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STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE DEAN RUSK
SECRETARY OF STATE
BEFORE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE
MONDAY, JUNE 13, 1966

Madam Chairman:

It is a pleasure for me to be before this Subcommittee and to pay my respects to the public service you are rendering in your far-reaching and thorough examination of the present situation in NATO.

I think the most useful thing for me to do today would be to discuss with you in some detail the NATO Ministerial Meeting at Brussels, from which I have just returned.

It might be convenient, Madam Chairman, if you saw fit to put the Communique of this meeting into the Record at this point.

By briefing you on this meeting, I will in effect also be telling you where NATO now stands and what seems to lie ahead.

The meeting had some very specific tasks. You are all aware that earlier this year the Government of France announced that it was withdrawing from participation in NATO's military activities. This meant primarily that it would no longer assign its forces in Germany to NATO.

The French Government also announced its decision that NATO and United States military establishments and bases should leave France.

Thus, the problems facing the Brussels meeting were these: to close ranks and fill the gaps left in NATO by the impending withdrawal of French forces; to relocate the NATO installations that must now leave France; to take advantage of this relocation to reorganize NATO's higher military structure on a more efficient basis; to determine to what extent arrangements could be worked out for French cooperation with NATO on a basis acceptable to the other Fourteen countries; to demonstrate that NATO was not an outmoded defender of the status quo, but was relevant to the

eventual

eventual settlement of East-West differences; and, of course, to transact the normal business of the Alliance.

I am most pleased to be able to inform you that the meeting succeeded in reaching these objectives, to the fullest extent that might have been hoped.

The Group of Fourteen, that is, the NATO countries minus France, which held its own separate meetings at Brussels, gave a display of unity of purpose, and showed an ability to unite for action, that provided irrefutable evidence that the Fourteen countries consider NATO to be as essential as ever.

The Fourteen agreed on the relocation of NATO's principal military headquarters - SHAPE and AFCENT, and of the NATO Defense College.

You may have seen the announcement from Belgium that the Belgian Cabinet has now decided to invite SHAPE to Belgium and will submit that question to its Parliament. It is anticipated that the consolidated AFCENT Headquarters will be in Benelux, or possibly in Germany, and that the NATO Defense College will move to Italy.

The Fourteen also agreed on a streamlining of NATO's top military structure, involving the abolition of the Standing Group and the creation of an integrated international military staff.

On the question of the seat of the North Atlantic Council, again, the Fourteen showed a will to unity and a readiness for decision that fully met my expectations. It was agreed that the measures taken by the French Government create a situation in which the Council, if it remains in Paris, will be physically separated from all the military organisms of NATO after the departure of the military headquarters from France. There was also agreement on the importance of close cooperation between the political and the military institutions of NATO and that their co-location is one of the principal factors to be kept in mind when a
decision

decision is made on this question. The Ministers therefore decided that while awaiting the result of the negotiations which will take place on the connected questions, other eventual locations for the Council should be examined. I believe that when all of the factors are studied over the next few months, the Fourteen will agree to move the Council if it is clearly evident that this needs to be done.

The question of arrangements between French forces and NATO forces proved to be the most difficult one that arose. The representative of France initially took the position at the meeting that political questions were for negotiation between France and Germany, and that the questions posed between France and NATO as a whole were entirely technical and military in nature and should be worked out between French and NATO military commanders. The Fourteen, including the FRG, did not agree with this view, since the questions between France and NATO are, in the first instance, clearly political in nature, involving as they do the extent to which France is committed to act with the other Allies in a crisis and the extent to which France will enter into effective command arrangements in time of war.

After considerable discussion, France agreed with the Fourteen that, and here I quote from the Communique:

"(a) The questions which need to be settled jointly between the Allies as a consequence of French communications will in the first instance be discussed in the Council in permanent session.

"(b) Prominent among these questions are the tasks and missions of French forces in Germany, including their cooperation with NATO Forces and command arrangements.

"(c) Other questions such as French participation in MADGE and NATO infrastructure projects will be discussed in the same way.

