



Doc. 1020

27 August 1959

On NATO cultural activities

Report¹

Committee on Culture, Science and Education

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1. 1959 - 11th Session - Second part



A. I. Draft Recommendation

The Assembly,

Having regard to the Resolution of the Committee of Cultural Affairs and of Information adopted in November 1958 by the fourth annual Conference of NATO Parliamentarians, relating to the cultural activities of N. A. T. O. 3²;

Vu l'existence d'une Convention culturelle du Conseil de l'Europe qui permet l'adhésion de pays non membres du Conseil et d'un Fonds culturel du Conseil de l'Europe,

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

1. Invite the Governments of member countries who are Members of N. A. T. O. : (i) before entrusting N. A. T. O. with fresh activities in the cultural field, to consider the grave disadvantage of duplication of work; (ii) to use the Council of Europe as the framework for multilateral action in the cultural field, with the object of strengthening the solidarity of the free world;
2. Examine the possibility of associating Portugal, the United States and Canada with the execution of certain projects of a cultural nature initiated by the Council of Europe.

2. Cf. Appendix I.

B. II. Explanatory Memorandum

1.

1. Your Committee has been both interested and disturbed by the repeated attempts of recent years to entrust the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation with fresh activities in the cultural field. Several members of the Committee who have participated in the NATO parliamentary conferences have been directly associated with this trend. The difficulties they have experienced in reconciling their duties as European parliamentarians and as politicians true to the Atlantic Alliance have on several occasions led to discussion on this topic in your Committee, which was accordingly able to reply without hesitation to the motion for a Recommendation, Doc. 991, referred to it on 24th April, to make the Council of Europe the framework for multilateral action in the cultural field, with the object of strengthening the solidarity of the free world.

2. Your Committee gave its unanimous approval to this recommendation, whose main purpose is to make Governments aware of the strong parliamentary opposition that exists to any extension of N. A. T. O.'s competence in the cultural field. In view of the present efforts to rationalise the European organisations, this would appear to be the right moment to consider the problem of the division of labour between the Council of Europe and N. A. T. O.

Arguments advanced in favour of NATO cultural activities

3. Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty lays down that " the Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being ". This Article makes no specific mention of the development of cultural relations among the members of the Atlantic community; nevertheless, it is in pursuance of this Article that considerable efforts have been made to endow N. A. T. O. with certain responsibilities in the cultural sphere..

4. Thus, since the establishment of N. A. T. O., numerous bodies in turn have given their attention to the cultural problem : the " North Atlantic Committee " (and its subsidiary, the " Working Party on the Atlantic Community "), the " Working Party on Social and Cultural Co-operation " and the " Committee on Information and Cultural Relations ". A temporary cultural adviser was appointed to study the problem, and, lastly, the " Three Wise Men " devoted an important part of their report (December 1956) to the need for cultural co-operation between the member countries of N. A. T. O. (see Doc. AS/CS (8) 60).

5. On its side, the annual Conference of NATO Parliamentarians has always attached the highest importance to the cultural activities of the Atlantic alliance, so much so that its President, Colonel Fens, declared recently that " this Conference had been convened in pursuance of Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty, and not of Article 5, which meant that its task was to study co-operation in the social and cultural fields, military matters being only of secondary interest. If social and cultural affairs were withdrawn from the sphere of competence of the Conference, the latter would have no further *raison d'être* " ¹³. We know, by the way, of the ambitious cultural programme adopted by the Fourth Annual Conference of NATO Parliamentarians inspired by the Report of its Committee on Cultural Affairs and Information (Doc. AS/Cult (10) 37).

6. Moreover, a Conference on the Atlantic Community was held at Bruges in 1957 with the object of working out the cultural basis of the Atlantic alliance. This was also the main object of the Atlantic Congress which met in London in June 1959. At each of these meetings declarations were made and resolutions were passed formally announcing that N. A. T. O. was not concerned exclusively with military and political affairs but also had a cultural mission. (The report adopted by the Atlantic Congress in London on 9th June 1959 is appended.)

