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EAST-WEST EXCHANGES OF MILITARY VISITS

Note by the Acting Chairman of the
Political Committee

The Political Committee approved the attached Report by its Acting Chairman at its meeting on 11th April, 1968. This Report has been drawn up in response to the request of the Council at its meeting on 17th January, 1968 (C-R(68)2, paragraph 50(2)).

2. The Council is invited to take note of the Report.

(Signed) Christian CHAPMAN

OTAN/NATO,
Brussels, 39.

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

EAST-WEST EXCHANGES OF MILITARY VISITS

On 17th January, 1968, the Council invited the Political Committee to review the political aspects of East-West exchanges of military visits (C-R(68)2).

2. The Committee has now completed its review, taking into account the Military Committee's preliminary views (MCM-40-67) and the Secretary General's comments (PO/68/38), as well as discussions in the Committee on 13th February, 5th March, and 12th March.

3. The Chairman's Report is hereby submitted for the Council's consideration. Attached at Annex is a list of East-West exchanges planned or recently accomplished.

4. The Committee's consensus was that the exchange of East-West military visits can promote détente and so falls within the policy adopted by members of the Alliance to expand East-West contacts at all levels. However some members said that their military authorities expressed doubts about the usefulness of such exchanges. East-West military exchanges should be scheduled with all due prudence and caution and all exchanges should be examined on a case by case basis.

5. There are both advantages and disadvantages to a policy of increased military contacts.

- (a) On the one hand, Western societies are more open than Communist ones, and overt access to Western military and technical data is, in general, vastly easier than to comparable Soviet data. Therefore, the West has relatively more to gain from increased access to such equipment and installations as the Soviets and their "allies" are willing to show, if reciprocity is insisted upon. Moreover, increased contacts could help to aerate the rigidly doctrinaire, parochial frame of mind of most Soviet military leaders. Contacts also could presumably reduce the chances of miscalculation or incomprehension on the part of these men, who for the most part have had little or no exposure to alternative value systems, competitive political vocabularies or strategic concepts, or to the Western scene in general. Exchanges between the different members of both opposing Alliances could encourage East European countries to assume a more independent attitude toward Moscow, in particular at the present time when greater fluidity is a characteristic of the area's political life. In the much longer run, military contacts might play their part in establishing a basis for arms control measures, perhaps beginning with invitations to manoeuvres (e.g. Exercise FIRST LOOK). They might eventually contribute towards elaborating the foundations for a European security system.

- (b) On the other hand, increased military contacts may allow the Soviet Union and its closer Warsaw Pact clients to glean information of a kind not necessarily available to them through regular intelligence collection channels. Moreover, it is not without interest that the USSR has made a larger effort than most of its partners to develop these contacts, and that the other Pact country making a considerable effort is Poland, who hews closely to the Soviet foreign policy line; whereas Rumania, a détente-minded country, has shown little interest. In this connection it is also interesting that while the Soviets are willing to promote selective contacts with certain NATO members, they have displayed a total disinterest in conducting exchanges with the United States. This may be interpreted to mean that the Soviets conceive of military exchanges, inter alia, as one possible device of "selective détente" in playing off one Alliance government against another and thereby creating tensions or suspicions. Finally, the effect of even "atmospheric", "protocolary", or "friendship" visits by Communist defence officials could affect the problem of maintaining parliamentary support for adequate military force levels in some NATO countries.

6. The Alliance principle of frank and timely consultations applies to East-West military exchanges. In this regard, reports on such exchanges should be made to the Council or the Political Committee as appropriate as well as to the Military Committee, and the exchanges should be included in the regular NATO "East-West Contact Lists" prepared semi-annually in June and December before each Ministerial Meeting. Although military contacts are a centuries-old practice, it would seem that many NATO countries have not yet fully elaborated their policy on military exchanges with Communist states; consequently the Committee felt that exchanges of views in NATO forums are necessary as the Allies move into a relatively fresh field of East-West contacts.

7. Specifically, the Committee recommended that the following criteria be observed:

- (a) Reciprocity - Reciprocity is very important, and should normally be insisted upon, especially in that it is in the self-interest of each Alliance member to do so. Reciprocity should, however, be applied within a context of overall political and intelligence objectives.

- (b) Security - C-M(55)15(Final) sets forth NATO's standing principles and minimum standards of security. The application and implementation of these principles and standards are the responsibility of the member countries, who are obliged to take all appropriate precautions as to which specific items of classified equipment, weapons or installations, may be shown to visitors from Communist countries.

- (c) Political exploitation - The exchanges should be conducted in a manner so as to exclude their political exploitation against the interests of other Alliance member countries by the Communist side.

