorities. The Assembly heard the views of the Secretary General of NATO on 17th October, and the Committee visited NATO and SHAPE on 28th November. It posed a number of questions to the Assistant Secretaries General for Defence Planning and Political Affairs, to the Chairman of the Military Committee and to SACEUR, himself. On 16th December your Rapporteur visited AFCENT for conversations with CINCENT and his Deputy.
3. In recent months there has been renewed interest in the desirability of some more clearly defined European responsibility for defence. A number of factors have led to this revived interest. It arises partly from concern about the economic organisation of Europe and the broadening of the European Communities, because of the British application for membership of the European Economic Community. The fact that the invasion of Czechoslovakia took place at a time when the United States was not only in the middle of a presidential election but also preoccupied with the war in Vietnam at the other end of the world also caused some anxiety in Europe. Last but not least is the fact that from 1969 onwards parties may withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty on giving twelve months' notice. This point has now been dealt with satisfactorily in the NATO communiqué of November 1968.

CHAPTER I **Background**

4. It is now twenty years since the first Brussels Treaty was signed and nineteen years since the foundation of NATO. NATO was then formed to guard against the danger of Russian aggression to the western free world. In the meanwhile circumstances have changed, as it is essential to recognise when considering

European security in the aftermath of the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

5. Twenty years ago the United States had a complete monopoly of nuclear weapons, but we have now reached a stage where the build up of Russian missiles has brought about something approaching a balance of nuclear weapons between East and West. This fact alone must have some effect on the credibility of the deterrent, which has been so successful in maintaining peace throughout this period. Again, at the time of the formation of NATO, North Africa was under régimes either controlled by or sympathetic to the West. Today the position is very different as Russia is supplying arms on a large scale to Egypt and exercising considerable political influence there. Further to the West, Algeria is increasingly dependent upon the Soviet Union, and there are fears that it might be willing to grant base facilities to the considerable Russian fleet which has now appeared in the Mediterranean. Russia has built up its fleet to become second only to the United States fleet and the Russian navy employs today about five times the manpower of the British navy. The persistent use of Soviet ships to shadow the United States Sixth Fleet has been not only irritating, but must have resulted in some reduction in the strategic importance of the Sixth Fleet.

6. The division of Germany has continued another twenty years and in 1956 a revolt in Hungary, in Russia's empire of satellite States, was savagely subdued.

7. Meanwhile it is true to point out that since the 1950s NATO's defensive line in Western Europe has been able to move forward from the Rhine to a line much nearer the iron curtain, owing to the availability of more troops. However, many of the formations which hold this line are below strength and it therefore seems questionable how quickly or completely they could fulfil the tasks allotted to them in times of emergency in conformity with the policy of flexible response.

8. There has been another important change in the situation in that Russia now faces two serious threats. The first is the possibility of the break up of the Soviet system of satellite States in Eastern Europe, of which events in Czechoslovakia provide the latest evidence. The second is that Communist China has quarrelled and continues to quarrel with the Soviet Union, thus giving it worries on its far-off eastern frontier as well as the worries that it has about the satellite countries on the West. Russia is said to possess 141 divisions of which only 15 are deployed in the Far East. Should it ever be tempted to adventures in the West it would undoubtedly have to reinforce these 15 divisions substantially for fear of a Chinese attack. Recent press reports have spoken of 500,000 Chinese troops being sent to reinforce the Chinese Soviet border, following what *Izvestia* described as the most extensive military manoeuvres ever held by Soviet forces in Asia. It may even be that Russia's new interest in the Suez Canal, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf is partly inspired by the fear that it will have a showdown with China sooner or later.

CHAPTER II

Reassessment of the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia

Soviet motives

9. Comment has continued since 21st August on the motives which led the USSR to invade Czechoslovakia, and their relative importance.

There has been much argument and difference of opinion and few very clear conclusions. From this it emerges that the motives were probably complex and that more than one argument decided the Soviet leaders to act. It is important to distinguish clearly between the genuine motives and the excuses.

