

Open Letter to NATO Leaders

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On the eve of the April 23 meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Paris, 140 citizens of four Atlantic Pact nations, representing the fields of industry, education, religion, labor, publishing, finance, science, law, civic organizations and public affairs, addressed an open letter to their countrymen and NATO representatives. The letter was initiated by Governor Christian Herter of Massachusetts; Joseph C. Grew of Washington, former Ambassador to Japan; former Under-Secretary of State, Will L. Clayton, of Houston, Texas; and former Ambassador to Norway, Lithgow Osborne, of New York. The text of the letter follows:

AS CITIZENS of the United States, Great Britain, France and Canada, we are addressing this open letter to our fellow citizens on the eve of the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Paris, and to our representatives at that meeting.

We are convinced that the burdens of taxes and high prices which rest so heavily on all our peoples can be eased only by a better integration of the economic, defense and foreign policies of all our countries through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

We point out that there is authority in the Treaty for further development of the North Atlantic Community to a) give us better defense at less cost; b) create a reliable and expanding economy to raise the standard of living for the Atlantic Community and the whole free world; c) multiply the effectiveness of our foreign policies to safeguard individual liberty and to establish peace.

Better defense at lower costs depends as much, if not more, on the integration of our economic policies as it does on the integration of our defense policies. By wise economic coordination, we could so increase the combined national incomes of the 14 NATO members that their combined defense costs would be a much smaller percentage of their incomes than it has been hitherto.

To achieve these goals we respectively suggest the following steps:

1. A joint declaration by the responsible Ministers attending the North Atlantic Council meeting that they will propose immediate steps to lower tariffs, eliminate quotas and other trade restrictions, simplify customs proceedings and free currencies to the end that the Atlantic nations may eventually become one financial and trading community.
2. Closer cooperation by NATO with all international agencies engaged in economic activity. Absorption by NATO of the separate functions of these agencies wherever such action would make for efficiency and good relations.
3. The creation of a North Atlantic Consultative Assembly, composed of representatives of peoples of the NATO countries, which would have as its principal objective the implementation of Article II of the North Atlantic Treaty which pledges members to bring about "conditions of stability and well being" and to "encourage economic collaboration between them."

4. The setting up of a central agency to coordinate Allied policy and planning all vital areas where imperialist Communist aggression threatens peace, including Europe, the Middle East and the Far East.

We hope that these proposals will receive consideration at the forthcoming meeting of the North Atlantic Council. We set them forth in the belief that all items on the agenda for this meeting are related to the paramount issue of whether we, the free peoples of the earth, can attain among ourselves a unity adequate to prevent a third World War.

We endorse the statement of our NATO Secretary-General that: "The democracies should form the habit, and have the means, of thinking together and acting together in all matters, be they great or small, in the interests of any of their number that are threatened, and further that the enemy should know without a shadow of doubt that they are so aligned."

We also endorse the statement of President Eisenhower, made in his report as NATO Supreme Commander on April 2, 1952, that: "There is power in our union...Visible and within grasp we have the capability of building such military, economic and moral strength as the Communist world would never dare challenge."

We are convinced that all the above steps would be taken by the NATO nations in the event of war. We ask that they be taken now in order to prevent war.