EAST-WEST EXCHANGES OF MILITARY VISITS

1. BELGIUM

(a) An exchange of visits between high-ranking Belgian and Soviet military personalities of a "purely protocolary nature" is planned, although none have yet taken place. A Belgian military delegation will make the initial visit to the USSR on 17th June, followed by a Soviet visit to Belgium.

(b) The visit of M. Charles POSWICK, Belgian Minister of Defence, to Warsaw, 10th to 14th January, 1967, at the invitation of Polish Minister of Defence Marshal SPYCHALSKI, was the first time a NATO Defence Minister had visited Poland. M. POSWICK was accompanied by Chief of the Belgian General Staff, Lt. General DESSART and his chief of cabinet, Colonel WERNER. He saw the Krakow Military Parachute Centre, and the Czezecin (ex-Stettin) Tank Base, the Warsaw Military Academy and the Warsaw Military Museum. M. POSWICK also visited Krakow, Zakopane, and Auschwitz. He was received by Polish Premier Jozef CYRANKIEWICZ.

(c) Marshal Marian SPYCHALSKI, Polish Defence Minister, visited Belgium, 15th to 20th September, 1967, accompanied by Vice-Minister of National Defence and Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Army, Wojciech JARUZELSKI, Commander of the Sixth Pomeranian Airborne Division, General Erwin ROZLUBIRSKI, and the chief of the Minister's cabinet, Colonel Zygmunt ZIELINSKI. It was the first time a Warsaw Pact Defence Minister had visited a NATO country. SPYCHALSKI visited the Royal Belgian Military School, the Sint-Kruis (Sainte-Croix) Naval Training Centre near Bruges, and Bierset Air Base where he was briefed on the mission and operations of the Belgian 42nd Air Reconnaissance Squadron and the VSV all-weather Squadron.

(d) Talks on disarmament questions at the expert level between Belgian and Polish delegations, including military officers and defence officials, were held at Brussels in January 1967, at Warsaw on 9th to 15th October, 1967 and again at Brussels on 11th to 14th March, 1968.

2. CANADA

(a) A scheduled visit of three to five Soviet naval vessels to EXPO in Montreal in August, 1967, was cancelled by the Soviets, apparently due to the Middle East crisis.

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(b) Two Soviet oceanographic vessels, "Baikal" and "Balkhash", visited the operational base in Vancouver from 28th September to 3rd October, 1967, but their visit was not the object of any joint exchange between the Royal Canadian Navy and the Soviets. However, permission to use the base in Vancouver was granted on the understanding that the Soviet Pacific port of Nakhodka would be open for an operational visit by the Royal Canadian Navy in the spring of 1968. For technical reasons, this visit will not now take place in 1968.

(c) An informal sounding was taken in 1967 by the Soviet military attaché in Ottawa to discover what the reaction would be to a formal invitation to the Canadian Chief of Defence Staff, General Jean Victor ALLARD, to visit Moscow during celebrations concerning the 50th Anniversary of the October Revolution. No formal invitation was in fact extended since, in the course of consultations, it was discovered that the invitation was unique among NATO governments. A formal invitation, therefore, was discouraged by Canadian Authorities.

3. FRANCE

(a) Official visit of General Charles AILLERET, Chief of the General Staff of the French Armed Forces, to the Soviet Union on 24th April to 3rd May, 1967, at the invitation of Marshal ZAKHAROV, Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces, and USSR First Deputy Minister of Defence. General AILLERET called on Marshal GRECHKO, USSR Minister of Defence, inspected the Frunze Military Academy, visited the Armoured Forces Academy, was received by Premier KOSYGIN, and officially attended the military parade on Red Square on 1st May.

(b) Marshal Matvei ZAKHAROV, USSR First Deputy Defence Minister and Chief of the USSR General Staff, accompanied by Vice-Admiral Vladimir N. ALEKSEYEV, Deputy Naval Chief of Staff, made an official visit to France on 8th to 18th October, 1967, at the invitation of General Charles AILLERET, Chief of the French General Staff. He returned the visit which General AILLERET had made to the USSR the previous spring. Marshal ZAKHAROV visited the French Air Training Centre at Salon-de-Provence, the Brest Naval Academy, the Special Military School at Coëtquidan, and the Pau Airborne School. At the latter base ZAKHAROV attended exercises in which several Soviet parachutists participated. These parachutists had come to Vichy to take part in the European championship parachute competition. ZAKHAROV also attended a demonstration of French military equipment and visited the aircraft carrier CLEMENCEAU. He was received by M. Georges POMPIDOU, Prime Minister, as well

as M. Pierre MESSMER, Minister of the Armed Forces. These talks, like those ZAKHAROV held with General AILLERET, concerned the development of contacts between the armed forces of the two countries and the exchanges of visits to take place in 1968. It was announced later that M. MESSMER will pay an official visit to the Soviet Union in the second half of April 1968. MESSMER, invited to the Soviet Union by USSR Minister of Defence Marshal Andrey GRECHKO, will also be the guest of Minister of the Aircraft Industry Pyotr DEMENTYEV.