7. If we remember how actively the present Secretary-General of N. A. T. O. is engaged in promoting a cultural programme for that Organisation, we must own that the cultural role of N. A. T. O. seems to be by now a well established doctrine.

8. The main argument in favour of extending the NATO sphere to embrace cultural matters is well known and need only be briefly recalled here. N. A. T. O., it is said, was organised and supported in response to two great concepts—the necessity of military defence against the Communist forces which threatened the way of life of its member nations, and the fact that member nations recognised that they had in common a way of life

3. Cf. Doc. A/WEU (5) CR 5, Official Report of the Sitting of the WEU Assembly, 17th June 1959.

they were determined to preserve and develop. It follows from this dual aspect of the Atlantic Alliance that there is a need to uphold the common culture, or to use the favourite expression, the " common heritage " of the member countries—their Atlantic heritage. To this end there must be promoted among the allied peoples a knowledge of each other; the values that they share must be defined and, through the instrumentality of the universities and other educational institutions, the press, television, radio and cinema, there must be a deeper consciousness of belonging to a well-defined community.

Arguments against NATO cultural activities

The doctrine that N. A. T. O. has a cultural mission has aroused strong criticism. On the one hand, there is opposition on grounds of the need for rationalisation; on the other, there are certain misgivings at having the " cultural heritage " used in the service of propaganda.

((a) The danger of duplication

9. In developing its own cultural programme, is there not some risk that N. A. T. O. will duplicate the work of other organisations already active in that field? Are there not some grounds for the view that the Council of Europe, for example, which was set up at the same time as N. A. T. O., may claim to have a much more definite mission in the cultural sphere, which would be prejudiced by any activity of N. A. T. O. in that sphere? It is open to question whether there is a cultural element in the terms of reference of N. A. T. O. according to the letter of the Treaty; but there can be no doubt that the Statute of the Council of Europe, which rules out any preoccupation with military matters, stresses the importance that its signatories attach to the cultural mission of this Organisation. Surely it would be incongruous if, at the very time when in order to concentrate our efforts it is proposed to transfer the cultural activities of W. E. U. to the Council of Europe, new activities should be started up under the aegis of another organisation of almost identical composition.

(b) Distinction between cultural and informatory activities

10. The other argument against conferring upon the Atlantic alliance a cultural mission could not be more succinctly expressed than in the words of M. Vedovato, speaking at the Fourth Conference of NATO Parliamentarians. Saying that the Russian aim of world domination forced us to engage in a kind of psychological warfare, he continued : " Propaganda is one thing, culture is another. A war of distorted information is one thing, science is another. Therefore I think that with regard to the " cultural function " of N. A. T. O., we must consider making large-scale use of information and co-operating in the exchange of information, knowledge of the activities of N. A. T. O. But in the cultural and, above all, scientific field, I think we must proceed with great caution. " This distinction between " culture " and " information " is traditional in the Cultural Committee. It is based on a profound respect for those human values which find their highest expression in culture, but which propaganda, if it is to be effective, must leave aside.

11. However, even if we do not admit such a distinction, any speculation over what constitutes the European " cultural heritage " as compared with that of the Atlantic community would take us very far, and we might in the end question the expediency of trying to cement the Atlantic alliance and European unification at the same time by appealing in a contradictory fashion to cultural values; we might wonder whether in doing so we are not throwing people into a state of confusion and perplexity instead of giving them a clearer consciousness of belonging to a particular political community.

12. We might further wonder whether it might not be preferable to keep all cultural preoccupations aloof from military matters. Here again, the conclusion would be that preference should be given to the Council of Europe as the framework of multilateral cultural activities in the free world by reason of its essentially pacific nature.

13. It is not our object in the present report to settle such delicate questions. We do not propose to add a chapter to the study of comparative civilisation nor to embroider on the general theme of political integration. Bearing in mind a growing body of opinion among European parliamentarians, our intention is, by making practical proposals, to lend point to the arguments of those who believe that, in a cultural programme for N. A. T. O., the drawbacks would outweigh the advantages and that, if the need arose, it would be in every way preferable to take the Council of Europe as the framework of multilateral action in the cultural field with the object of strengthening the solidarity of the free world.