"(d) The Council in permanent session may, of course, make any arrangements it wishes for discussion of these questions. It may,

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for example, decide to set up smaller groups to deal with some or all of the questions. When the political problems have been discussed and sufficient agreement reached on them, the elaboration of the necessary military arrangements will be referred to discussions between the French High Command and the SACEUR.

"(e) If the Council in permanent session can make no progress, discussion will be resumed at Ministerial level."

All of the matters of which I have just been talking, were approved by the plenary Council, including France.

I do not wish to suggest that the political problems raised by the France-NATO crisis have been solved. It remains to be seen whether political discussion in the Permanent Council on France's relationship to NATO will be productive, and what France means in saying that it wishes to remain a party to the North Atlantic Treaty.

Another result of the meeting was the demonstration by the Fourteen that France was expected to stand aside when the North Atlantic Council considers matters involving those Alliance activities in which France has ceased to participate.

The meeting was not confined to dealing with the France-NATO crisis.

NATO has, of course, been actively concerned over the years with an improvement in East-West relations and with creating an atmosphere more conducive to ultimate resolution of the fundamental European issues left over from World War II. It was clearly the sense of the Ministers at Brussels that even if the immediate outlook for new concrete agreements or arrangements is not altogether encouraging, the West should make it evident beyond any question that it seriously desires improved relationships, and continues to hope that unremitting efforts on our side may evoke eventually favorable responses from the East. If there is to be genuine progress toward the eventual settlement

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of the tragic division of East from West, and particularly, the tragic division of Germany, the Fourteen countries at Brussels recognized that they must stand together. I want to underscore this point. There was no disagreement among the Fourteen that the progress we seek in our relations with the East will come as a function of our unity.

In this connection, I suggested to the Council that it instruct the Permanent Representatives to continue to examine closely the prospects for healthy developments in East-West relations and to consider further initiatives which might be usefully undertaken by members of the North Atlantic Pact, in addition to the numerous activities that are already being carried on. This was agreed, and the Permanent Representatives will report on the matter to the Ministers.

I hope that member governments will be forthcoming in consulting intimately and frequently on these matters. There will be further consultation about the nature of the threat from the East, its implications for the West, the nature of the changes occurring in Eastern Europe and their implications for the West. We shall also need to identify those areas where further points of agreement may be developed and in so doing further the process of trying to build a peace. The Permanent Representatives will take this up as a matter of continuing business.

In addition, very important and constructive regular Alliance business was done. I would like particularly to mention the following:

The Council heard a report from the Special Committee studying nuclear matters. The Committee will continue its activities and is expected to make a final report to the December Ministerial Meeting.

The organization that deals with cooperative research, development and production was revamped, and conditions now seem promising for important inter-allied cooperation in this respect.

Attention was paid to the need of Greece and Turkey for support in their efforts to contribute to the common defense. Additional countries indicated

indicated a readiness to help.

I called to the attention of the Council the importance of the NATO Parliamentarians Conference and stressed the need as emphasized by our own Congressional members to strengthen the Conference's Executive Secretariat. I consider this a most useful activity that contributes a great deal to public understanding of and participation in the Alliance.

Finally, although time was limited, I told our Allies of the latest developments in the Dominican Republic and in Viet-Nam.

To sum up: I want to reiterate that the Brussels meeting provided a most impressive demonstration of the great value all members of the North Atlantic Alliance except France continue to attach to NATO. I am persuaded that the Allies will do whatever is necessary to preserve this system which they consider essential to their security. They hope that France will cooperate in this endeavor, but if it will not, the rest of us are prepared and determined to carry on. They are eager to put to use the strength NATO provides in order to improve East-West relations. They do not expect a grand European settlement in the near future, but they hope that if the East is prepared to cooperate, it will be possible through trade, cultural contacts, and scientific and technological exchanges to create a more favorable East-West atmosphere, so as to facilitate eventual settlement of the fundamental, hard problems that continue to divide Europe.

Thus, the outlook for NATO, though unclear as far as France is concerned, is in no way cause for pessimism.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

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