(c) A Soviet military delegation comprising twenty civilian and seventeen officer members of the Military Academy of the Soviet General Staff led by Colonel RAZEWSKY visited France from 28th May to 9th June, 1967. They were received 8th June by Premier POMPIDOU. Their itinerary included Saclay, the Berliet plant at Lyon. Sud-Aviation, the Ranguel complex, Pechiny installations, the Aquitaine Petroleum Corporation at Bordeaux, the Samur Tank School, and the Renault factory at Flins. The visit complemented a 1966 visit to the USSR by between eighty and ninety members of the French Institut des hautes études de défense nationale.

(d) The "friendship" visit to Toulon on 15th to 20th October, 1966 of the Soviet missile destroyer "Naporistyy", with Captain (First Rank) Stepan SOLOV'AN, Captain, Destroyers, Black Sea Fleet embarked, was the first Russian naval call at Toulon since the 1917 Revolution. It returned the visit of the French destroyer-escort "Tartu" to Odessa and Sevastopol in May 1966.

4. GERMANY

(a) The fourth Advanced Training Course for Medical Officers, organized by the Comité Internationale de Médecine took place in Munich from 22nd to 31st August, 1967. After the course, the head of the Soviet delegation, Lt. General Professor Dr. GEORGYEVSKIY visited at his request the Central Military Hospital of the German Armed Forces at Koblenz.

5. ITALY

(a) Italy and Yugoslavia have agreed in principle to an Italian naval visit at the Yugoslav port of Split in the Summer of 1968.

6. NETHERLANDS

(a) The Netherlands cruiser "De Zeven Provinciën" paid an unofficial visit to the Polish port of Gdynia on 5th to 8th May, 1967.

(b) HNLMS "Snellius", a hydrographic survey vessel, informally visited Leningrad 29th June to 3rd July, 1967. The ship, following customary practice, was open to the public. The ship's officers paid visits to Soviet establishments dealing with survey matters. Excursions to the Leningrad Maritime Museum and the cruiser "Aurora", an historic relic moored at quayside, were organized for the crew. A Soviet return naval visit is expected.

7. NORWAY

(a) The Norwegian Defence Minister, M. Otto Grieg TIDEMAND, and one Senior Norwegian military officer paid an official visit to the Soviet Union 16th to 20th October, 1967 at the invitation of Soviet Defence Minister GRECHKO. Mr. TIDEMAND reportedly was briefed on the system of training command personnel for the Soviet army in military academies, visited an air force unit, and was present at exercises of a motorized infantry battalion of the Taman guards division. He had talks with the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers KOSYGIN, Foreign Minister Andrey GROMYKO, Marshal GRECHKO, and "leading personalities" of the Soviet Defence Ministry.

8. UNITED KINGDOM

(a) Exercise LIFELINE. In April 1966 the Soviet Military and Air Attachés in London attended the United Kingdom's Exercise LIFELINE, staged to practice the mounting and re-supply of parachute operations in counter-insurgency and limited war situations, the tactical and logistic use of helicopters, and amphibious and air supporting operations. This was a reciprocal arrangement for attendance of British attachés at a Soviet exercise in the summer of 1965. Other Warsaw Pact attachés were also invited but declined to attend because they could not guarantee reciprocity. The Soviet observers viewed a company attack mounted from helicopters and supported by artillery and aircraft, battalion headquarters, beachhead positions, landing of supporting troops and equipment, and, from a helicopter, HMS FEARLESS, new Royal Navy assault ship. They also saw a battalion parachute drop, a company attack, a joint attack by British and Italian infantry, and examined various weapons and equipment at commando headquarters.

(b) Visit of sixteen military officers of the Imperial Defence College (IDC) to Poland on 29th August to 3rd September, 1967. Another IDC visit to Eastern Europe is contemplated.

(c) Visit of HMS "Devonshire" (DLG), Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, embarked, to Leningrad in September, 1966.

(d) Visit of HMS "Devonshire" (DLG), Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, embarked, to Gdynia, Poland, in September, 1966.

(e) Visit of the frigate HMS "Rhyl" to Varna, Bulgaria, in November, 1966.

(f) Visit of the frigate HMS "Lowestoft" to Constanta, Rumania, in November, 1966.

(g) Visit of the Polish destroyer "Wicher" and minesweepers "Orlik" and "Albatros" to Edinburgh in July, 1967.

(h) Visit of the Rumanian sail training ship "Mircea" to Portsmouth in August, 1967.

(i) An invitation has been extended to the Bulgarian Navy to visit the United Kingdom in 1968, but no reply has been received.