The role of the Council of Europe in the cultural field

15. The cultural task of the Council of Europe is clearly defined in its Statute and has steadily grown in importance over the past ten years.

(a) The European Cultural Convention

A significant milestone in this development was the conclusion of the European Cultural Convention in 1954, which was ratified by all member countries of the Council of Europe, with the exception of Greece. Article 9, paragraph 4, of this Convention allows for the association of non-member countries in the cultural work of the Council of Europe. The first country to take advantage of this opportunity was Spain, and the accession of other countries is at present being considered.

(b) Le Fonds culturel

The Cultural Convention having furnished the legal basis for multilateral cultural action, the Council of Europe's potential in the cultural field was considerably strengthened by the establishment in 1959 of the Cultural Fund, which provides the necessary financial backing.

The Cultural Fund, like the Convention, is open to non-member countries.

14. Although plans to give N. A. T. O. its own cultural programme are open to criticism, no one can question the close cultural ties linking the United States and Canada with Europe. There can indeed be no doubt that these countries could make a most valuable contribution to many aspects of our cultural work.

15. It would therefore seem most suitable for collaboration in the cultural field to be organised on lines similar to those on which the two great overseas Powers are associated with European economic co-operation. In view of the facilities afforded by the Cultural Convention and the Cultural Fund, there seems no legal objection to active participation of the United States and Canada—nor for that matter of any other member country of N. A. T. O.—in the execution of the Council of Europe's cultural programme. It should in any case be noted that all the cultural projects adopted by the Atlantic Congress in London in June 1959 can easily be carried out within the framework of this programme (see Appendix).

2. Conclusions

16. If the Governments concerned decided not to assign specific cultural functions to N. A. T. O. but rather to extend those of the Council of Europe across the Atlantic, it would be no more than a logical continuation of the general policy initiated ten years ago. Of the two organisations established at that period, at almost exactly the same time, N. A. T. O. was to be the central body for the military defence of the West, thus allowing the Council of Europe to fulfil more easily its function as the focal point for peaceful co-operation. The decision recommended would be a natural complement to the welcome step taken by the Governments concerned in transferring the cultural activities of W. E. U. to the Council of Europe.

17. Moreover, the draft Recommendation in no way prejudices either the informatory function of N. A. T. O., which one can only wish to see grow in importance, or certain action by N. A. T. O. in the scientific field, which can be justified by military requirements.

Appendix 1 APPENDIX I

Resolution of the Cultural Affairs and Information Committee adopted by the fourth annual Conference of NATO Parliamentarians on NATO cultural activities

The fourth annual Conference of NATO Parliamentarians,

1. Recalling the unanimous recommendation drawn up at the 1957 Conference to produce, under the auspices of the Secretariat-General, a publication about N. A. T. O. and the Atlantic community which would constitute a picture and complete documentation of the achievements, the power and the possibilities of N. A. T. O. and of the Atlantic community, of their forces, and their physical, demographic, military, economic, moral, social, scientific and intellectual reserves, and of those of the countries which belong geographically or spiritually to the Atlantic world and which are or will be certainly at N. A. T. O.'s side to arrest and finally to overcome the Soviet will to impose its domination over the whole world; Considering that there has been so far no apparent attempt to begin to implement this recommendation, Invites the Secretary-General to examine the possibility of putting that recommendation into effect;

2. Noting that the General Affairs Committee has been replaced by a Committee on Economic Affairs and a Committee on Cultural Affairs and Information. Recommends

2.1. that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Cultural Affairs and Information Committee :

- a. conduct a careful and intensive study of ways and means of assimilating and disseminating authentic information on the purposes, objectives, functions and achievements of N. A. T. O.;
- b. make and present to the 1959 NATO Parliamentarians' Conference specific recommendations based on the said study;
- c. invite each member nation of the Conference to name a national rapporteur to assist in the study;

2.2. that the officers of the Cultural Affairs and Information Committee be empowered to extend to the preparatory Sub-committee of the Atlantic Congress dealing with the Atlantic Institute encouragement and assistance to the end that preparation for discussion of this subject at the Atlantic Congress may be as effective as possible;