Probable genuine motives

10. The motives can be summarised as being either of a political or military or economic character and it is suggested they may have run in something like the following way:

(a) Anxiety lest the Dubcek régime might be overtaken by events and replaced by another which would renounce the communist System;

(b) Anxiety lest the freedom of comment and criticism in Czechoslovakia should lead to similar demands in the Soviet Union itself, especially in the Ukraine, to say nothing of East Germany and Poland;

(c) Concern that the advantages to the Soviet economy of its trading terms with Czechoslovakia, one of the most industrialised areas in Eastern Europe, would disappear, as that country was clearly bent on getting the best terms it could in the world market;

(d) The need to make an example of an unruly member of the satellite system;

(e) A military concern lest Czechoslovakia, despite its declarations to the contrary, might leave the System of the Warsaw Pact, thereby causing a gap in it and also knowledge that the stationing of Soviet troops in this weak spot would restore the defences of the Soviet system. Czechoslovakia is the only member of the Warsaw Pact to have a common frontier both with NATO and with the Soviet Union. Further, there was considerable military advantage in securing the left flank of the Soviet forces in East Germany and at the same time being able to deploy troops along the Austrian frontier, bringing them within striking distance of the Danube.

Probable excuses

11. The first excuse was that the Soviet army had been invited in but this was immediately abandoned, presumably because no one of any importance could be found in Czechoslovakia to say they had issued the invitation. The main excuse therefore became western and German penetration of Czechoslovakia, presenting a military threat to the Soviet Union. The fear of Germany, however unfounded it may be known to be by the West, is probably a genuine fear in some Russian minds. There were allegations of western plans to replace the Czechoslovak régime and an alleged discovery of "caches" of western arms in Czechoslovakia.

Conclusions

12. If this analysis is broadly correct the conclusion would be that the Soviet Union never interpreted the situation in Czechoslovakia as an immediate military threat. But it may have been concerned that its western buffer State would be penetrated in the long run. The Red Army may not have thought it a bad opportunity to strengthen their position on this front opposite Bavaria by themselves occupying places they had not been in since 1945, at the same time as they replaced unreliable Czechoslovak formations.

CHAPTER III

Potential communist threat in Central Europe

(a) Deployment of Warsaw Pact forces

13. The Warsaw Pact formations which invaded Czechoslovakia on 20th to 21st August 1968, consisted of about 25 divisions of which 15 were probably Russian. Press reports gave numbers varying from 350,000 men to 650,000 men. They came from Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany, Poland as well as the Soviet Union. The Soviet element came from East Germany, Hungary, Poland, as well as from Russian territory. Your Rapporteur has been unable to obtain exact information on the extent of the call up of the reserves by the Russians and any subsequent demobilisation. These divisions were placed on a full war footing and civilian transport was requisitioned to make up any deficiencies, according to normal Russian practice. The exact number of armoured divisions is uncertain.

(b) Soviet Czechoslovak treaty signed on 16th October 1968

14. This treaty was said to be based on the conversations which took place in Moscow on 23rd to 26th August and again on 3rd to 4th October. The treaty lacks precision, in that it states that "part" of the Soviet troops already in Czechoslovakia will remain there "provisionally" in order to provide a guarantee against the "aspirations of revenge, more and more accentuated, of the militarists of West Germany". The other Warsaw Pact troops will be withdrawn gradually within two months of ratification by the two parties. In fact this ratification took place two days later on 18th October 1968. The countries concerned seem to find it normal that a bilateral Soviet Czechoslovak treaty should incorporate provisions affecting the armed forces of Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary and Poland.

15. It should be noted that the blame is once more attributed by the Russians to West Germany. Under the treaty, the points where the remaining Soviet troops are to be stationed is to be agreed between the Soviet and Czechoslovak Governments. If this consultation has been real it is of interest in deciding how far the Russians are keeping troops there to control the internal situation and how far to have a deployment of reliable troops near the West German frontier. It has been reported that a large contingent of Russian troops has been stationed near the uranium mines in the north of Czechoslovakia. There are also concentrations round Prague and large towns. Premier Cernik has been emphatic that the protection of the western frontier will remain in the hands of the Czechoslovak army.

16. As to the numbers of troops still remaining in Czechoslovakia, it was announced on 7th November by Mr. Frantisek Kouril, Government Press Secretary, that 86% of the troops due to leave under the Treaty had by then already gone. This presumably refers to troops other than Russian. Estimates of the number of Russian troops remaining vary from 70,000 to 80,000, probably an accurate figure in December. These represent about 6 divisions, none stationed nearer the western frontier than Prague. It remains to be seen how many Russian troops will stay and for how long, but this probably depends on the internal position in Czechoslovakia and the extent to which the Soviet authorities are able to bend the Czechoslovak Government to their wishes. It should be noted that the British Minister of Defence stated in the House of Commons on 18th December that there were now 50,000 more Soviet troops in Eastern Europe than six months ago.

