

From the Office of  
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NATO CO-ORDINATION ON MEDITERRANEAN AREA POLICIES URGED BY SENATOR HUMPHREY

Strengthening of the NATO alliance calls for greater emphasis on political, economic, and cultural ties "as well as bolstering its military defenses,"

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) declared today in an address before the National Council of Jewish Women at Cleveland, Ohio.

"It seems essential that the military emphasis in the agenda of the NATO Conference be counterbalanced by positive items of a political or economic nature," Senator Humphrey declared.

"NATO needs, first of all, an 'inner strength' -- a sense of confidence and direction. The NATO Alliance needs steady and determined leadership from its most powerful member, the United States.

"The purpose of NATO is not to wage war, but to prevent and stop aggression. NATO is an instrument of peace -- a positive force for constructive growth and development. It is in this spirit that the policies for strengthening NATO must be conceived and designed.

"The Soviet threat is more than military. It is political, economic, and social. The Communist empire seeks to expand and dominate not only by modern military weapons, but by subversion, propaganda, economic warfare, infiltration -- yes, unrelenting competition at every level of human activity. Therefore, if we seek to strengthen NATO, we must invigorate and equip it to meet the new Soviet aggression in all of its many forms and designs, on all fronts, wherever it appears."

On the economic front, Senator Humphrey pointed out that while new and specialized organizations have already been established "to resolve economic differences and develop unified programs for Western Europe itself," political facilities "do not exist for harmonizing the economic policies of NATO member countries beyond Western Europe.

"It may not be practical to assume that we can resolve all these differences that produce friction within the alliance, but clearly a start can be and should be made," Senator Humphrey declared.

"For instance, the economic development of the Mediterranean area is in the common interest of NATO if we are to prevent Soviet domination of the area. It is in the common interest of all NATO countries to foster the growth of stable, secure, and responsible governments in North Africa and the Middle East -- governments and people oriented toward the free world," Senator Humphrey said.

"While there are obvious and difficult divisions between the NATO allies on policy in the Middle East and North Africa, there is also a growing common recognition that the security and development of this area more than any other area is vital to the security, freedom, and prosperity of Europe.

Because geography makes NATO economic cooperation in the Mediterranean area "a logical extension of its activities", Senator Humphrey said that "co-ordination of the policies of NATO member countries for the economic development of the Mediterranean area would be the most feasible first step for the alliance to take toward injecting greater harmony in their economic policies in general. Economic assistance and development must be based on the full and complete independence of the nations to be aided -- there must be a purity of purpose that removes any suspicion of colonialism or imperialism.

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"Such a proposal would serve the purpose of elaborating a more rational development program," Senator Humphrey said. "It could be thought through on a regional basis, and the various national programs made more complementary in light of the common NATO interests in the Mediterranean area. Where it does not prove feasible to harmonize the aid programs completely, the end result would still be a greater degree of harmonization than half a dozen separate and entirely unrelated national programs.

"This approach provides an opportunity for increasing cooperation among NATO members in the Middle East and North Africa. Finally, it will serve the most vital purpose of all -- a general increase in confidence among the NATO allies."

On the political front, Senator Humphrey said "a big step forward" would be for each of the three big powers to agree to discuss with its NATO partners "a problem on which it has hitherto tended to reserve its independence, and which is a source of friction and danger to NATO itself."

"Britain could agree to discuss the Cyprus question; France, Algeria; and the United States our policy toward the Middle East.

"Even if a united NATO policy toward the Middle East cannot be achieved, at least the national policies of Britain, France, and the United States in the area would have the benefit of the views and criticisms of other interested NATO countries. Policies subjected to such consultation would, in all likelihood, be in greater harmony than the unilateral policies pursued by NATO members in the past five years which have threatened the integrity of the Alliance.

"But in any such consultations, the legitimate political and economic aspirations of the peoples in the Middle East must be taken fully into account. There must not be the faintest trace of a collective colonialism to replace unilateral evidences of western influence," Senator Humphrey declared.

On the cultural front, Senator Humphrey called for "NATO-wide recognition of university diplomas for the purpose of interchange of higher studies," and suggested that thought also be given to a proposal "for NATO colleges throughout the alliance, geared to a NATO-wide scholarship program."



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