Considering the essential importance of moral values as the basis and the unifying factor of the Atlantic Alliance; Conscious of the necessity of developing among the member peoples of the Alliance an awareness of their moral unity; Believing that it is desirable to stimulate by closer co-operation the efforts of the members of N. A. T. O., to continue to raise the moral and intellectual level of their younger generations in order to maintain and increase the prestige of the civilisation which is their common heritage; Paying tribute to the initiatives which have already been undertaken to this end by the General Secretariat of N. A. T. O., invites the General Secretariat to convene a conference of persons particularly well qualified to undertake a complete and comparative study of the teaching programmes and educational systems in the member countries.

Appendix 2 APPENDIX II

Report of the Atlantic Committee on Spiritual and Cultural Values (Committee A) as adopted by the Congress on 9th June 1959 (Atlantic Congress, London - 5th to 10th June 1959)

STATEMENT

Moral and spiritual values of the Atlantic Community

1. The Atlantic Congress states that, in spite of differences in their cultural, political and spiritual outlook, the member countries of the Community must realise that they form a moral unity which expresses itself through common principles.
2. Respect for human dignity is the inalienable basis of civilisation. The purpose of a political and economic society is to create conditions enabling every human being freely to fulfil his destiny.
3. The guarantee of this dignity is, first, the recognition of objective spiritual values which cannot be altered by any human agency but are the expression of a natural or transcendent law governing communities and individuals alike.
4. Among the fundamental rights which every authority must recognise and guarantee and which are recognised in the United Nations Charter and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the following should be specially mentioned :
 - a. The right to life; the worth of the human being—in short, respect for the sanctity of human life;
 - b. The right to an inviolate personal life;
 - c. Freedom of speech, conscience, opinion, belief, religion and association;
 - d. The right of every man to work and to receive its just reward;
 - e. The right of the family to stability and the right of parents over their children and their education.

The Atlantic Community recognises that political and economic society is based indissolubly on the dual principle of individual liberty and the common good. It deplores selfish individualism as much as any form of totalitarianism. It is, moreover, open to all political and economic regimes which respect its basic principles.

The safeguards of both rights and duties of individuals and peoples must be constitutionally expressed. The law is the essential instrument through which the principles of civilisation are put into practice..

Respect due to every human being implies the duty to bring material and spiritual well-being progressively within the reach of all at both national and international levels.

Peace and unity among all men with justice and freedom are the highest expression of the application of those principles which the Community seeks to promote.

Civilisation is the common product of all peoples. In particular, Asia, Africa and Oceania have a part to play side by side with the Western peoples. It is important to realise that the common values of civilisation are differently expressed by different peoples according to their various traditions.

At a time when the future of the world is at stake, when the enslaved peoples are looking for hope, when the peoples of Africa, Asia and Oceania have a decisive choice before them, the Atlantic Community must put forward a constructive concept of civilisation of the future, which is capable of winning everyone's support, and must demonstrate by its actions that it is determined to promote that idea..

RESOLUTIONS

I. Information

This Atlantic Congress recommends that the NATO Council should give full effect to the proposals of the NATO Committee of Three pertaining to co-operation in the information field.

The Congress, moreover, feels that N. A. T. O. should pursue a policy of actively informing citizens of its member nations and of the rest of the world about the purposes, principles and plans of N. A. T. O. and its efforts to create greater understanding within the Atlantic Community, political, economic and cultural, as well as military..

For that purpose, the Congress urges the Governments to strengthen the NATO information programme and raise the status of the office of the Director of Information and make it responsible for information media, cultural affairs, press and public relations. Where desirable, this should include the establishment in member countries of NATO liaison information offices. There should be an adequate budget for all these purposes.

The NATO information division should be given greater freedom to develop imaginative basic information materials to assist both governmental and private organisations. Furthermore, the Congress urges Governments to give much greater priority to information about N. A. T. O. in their national information programmes.

The role of the voluntary organisations should be expanded and encouraged with increased moral and financial support. In connection with the 10th Anniversary of the Treaty, a programme with a special fund for supporting approved activities of voluntary organisations proved successful. That fund should be maintained and expanded as a permanent feature of the NATO information budget.