(c) The present threat to the West

17. The Committee and your Rapporteur have heard differing assessments of the threat to the West, even among NATO authorities. SHAPE has stated that the 15 Czechoslovak divisions are now to be considered unreliable, although it has also been suggested to your Rapporteur that their reliability might improve if the Soviet Union were ever able to lead Czechoslovakia to believe that NATO was about to launch an attack. If we neglect the Czechoslovak divisions, the Warsaw Pact divisions facing the West on the vital central front now total 28 Soviet divisions, plus another 4 in Hungary, 15 Polish divisions and 6 East German divisions, against 23 NATO divisions. These figures again require interpretation. SHAPE says the satellite divisions vary in their reliability and combat readiness; the 23 NATO divisions include dual-based formations such as the United Kingdom brigade which although assigned to NATO is normally stationed in the United Kingdom. If manpower alone were considered, the situation would be less unfavourable to the West, but when strengths are not vastly different, firepower, equipment and mobility must also be taken into account.

18. Speaking in Munich on 2nd February, Mr. Healey said:

"NATO is outnumbered by the Warsaw Pact on the central front by more than two to one in infantry formations and nearly three to one in armoured formations. The Warsaw Pact superiority in aircraft is nearly two to one."

Here it is comforting to recall that the task of NATO troops is only defensive, whilst Soviet troops have not only the task of manning the frontier of the iron curtain — a task they take seriously since they do not view

NATO as an instrument of defence — but must also be prepared to maintain order in the satellite countries. But if the Czechoslovak divisions are unreliable today, the position cannot have been all that different six months ago.

19. Further, as long as Soviet armoured divisions are in forward positions the response required of the West must be more rapid and especially so on the new evidence of Soviet mobility. On 31st October 1968 in a newspaper article, Lord Avon, former Prime Minister of Great Britain, recorded his view that "Moscow has tilted the balance of military power to its advantage in a crucial part of Europe". At the end of October, too, General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, speaking in Washington as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, stated that the Czechoslovak invasion was a complete tactical surprise and that it altered the balance in Europe in favour of the communist countries and described the Warsaw Pact countries as having the most powerful traditional armed forces in the world. It should be noted that the communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council issued on 16th November 1968 says merely that "the use of force and the stationing in Czechoslovakia of Soviet forces not hitherto deployed there have aroused grave uncertainty about the situation and about the calculations and intentions of the USSR".

20. Fully mobilised Soviet formations still stand rather near to the iron curtain, in a position which could quickly become threatening. This alone calls for a greater degree of readiness in NATO forces.

21. Therefore your Rapporteur remains unconvinced by the more soothing statements of one or two NATO governments that there has been no change in the balance of power in Central Europe. Perhaps an added threat to the West would be a better way of putting it.

22. Be this as it may the most important change in the situation is, as the British Foreign Secretary put it on 31st October 1968, an "alarming element of unpredictability". This view is now fully supported by the NATO communiqué quoted above. All NATO assessments of Soviet intentions will need revision. If the Russians could have been so badly misinformed about the probable reactions to the invasion of their Czechoslovak allies, how great must the danger be that they will utterly miscalculate on western reactions to some projected Soviet move? The blatant demonstration of Soviet willingness to use force to achieve political objectives is all too clear and this alone alters the military situation.

(d) Threat to the NATO flanks

23. Note should be taken of the statement by the Norwegian Defence Minister on 29th October, drawing attention to increases of Soviet land and naval forces in the Kola peninsula. Another Rapporteur, Mr. Goedhart, has dealt in detail with increased Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean and the supply of arms to Egypt at a particularly delicate moment. According to Turkish sources the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean was increased by 25 ships in 1968 including four cruisers; the number of ships declined somewhat towards the end of the year. General Allon, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister, has said that in the next 18 months the Egyptian armour will be 150% more powerful than in 1967. The air force is already 150% more powerful than before the six-day war. When considering the military balance in Central Europe, it is wise to take these factors into account.

