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C.O.S.(57)244

14TH NOVEMBER, 1957

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CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

NATO MINIMUM FORCE STUDIES

Note by the Secretary

At their meeting* on 12th November, 1957 the Chiefs of Staff approved the report at Appendix for the guidance of the United Kingdom representative in the Standing Group on the preparation of MC.70.

2. The attached report should be read in conjunction with the reports on the three Minimum Force Studies, viz.:-

- (a) Allied Command Europe - C.O.S.(57)245
- (b) Allied Command Atlantic - C.O.S.(57)246
- (c) Allied Command Channel - C.O.S.(57)247

3. In accordance with the instructions of the Chiefs of Staff copies of the report have been forwarded to the United Kingdom representative on the Standing Group.

(Signed) H.G. CROLY

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, S.W.1.

14TH NOVEMBER, 1957.

* C.O.S.(57)86th Meeting, Minute 4.

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APPENDIX TO C.O.S.(57)244

NATO MINIMUM FORCE STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

1. Our reports[§] on the three major NATO Commanders' Minimum Force Studies show that these cannot be considered in isolation and at the same time provide a basis on which the Minimum Essential Force Requirements paper[¶] can be written. As instructed[†], we have prepared a paper as a brief for Admiral Denny for the Standing Group discussions during the preparation of MC 70.
2. We have attempted to:-
 - (a) Isolate the points on which the three force studies are inconsistent with each other.
 - (b) Determine the extent to which the studies are inconsistent with the NATO strategic concept^{**}.
 - (c) Determine the degree to which the blame for these inconsistencies can be ascribed to the lack of precision of the strategic concept itself.
 - (d) Indicate any interpretations in the three studies of the strategic concept which may be in conflict with the United Kingdom interpretation of that document.
 - (e) Indicate the degree to which the lack of detailed guidance in the latest NATO Intelligence^{§§} has led to duplication of threat assessment in the three studies and thus to resultant duplication of force requirements.
3. We have also shown the short-falls in the United Kingdom declared forces that will obtain if each Commander's assessment of his force requirements is accepted.

INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN THE THREE STUDIES

4. All three studies have been written from their particular theatre point of view and there are accordingly certain inconsistencies which we discuss below. (We consider that these inconsistencies stem from the lack of an agreed appreciation of the probable course of a general war, applicable to the three Allied Commands, and should be resolved by the Standing Group in their preparation of MC.70.) (see)

- § G.O.S.(57)245, G.O.S.(57)246, C.O.S.(57)247.
¶ MC.70
† C.O.S.(57)77th Meeting, Minute 3
* MC 14/2. MC 48/2. C-M(56)138(Final)
§ SG 161/10

- 2 -

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Policy for the Preservation of Shipping

5. The measures that ACCHAN and SACLANT propose to take for the preservation of shipping on the outbreak of war do not appear to be fully co-ordinated. ACCHAN's policy is to evacuate shipping from the Western European (including the United Kingdom) area so as to avoid destruction in the nuclear offensive. This is a policy with which the United Kingdom agrees. ACCHAN assumes that SACLANT will take measures to preserve such shipping.

6. SACLANT on the other hand makes no mention of the shipping evacuated from the ACCHAN region, which will increase the numbers already in the ACLANT region to about 3,500 ships requiring protection. He proposes, by using his forward defence concept, only to afford general protection to shipping by dispersed southerly routeing under the distant cover of other operations.

Our Views

7. The ships which ACCHAN proposes to evacuate from the Western European area, which are vital for the rehabilitation and survival of Europe after the nuclear phase, must be preserved. We consider that ACCHAN and SACLANT must agree on the scale of shipping affected and on the measures to be taken to protect it.

Naval Force Requirements

8. When stating their naval force requirements the three Supreme Commanders are not consistent in allowing for maintenance, repair and replenishment.

- (a) CINCHAN makes no allowance.
- (b) SACLANT's forces are those required to meet the threat at the time and we can only assume that he has made allowance for ships temporarily non-operational.
- (c) SACEUR allows for one third of his forces being in harbour or logistic supply areas.

Our Views

9. Even if a third (paragraph 8(c)) is not necessarily the correct figure, we do consider that SACEUR has approached the problem realistically and that all naval force requirements for maintenance, repair and replenishment should be assessed on a common basis.