II. Education

A. Schools

The Atlantic Congress, believing it to be of the utmost importance that the boys and girls of today should be well equipped to play their part as citizens of tomorrow in the formation of their country's policies,

5. Welcomes and endorses the recommendations made to educational authorities and teachers by the International Study Conferences on Education, organised since 1956 by the Atlantic Treaty Association in co-operation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Ministries of Education or equivalent authorities of the fifteen nations,

6. Hopes that this systematic international co-operation among those responsible for education in schools and colleges will become a permanent feature of the development of the Atlantic Community under the continuing auspices of N. A. T. O. and the Atlantic Treaty Association.

7. In particular, the Congress endorses the recommendations of the Educational Study Conference of September 1958 that the conditions of international life today make it more than ever necessary that boys and girls receive a sound education, so that they may have standards by which to judge international affairs objectively including the Communist challenge to our civilisation. It is necessary that before their schooling is finished they should understand the moral principles which should inspire international conduct, and the opportunities of practical service to mankind which their country's membership of a larger society offers. They should be able to reconcile patriotism and international duty; grasp the principal forces at work in world politics; and realise that they are personally involved in the treaty obligations of their country. Specifically they should learn to appreciate the necessity for the political, economic and cultural co-operation implicit in Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty and the commitment of Article 5, whereby the Allied peoples promise to fight, and, if need be, give their lives for one another if any one of them is attacked.

8. The Congress therefore calls upon all educational authorities, public and private, in the Atlantic countries to make better provision for the teaching and study of international relations and languages, especially in secondary schools, and to make available to teachers the necessary aids and material for the purpose.

9. The Congress also requests the Governments greatly to increase their financial support for the international visits and exchanges of students and teachers, as one of the most important means of building up among the younger generation a real sense of community among the NATO peoples.

B. Universities

The Atlantic Congress considers that :

10. Students' discussions on all aspects of Atlantic co-operation should be encouraged in universities, training colleges and students' organisations. A study of N. A. T. O. should be included in all international study groups;

11. The training of young scientists and the development of facilities for that purpose should be vigorously pursued in co-operation with the Scientific Committee of the North Atlantic Council;

12. In the training of teachers at universities and training colleges, it should be regarded as a qualification for teaching in general fields that the candidate should have an adequate knowledge of international relations, and attention should be devoted to these subjects in the curriculum;

13. Every graduate should have a working knowledge of the language of at least one other Atlantic country in addition to his own, and every encouragement should be given to exchange visits at the university level;
14. Universities in NATO countries should offer the maximum assistance and co-operation to the authorities of Asian and African Universities and should welcome an increasing number of students from the countries of Asia and Africa and other parts of the world;
15. A conference of university teachers from NATO countries, concerned with public international law and international relations, should be arranged in 1960.

C. Adult Education

Having regard to the need to acquaint adults with the importance of the Atlantic Community and its free institutions, the Congress recommends that more encouragement and practical support should be given by educational authorities in the Atlantic countries to those organisations offering opportunities to adults to study the origins and development of the Atlantic Community.

III. Publication of Congress documents

The Atlantic Congress resolves

16. that the proceedings, reports and resolutions of the Atlantic Congress be assembled and bound in appropriate form for the widest dissemination among the libraries, schools and universities, citizens' groups and other suitable organisations and individuals;
17. that the Preparatory Committee and Officers of this Congress make suitable arrangements to carry out paragraph 1 of this resolution.

IV. A Studies Centre for the Atlantic Community

With reference to previous declarations by several organisations, and in particular those of the NATO Parliamentarians' Conference, the Atlantic Treaty Association, the Declaration for Atlantic Unity, and the 'Conference on the Atlantic Community (Bruges 1957)', the Congress wishes to remind N. A. T. O. that its purposes are not only military and political, but also cultural. Therefore, the Congress proposes that in the very near future, a Studies Centre for the Atlantic Community be created.

The establishment of the Centre shall be entrusted to a group of persons chosen by the members taking part in the preparation of this Congress, with power of co-option.