(e) The broader consequences of the invasion

24. Whichever motive or motives were uppermost in the minds of the Kremlin leaders, when deciding on invasion, they must have outweighed in importance serious disadvantages for Russia: the abandonment of the November 1968 "World Communist Party Conference: prejudicing progress in the détente; jeopardizing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty; Albania's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. The invasion may even have done something to secure the election of Mr. Nixon, rather than Mr. Humphrey. The communist parties of the West were annoyed and embarrassed, consequently setting back hopes of successes by communists in the West.

No doubt many of these consequences were foreseen but shrugged off by the Soviet leaders as matters that could be patched up within a few months of the invasion. As was to be expected the Soviet Union is now working hard to re-establish the situation. It has reiterated its interest for example in immediate negotiation on limiting strategic offensive and defensive nuclear missiles and in the non-proliferation treaty, (speech by the Soviet representative in the United Nations First Committee on 12th November 1968). A preparatory committee of 66 communist parties met in Budapest on 20th November 1968 to prepare for the postponed world conference now planned for 1st to 15th May 1969. Last but not least, the shock of the invasion has put now life into NATO, which can hardly have been desired by the Russians. It also served to show up weaknesses in NATO, which there is now an opportunity to rectify. The economic cost to the Soviet Union should not be underestimated. The full mobilisation and use of a force this size must have been very costly.

25. It could be that the political failure of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, in contrast to its military success, has made the Soviets more reluctant to intervene in Rumania or Yugoslavia. On the other hand the military success of the invasion could have the opposite effect. Time will show. In the absence of strong internal support an operation against Albania seems unlikely, for lack of a common frontier and the extreme difficulties of an airborne or seaborne invasion. Besides, the Chinese come into the reckoning here — there were press reports on 8th December of a Chinese-Albanian agreement to permit the stationing of Chinese troops in Albania and the establishment of Chinese naval and missile bases there.

26. The success of the invasion of Czechoslovakia could also be an encouragement to the Soviet Union to put pressure on NATO's weak spot — conventional forces — now that some degree of nuclear parity has been reached.

(f) New Soviet doctrine of "Socialist Commonwealth"

27. The Russians have now made a new claim. It first appeared in a *Pravda* article in September, and was amplified by Mr. Brezhnev speaking to the Polish Communist Party Congress on 12th November:

"When the internal and external forces hostile to socialism seek to turn back the development of any socialist country to restore the capitalist order, when a threat emerges to the cause of socialism in that country, a threat to the security of the socialist commonwealth as a whole this is no longer a matter only for the people of the country in question, but it is also a common problem, which is a matter of concern for all socialist countries.

It goes without saying that such an action as military aid to a fraternal country to thwart the threat to the socialist order is an extraordinary, enforced that is, last resort measure. It can be caused only by the direct actions of the enemies of socialism inside the country and beyond its boundaries — actions which create a threat to the common interests of the socialist camp."

This assertion of the right to interfere in the internal affairs of any State within what the Russians term "the socialist commonwealth", at present means any country in their empire of satellites, but the doctrine could conceivably be extended to other countries like Yugoslavia or even Egypt. This is a new Monroe doctrine. It emphasises the division of Europe into blocks or spheres of influence. For the West, the danger of this doctrine is that it does not preclude the gradual extension of the Soviet sphere of influence and that, as the NATO communiqué of 16th November points out, it is contrary to the basic principles of the United Nations Charter and that the intervention by one State in the affairs of another is unlawful.

28. This doctrine imposes no new direct threat to NATO territory, but it could pose a serious indirect threat if ever applied to Finland, Yugoslavia or Albania. It could progressively weaken the western defence positions. It did make it necessary for the communiqué to "reaffirm the determination of the Alliance to persevere in its efforts to contribute to a peaceful solution of the German question based on the free decision of the German people and on the interests of European security".

29. The communiqué went on to give a warning that "clearly any Soviet intervention directly or indirectly affecting the situation in Europe or in the Mediterranean would create an international crisis with grave consequences".

