

Subsection 3.—Canada and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*

During 1959-60, the North Atlantic Council continued in permanent session at Paris under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, Mr. Paul-Henri Spaak. The Canadian Permanent Representative was Mr. Jules Léger, former Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Two Ministerial meetings of the Council were convened during 1959. The regular spring meeting of Foreign Ministers was held in Washington, Apr. 2-4. A special ceremony at the opening session marked the 10th anniversary of the Treaty, which was signed in Washington on Apr. 4, 1949. The Council directed its attention to the central problem posed by the Soviet Union's pronouncements on Berlin and Germany. Discussion centred mainly on the Western position for the negotiations with the Soviet Union scheduled to commence at Geneva later in the spring, upon which there was general agreement. The Ministers expressed desire to see outstanding problems solved by negotiation and confirmed the principles contained in the Council's declaration on Berlin of Dec. 16, 1958.

The year's work of the Council culminated with the meeting of Foreign, Defence and Finance Ministers held in Paris, Dec. 15-17 and again on Dec. 22 following a meeting during the intervening period of the Heads of Government of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Federal Republic of Germany to consider preparations for an East-West Summit conference. In addition, the Foreign Ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Canada met on Dec. 21 to discuss arrangements for convening the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee. The NATO Ministerial meeting was therefore concerned not only with its traditional review of the international situation and current NATO defence problems but with the more important matters relating to the forthcoming East-West Summit negotiations and preparation for negotiations with the Soviet Union on disarmament, both in the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee and at the Summit. Agreement was reached on the arrangements for convening the Summit conference and the meetings of the Disarmament Committee, and for ensuring that there would be full consultation with NATO in preparing the Western position for these meetings.

On the invitation of the Government of Turkey, the Foreign Ministers convened in Istanbul, May 2-4, 1960, for their annual spring meeting which was devoted mainly to an examination of the proposed position to be adopted by the three Western negotiating powers at the forthcoming Summit conference. After a full discussion, agreement was reached on the broad lines of the Western position on the central issues of disarmament—Germany and Berlin, and East-West relations. Earlier, at the end of March, a special meeting of Defence Ministers was held in Paris to review important defence problems and the action taken to implement earlier decisions of the Council in the defence field.

The 1960 annual meeting of Foreign, Defence and Finance Ministers was held in Paris, Dec. 16-18. They reviewed international developments since the failure of the Summit conference, reaffirmed their views on Germany and Berlin and East-West relations and expressed hope for the early resumption of negotiations on disarmament. On the subject of defence they agreed on the importance of maintaining a proper balance between the conventional and nuclear strength of the NATO forces; they noted with interest a concept for a multilateral MRBM force suggested by the United States and instructed the Permanent Representatives to study it and related matters in detail. In addition, they welcomed the assurance of the United States to maintain in the NATO area nuclear weapons made available to NATO.

The meeting also examined problems related to the non-military aspects of long-term planning and underlined the importance of pursuing comprehensive political consultations designed to achieve the closest possible co-ordination of national views and unity of action.

* The terms of the Treaty and the organization of the Council and subordinate committees are dealt with in the 1954 Year Book at pp. 113-115. A short review of the events leading up to the establishment of NATO and its subsequent membership is given in the 1960 Year Book at p. 167.