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Pooling What with Whom?

The decision that the North Atlantic Council meeting in Paris on 16, 17, and 18 December should be held at the level of heads of government grew out of the October meeting in this country between President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Macmillan of Great Britain, which, in turn, found one of its causes in the Soviet launching of sputnik I. As a reaffirmation of solidarity among free nations, and as an attempt to meet our own and our allies' immediate defense needs, the top-level meeting is welcome. As an answer to the scientific aspects of the Soviet challenge, the portion of the conference to be devoted to what the earlier U.S.-British meeting called "an enlarged Atlantic effort in scientific research and development" may offer some partial measures, but those measures face hard problems.

Any effort to share secrets in military research and development with other countries must first meet difficulties arising from our own laws and traditions. In the matter of atomic weapons, the Atomic Energy Law of 1954 permits us to supply our allies with information about such items as size and yield, but not with information about design and construction. In the matter of missile development, although no comparable law is on the books, we should not expect that our Defense Department or our industrial companies are in any rush to give away important military secrets. In time, of course, laws may be amended and traditions changed. The President already has said that he will ask Congress to amend the Atomic Energy Law. However, even if these initial difficulties are met, a more fundamental source of difficulties exists on the other side of the Atlantic.

NATO has several objectives: one is the political objective of promoting the unity of the member nations; a second is the objective we are here considering of advancing science and weaponry. The more fundamental difficulties lie in the possibility that these two objectives may work at cross purposes. If we are to disclose defense secrets to another nation, then, to compensate for the increased security risk, we can expect to learn something of comparable importance. Unfortunately, not all nations are equal in capacity. The advantages of trading with, say, England, are not the same as those of trading with, say, Turkey. Since some nations have more to tell us than others, exchange cannot simply be a matter of share and share alike. Consequently, if cooperation is to go beyond mere talk, we can expect that somebody's feelings will get hurt, to the detriment of NATO's political goals.

When we consider the matter of sharing, not just what we already know, but the responsibility for future tasks, a third source of difficulties arises. Not only is there the question of our laws and traditions, not only the possibility of hurt feelings, but also the question of the degree of trust that any nation can have in another's capabilities. To share responsibilities for future tasks is to divide them. Are we prepared to trust the development of items crucial to our defense to another nation, no matter how advanced that nation is? Or will such trust, in practice, be limited merely to matters of secondary importance?

Besides exchange in military research and development, the "enlarged