(g) Problems of the "grey" areas

30. Even if it were conceded by the West that, despite the Charter of the United Nations, Russia should be free to intervene within the "socialist camp", in return for a tacit understanding that the Soviet Union would never interfere in any NATO territory, the problem of the "grey" areas would remain. Yugoslavia and Albania have been mentioned. But other examples come quickly to mind: Finland, Sweden, Austria, Algeria. Most important of these is Austria. Recently the Soviet Union has claimed that Articles 53 and 107 of the United Nations Charter — the "enemy State" articles — give it the right to intervene in the German Federal Republic in certain circumstances. The claim has of course been rejected by NATO countries, but the possibility of the Soviet Union making a similar claim in respect of Austria cannot be excluded. A glance at the map shows the strategic importance of Austria, now that conventional forces have a renewed importance. The Czechoslovak border is very near to Vienna and indeed to quite a length of the Danube. Events which led to Red Army troops being on the south bank of the Danube would constitute a serious threat to Bavaria and make a heavy reinforcement of NATO troops there essential.

31. "Vigilance is the price of liberty", one reads on the SHAPE badges at Casteau. Increased vigilance is now necessary, because of the new unpredictability of the Soviets and because their troops have moved nearer to the West, in a position from which a surprise attack could be more easily launched.

CHAPTER IV

How NATO should react

(a) Contingency planning

32. The first reaction of NATO must be to consider anew all the possible eventualities which might now arise with the increased uncertainty of new Soviet policies. Clearly Soviet policy is more unpredictable than it seemed to be a year ago. There is an infinite variety of possible Russian moves, and their political implications require study by NATO as much as their military implications require study at Casteau.

33. To minimize the Soviet threat to other countries inside their own sphere of influence, like Rumania, or outside it, like Yugoslavia, western policy should concentrate on better defence mobility, bringing units up to strength and maintaining more adequate supplies — e.g. of ammunition. This should help to counteract any impression that the West is reluctant to react. Newspaper articles, like a recent critical one on the Bundeswehr, do not improve the credibility of western defence.

34. Yugoslavia is of importance to the West, both strategically and psychologically. In saying so nothing should be added to support Soviet allegations of provocation. The strong statement in paragraph 6 of the NATO communiqué of 16th November is much to be welcomed and is worth repeating in full:

"The members of the Alliance urge the Soviet Union, in the interests of world peace, to refrain from using force and interfering in the affairs of other States. Determined to safeguard the freedom and independence of their countries, they could not remain indifferent to any development which endangers their security. Clearly any Soviet intervention directly or indirectly affecting the situation in Europe or in the Mediterranean would create an international crisis with grave consequences."

There is still in existence a mutual defence treaty signed by Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey in 1954 and there has been increased interest in it since August. Yugoslavia has announced an 8% increase in defence

expenditure. Marshal Tito, rejecting Mr. Rusk's thesis that Yugoslavia was a "grey" area has stoutly asserted that Yugoslavia is in nobody's sphere of influence and is strong enough to defend itself; it sought no aid from NATO but would welcome economic assistance. This attitude, coupled with the NATO communiqué must have a deterrent effect on any Soviet plans to occupy the country. If it were to be known that logistic support could be provided by NATO countries in an emergency, this would be a further deterrent insofar as the right ammunition and equipment could ever arrive in time. When Marshal Tito dies or retires, the risk of Soviet intervention to get Yugoslavia back into "the camp" must increase.

35. The attitude adopted by Rumania is different. For some years it has ceased to be an active member of the Warsaw Pact; it took no part in the occupation of Czechoslovakia and publicly condemned it. But under Soviet pressure it has now had to act as host to the Warsaw Pact conference under the Supreme Commander Marshal Yakubovsky at the end of November. Warsaw Pact manoeuvres in Rumania in 1969 were mentioned. Any Soviet occupation of Rumania would bring Soviet forces to 70 km from Belgrade — the Hungarian frontier where Soviet forces are permanently stationed is twice the distance.

36. Strategically the occupation of Rumania would not be as serious for NATO as would the occupation of Yugoslavia, but nothing should be done to suggest that such an act of aggression could be a less serious breach of international law. The "unclear" warning of paragraph 6 of the NATO communiqué makes no distinction between countries that may be in danger of Soviet occupation. Besides, the manoeuvres in Czechoslovakia were used to reconnoitre the routes for the subsequent invasion, so talk of manoeuvres in Rumania could have a sinister ring.

37. Meanwhile there has been recent evidence of fresh Chinese support for Albania, which again emphasises the hostility between China and the Soviet Union and might either deter any Soviet ambitions in Albania or alternatively encourage them to show that they can deal with the Chinese sphere of influence there.