Economic Considerations

10. Although each Supreme Commander has taken economic considerations into account when preparing Force Requirements, each has employed a different basis for his calculations.

11. SACEUR's total costing^a for 1962 is \$2,200 million, an increase of \$300 million on the present figure. He

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- 3 -

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considers this to be a manageable increase. In addition, there would be a \$5,000 million capital requirement spread over five years, but this figure excludes capital expenditure by the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Germany.

12. SACLANC expects that "more funds quantity-wise will be available for defence" because he believes that the same proportion of the gross national income, which will increase, will be available for defence.

13. ACCHAN assumes that defence budgets are unlikely to be increased.

14. The foregoing considerations indicate a substantial increase in overall costs for NATO defence. In addition, experience shows that the costs of weapons and technical equipment invariably rise above predicted levels.

Our Views

15. ~~We very much doubt whether it is correct to assume that NATO nations are willing to contribute more to their defence. It is certainly not true in the case of the United Kingdom, where Government policy is to relieve the strain on her economy by reducing the defence budget.~~

Reinforcement and Re-Supply of Europe in General War

16. SACEUR clearly envisages a short war in which the nuclear exchange, taking place in the first few days, would prove decisive. He does, however, admit to a concluding phase lasting weeks, or even months, during which residual forces would re-organise for the operations ending the war. His minimum force requirements relate almost exclusively to those needed in the critical opening phase, although he does envisage the provision of reinforcements from North America later. SACLANC's plans, however, are designed to "permit the arrival of the large volume of shipping required to reinforce and re-supply Western Europe."

17. SACEUR requires stockpiles of war reserves to last the first 90 days of war and bases his demand on the NATO policy laid down in MC.55. This document is now under revision in the light of the new Strategic Concept.

Our Views

18. ~~We think that these conceptions expose a general weakness. Co-ordination between the Supreme Commanders is urgently needed to ensure that the different commands are basing their plans on the same agreed appreciation of the probable course of a general war. In this connection it is necessary to specify an agreed policy on the composition and contents of the first survival convoy to Europe. It is not possible for us to say whether it is correct to include fighting formations in this convoy, nor is it possible to comment in detail on SACEUR's policy for stockpiles of war reserves.~~

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19. We question the validity of the 90 days concept. The size of the stockpile, however, should be derived from the overall concept of operations, the tasks and roles of each Supreme Commander and the sources from which re-supply may be possible. This cannot be done until MC 70 is finalised and SACEUR's paper "The impact of the 30 day concept on the stockpiling situation" and comparable papers required of the other Commanders have been considered.

Ready Forces

20. The question of "Ready Forces" is given different weight in the three Minimum Force Studies. SACEUR gives it the greatest emphasis and considers that the time needed to mount a Soviet nuclear offensive will shorten between now and 1963, and deduces that the need for "ready forces" will increase, and that they should have "first call on the resources of the Alliance".

Our views

21. We question whether SACEUR is wise to frame a policy which has little possibility of fulfilment. We would have to provide about 30,000 additional men to bring units up to strength and a further 70,000 for new units if we were to meet SACEUR's minimum force requirement. It is not practicable to depend on the ability of the United Kingdom to move such large numbers in time; nor is it practicable to maintain forces continually at immediate readiness. Similar considerations will doubtless apply in some measure to other countries. SACEUR should therefore have an alternative plan if his requirements cannot be met.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE STUDIES ARE INCONSISTENT WITH THE NATO STRATEGIC CONCEPT

22. The United Kingdom, in taking the initiative in the formulation of the new NATO Political Directive, had clearly in mind a concept of nuclear retaliatory forces as a major deterrent to general war and complementary shield forces. The wording in MC 14/2 and MC 48/2 is capable of several interpretations. This is due to the concept being progressively watered down throughout the stages of drafting in order to reach superficially an agreed policy, which is in fact a compromise, and submerges fundamental international and inter-service differences of opinion. The United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff appreciated this fact in agreeing to the strategic document in the interests of NATO unanimity and said that "... our agreement to specific words would not materially affect the level of our NATO forces."

23. Due to the general terms of the wording of MC 14/2 and MC 48/2 it is difficult to be firm, with the exception of SACEUR's concept of limited war in Europe, in determining the extent to which the studies are inconsistent with the NATO strategic concept. We examine this exception below.

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- 5 -

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