

Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Session of the North Atlantic Council (Reykjavik, 24 and 25 June 1968)

Caption: Known as the ‘Reykjavik Signal’, the Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Session of the North Atlantic Council of 24 and 25 June 1968 reaffirms the intention of the Allies to continue to move toward détente and asks the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries to associate themselves with the process leading to balanced and mutual force reductions.

Source: Ministerial Communiqués. Final Communiqué, Chairman: Mr. M. Brosio, Reykjavik 24th-25th June 1968. [ON-LINE]. [s.l.]: NATO, [18.08.2005]. Available on <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c680624a.htm>.

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Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Session of the North Atlantic Council (Reykjavik, 24 and 25 June 1968)

Chairman: Mr. M. Brosio.

The North Atlantic Council met in Ministerial Session in Reykjavik on 24th and 25th June, 1968.

1. In reviewing the international scene, Ministers examined the situation created by the recent measures affecting the access routes to Berlin.

a. Ministers stressed again that the Soviet Union is responsible for any action which has the effect of hampering or endangering the freedom of communication with Berlin and urged that such courses of action should be discontinued.

b. By challenging international agreements and long-standing practices concerning Berlin, the East German Authorities have created a serious situation. Ministers considered these measures a deliberate attempt to jeopardize détente, from which Berlin and its inhabitants must not be excluded.

c. Ministers recalled the declaration of the North Atlantic Council on Berlin of December 16, 1958 and the responsibilities which each member state assumed in regard to the security and welfare of Berlin.

d. Member governments do not recognize the "*German Democratic Republic*". They consider that its actions, having no juridical basis, cannot create international rights nor consecrate the division of Germany against the will of its people. The Three Powers and the Soviet Union remain responsible for Berlin and Germany as a whole, pending a peace settlement.

e. Ministers approved and associated themselves with the expressed determination of the Three Powers to maintain freedom of access to the city. They took note of the decision of the governments of the Three Powers responsible for the security of Berlin, together with the government of the Federal Republic of Germany, to remain in continuous consultation concerning Berlin and to stand ready to meet any contingency. The Council will be kept continuously informed and will consult as appropriate on the situation.

2. Ministers discussed the follow-up to the Report, approved at the Ministerial Meeting of December 1967, on the Future Tasks of the Alliance. For this purpose the Council in Permanent Session submitted to Ministers a comprehensive report on work which it had accomplished thus far in carrying out the main tasks set for the Alliance in the years ahead.

3. The first part of this Report reviewed East-West relations since 1966. It set forth the results of a co-operative study by member governments of their policies designed to promote progress towards a more stable relationship in which the underlying political issues in Europe can be solved. The study noted that in certain respects improvements in East-West relations had taken place. It concluded that, while in the longer term prospects for further improvements could be favorable, opportunities for rapid progress towards general détente should not be over-rated.

4. Ministers nevertheless reaffirmed their intention to continue their efforts to promote détente. Each ally should play its full part in improving East-West relations, bearing in mind the established practice of timely consultation within the Alliance. Ministers concluded that the intensified examination and review, within the Alliance, of suitable policies to achieve a just and stable order in Europe, to overcome the division of

Germany and to foster European security had proved of great value and should continue. This task will be part of a process of active and constant preparation for the time when fruitful discussions of these complex questions may be possible bilaterally or multilaterally between Eastern and Western nations.

5. A second part of the Council's Report summarized the results so far of intensive work on a programmed study of disarmament and practical arms control measures. As an initial effort, member governments and their experts have concentrated on the study of the possibility of balanced force reductions as between East and West. The Ministers confirmed the decision of the Permanent Council to give priority to this complex and important work. They did not under-estimate the existing obstacles but they confirmed the need to prevent an escalation in arms levels on both sides.

6. Ministers representing the nations participating in the NATO Defence Program adopted a declaration on mutual force reductions, which is attached to this communiqué. The French Delegation declared, for reasons of principle and procedure, that it could associate itself only with paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 6 of the attached declaration. It has nevertheless affirmed that, since the study of possibilities of balanced and mutual force reductions has not been completed, France will continue to take part in the further work in the Council foreseen in paragraph 13 of the Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance.