38. Above all, SHAPE should immediately re-examine all forms which another Soviet coup could take and, equally important, NATO should supply in advance political guidance for each eventuality.

(b) Defence planning

39. Better NATO defence mobility is necessary and this means more troops on the ground in West Germany. The United Kingdom Secretary of State for Defence stated on 6th November that 50,000 British troops could be brought up to some 120,000 in the case of an urgent threat to the security of Europe. In view of the speed of the Soviet military action in August, it is questionable whether heavy reinforcements could be brought from the United Kingdom or the United States in sufficient time to influence events.

40. The United Kingdom is in a special position under the Brussels Treaty in that it was originally committed to keeping three divisions and a tactical air force on the continent. This obligation has been progressively reduced with the agreement of the WEU Council, until today it stands at no more than an army of 50,000 men and the tactical air force — the last reduction of a brigade of 5,000 men was carried out early in 1968.

41. Your Rapporteur believes that NATO in general and the British tax-payer in particular will get far greater value — in political and defence terms — for the cost of the British land forces if they are stationed in Germany rather than in the United Kingdom. This applies to the brigade withdrawn in 1968, and indeed to the rest of the strategic reserve in the United Kingdom. The arguments run as follows.

42. First, forces in Germany provide greater deterrent effect than in the United Kingdom. Secondly, the political inhibitions inherent in NATO make it uncertain that forces now in the United Kingdom (and United States for that matter) would in fact be returned to Germany in a period of growing tension until too late. As the Czechoslovak case shows, the desire to avoid provocation in a period of crisis is very strong in the democratic countries of NATO. Thirdly, when the time is again ripe — perhaps in a year or so — for talk of balanced mutual force reductions in the language of the Reykjavik communiqué, NATO will be in a far

better bargaining position with United Kingdom forces in Germany — their withdrawal to the United Kingdom should then be worth at least equivalent Soviet withdrawals from East Germany to the Soviet Union.

43. The United Kingdom has balance of payments problems. What could be sought to facilitate more British troops being stationed in Europe is not a contribution to the cost of maintaining the troops there, but a multilateral arrangement to offset the effect on the balance of payments through countervailing expenditure in the United Kingdom by other parties to the Agreement. Paragraph 8 of the NATO communiqué of 16th November recognises that solidarity could be strengthened "by co-operation between members to alleviate burdens arising from balance of payments deficits resulting specifically from military expenditure for the collective defence". Admittedly a formula satisfactory to all countries will be hard to find but there must be a fresh and urgent study of this problem.

44. For the rest the needed improvements in the defence effort of the NATO countries are spelt out in paragraph 8 of the latest NATO communiqué. Existing conventional units must be brought up to strength and their conventional capabilities improved.

(c) Conclusion to NATO reactions

45. The West should take up a position of strength, devoid of military threat, from which to pursue a policy of détente; to dissuade the Soviet Union from occupying further countries or places and to do what is possible to expedite Soviet withdrawal from Czechoslovakia. Events seem to have shown that it would be wiser that western policies of persuasion should concentrate on Moscow rather than on satellite capitals. Both political and economic aspects of East-West relations could play a part in achieving western objectives. When the time comes for resuming such initiatives as balanced mutual force reductions, consideration should be given to initiating direct negotiations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact as such.

46. Mr. Paul Henri Spaak has advocated bloc-to-bloc negotiations in articles in *Le Monde* of 2nd October and *Libre Belgique* of 13th November.

47. Caution will of course be necessary, because the West should not recognize any increased rigidity in supposed spheres of influence.

CHAPTER V

Higher organisation of western defence

48. European responsibility for the defence of Europe needs to be more clearly defined. Nevertheless, United States presence in Europe is essential for the West in order to maintain sufficient forces to balance the East. Western forces must be integrated in some measure to command respect. Each NATO power has its difficulties, but somehow the military objectives must be reconciled with the political and economic difficulties.

49. Recent proposals have been made for a specifically European element in NATO defence. There have been statements by MM. Harmel, Brosio, Schroeder and Wilson. Two significant meetings have been held in Brussels on 14th November: one between the Foreign Ministers of six WEU countries (not France) at which it was agreed that Italy should prepare a paper on the Harmel proposals for consideration at the February meeting of the WEU Council, and one between the Defence Ministers of the same six WEU countries, plus Denmark and Norway, to evolve a European identity in the defence field.

50. In seeking closer European defence co-operation, the members of WEU have an obligation to further, by every means in their power, the progress of European unity, particularly in the sphere of defence, which is the special responsibility of this organisation. Any positive suggestions at this time can be only tentative, but the Assembly will wish to keep this situation under review. Such matters will no doubt be discussed at the WEU Council meeting in early February 1969. Possible forms of European defence organisation range from

(i) a European Defence Community with a Permanent Commission, responsible for expenditure, weapons procurement and even recruiting, to (ii) a fluid arrangement, whereby the European permanent representatives to NATO should meet prior to full meetings of NATO bodies.

51. The first solution is not practical politics today. Even the second more modest proposal would introduce a new division in NATO between Europe and America and might encourage a popular movement in the United States for more withdrawals of troops from Europe. It also poses the question as to who is to be invited to the purely European meetings. Should it be the WEU nations plus Denmark and Norway? Should Greece, Turkey and Portugal be invited too? To include everyone would make the Committee cumbersome, merely exclude North America, and there would be objections to the membership of countries not ruled by a democracy. Turkey is in an important strategic position and there is a lot to be said for including it.

52. One compromise would be to develop the Harmel proposal. If it were vetoed in WEU a group could be set up outside it with six WEU countries, plus Denmark and Norway and, possibly, Turkey. Their Foreign Ministers could meet quarterly to discuss items on the NATO agenda. A permanent secretariat would be needed to prepare for these meetings and to keep in touch with NATO. The drawback to this plan is that it would be divisive in character and would have the unfortunate effect of emphasising lack of French participation. The French position with regard to NATO would be clearly understood and the fact that they claim, no doubt with reason, that the five divisions of French troops stationed on the east of the country are probably in a superior state of readiness to any other western troops.

53. The need is to establish a true partnership on the basis of equality and interdependence between the United States of America and a united Europe. Effective machinery for the joint planning of armaments production within NATO, on a basis which would infer an equitable distribution of orders between America and Europe, and between the European countries themselves, would be a first step.

54. Joint production of armaments must be stimulated more successfully, therefore the WEU Standing Armaments Committee must be given fresh impetus.

55. The continuing need for NATO, an obvious lesson of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, must be strongly reaffirmed. The wording of paragraph 12 of the NATO communiqué is highly satisfactory about this and is worth quoting in full:

"The North Atlantic Alliance will continue to stand as the indispensable guarantor of security and the essential foundation for the pursuit of European reconciliation. By its constitution the Alliance is of indefinite duration. Recent events have further demonstrated that its continued existence is more than ever necessary. The Foreign Minister of France recalled that, for its part, unless events in the years to come were to bring about a radical change in East-West relations, the French Government considers that the Alliance must continue as long as it appears to be necessary."

The time has come to follow up declarations, however well worded, with deeds. Progress in defence co-operation between the nations of Western Europe is overdue and should be pursued with the utmost vigour. This is a task for Ministers and the WEU Council, but the Assembly is entitled to expect positive progress in the aftermath of the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

(1) Adopted unanimously by the Committee.

(2) Members of the Committee: Mr. *Edwards* (Chairman); MM. *Goedhart*, *Vedovato* (Vice Chairmen); MM. *Abelin* (Substitute: *Bourgoin*), *Amatucci*, *Beauguitte*, *Berkhan*, *Delforge*, *Digby*, *Draeger*, *Fitch*, *Foschini*, *Housiaux* (Substitute: *De Keuleneir*), *Jannuzzi*, *Jung* (Substitute: *Legaret*), *Lemmrigh*, *Lenze*, *Massimo Lancellotti*, *Mommersteeg*, *Nothomb*, *van Kiel* (Substitute: *Bos*), *Lord St. Helens*, MM. *Eugene Schaus*, *Schloesing* (Substitute: *de Montesquiou*), *Sourdille*, *Wienand* (Substitute: *Rutschke*), *Williams*.

N. B. The names of Representatives who took part in the vote are printed in italics.

(3) Document 455 adopted by the Committee on 20th September 1968 and Recommendation 170 adopted by the Assembly on 16th October 1968.