7. Ministers examined and approved a report from the Permanent Council which dealt in detail with the situation in the Mediterranean and related defence problems. They directed their Permanent Representatives to consult fully on this situation and to extend their consultations in range and depth as circumstances required. To this end, the Secretary General was requested to co-ordinate the exchange of information among members of the Council and to keep the Council closely advised on the situation in the Mediterranean. It is, of course, understood that member countries, or the Secretary General, may put forward matters to be considered by the Council in accordance with their rights and responsibilities.

8. The Ministers of the countries taking part in the Defence Planning Committee, concerned at the recent expansion of Soviet activity in the Mediterranean, decided that their Permanent Representatives, with the assistance of the NATO Military Authorities, would take under early consideration measures designed to safeguard the security interests of NATO members in the Mediterranean area and to improve the effectiveness of allied forces in that area. The Permanent Representatives will also consider other measures or organizational changes that may be needed to enhance the effectiveness and co-ordination of allied surveillance activities in the Mediterranean and that may require further authorization.

9. France did not associate herself with the decisions referred to in paragraph 9 above.

10. The Council heard statements of the Foreign Ministers of Greece and Turkey on the subject of relations between the two allied countries. The Council noted with satisfaction recent developments in Greek-Turkish relations and expressed the hope that further progress, to the benefit of both countries and of the Alliance, might be achieved in the future. The Council also expressed the hope that the informal talks started between the two communities of the Republic of Cyprus would make an important contribution towards a final settlement of the problem.

11. The next Ministerial Meeting of the Council will be in Brussels in December 1968.

Annex — Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions

Declaration adopted by Foreign Ministers and Representatives of Countries participating in the NATO Defence Program

1. Meeting at Reykjavik on 24th and 25th June, 1968, the Ministers recalled the frequently expressed and strong desire of their countries to make progress in the field of disarmament and arms control.

2. Ministers recognized that the unresolved issues which still divide the European Continent must be settled by peaceful means, and are convinced that the ultimate goal of a lasting, peaceful order in Europe requires an atmosphere of trust and confidence and can only be reached by a step-by-step process. Mindful of the

obvious and considerable interest of all European States in this goal, Ministers expressed their belief that measures in this field including balanced and mutual force reductions can contribute significantly to the lessening of tension and to further reducing the danger of war.

3. Ministers noted the important work undertaken within the North Atlantic Council by member governments in examining possible proposals for such reductions pursuant to paragraph 13 of the "Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance", approved by the Ministers in December 1967. In particular, they have taken note of the work being done in the Committee of Political Advisers to establish bases of comparison and to analyze alternative ways of achieving a balanced reduction of forces, particularly in the Central part of Europe.

4. Ministers affirmed the need for the Alliance to maintain an effective military capability and to assure a balance of forces between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Since the security of the NATO countries and the prospects for mutual force reductions would be weakened by NATO reductions alone, Ministers affirmed the proposition that the overall military capability of NATO should not be reduced except as part of a pattern of mutual force reductions balanced in scope and timing.

5. Accordingly, Ministers directed Permanent Representatives to continue and intensify their work in accordance with the following agreed principles:

- a. Mutual force reduction should be reciprocal and balanced in scope and timing.
- b. Mutual reductions should represent a substantial and significant step, which will serve to maintain the present degree of security at reduced cost, but should not be such as to risk de-stabilizing the situation in Europe.
- c. Mutual reductions should be consonant with the aim of creating confidence in Europe generally and in the case of each party concerned.
- d. To this end, any new arrangement regarding forces should be consistent with the vital security interests of all parties and capable of being carried out effectively.

6. Ministers affirmed the readiness of their governments to explore with other interested states specific and practical steps in the arms control field.

7. In particular, Ministers agreed that it was desirable that a process leading to mutual force reductions should be initiated. To that end they decided to make all necessary preparations for discussions on this subject with the Soviet Union and other countries of Eastern Europe and they call on them to join in this search for progress towards peace.

8. Ministers directed their Permanent Representatives to follow up on this declaration.