

TOP SECRETUK EYES ONLYAnnex (Continued)Our Views

21. While we agree that the use of submarines and maritime patrol aircraft as proposed is a proper one in war, we do not consider that SACLANT's faith in the effectiveness of the "barrier" is justified. Weather conditions in the area and difficulties of navigation will leave gaps. Moreover, available evidence from trials and exercises to date indicates that he is optimistic.
22. The establishment of detection zones in peacetime would provide certain useful intelligence. NATO forces patrolling these zones, however, would have no right to impede Soviet vessels passing into the Atlantic and these would have to be tracked if the value of the zones were not to be very limited. We foresee many political difficulties such as Norwegian objections. Furthermore, "retaliatory" zones might be set up by Russia. United Kingdom participation could only be to the detriment of the Royal Navy's A/S training, and at the expense of the flexibility required of our naval forces to meet the Cold War task. We would agree to the machinery for such a task being set up, but United Kingdom forces could only be made available in a period of tension.

DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

23. SACLANT assumes that such enemy naval forces as penetrate the barrier will include a number of submarines capable of launching guided missiles with nuclear warheads against land targets within range of the eastern seaboard of North America. He proposes that all available A/S units based in the Western Atlantic should be deployed on D-Day to meet this threat. All A/S units in the Eastern Atlantic are deployed to cover Western and Mediterranean approaches to NATO Europe. We note from his force tables that on D-Day WESTLANT's forces are approximately double those of EASTLANT and IBERLANT combined.
24. The A/S forces likely to be available, SACLANT states, cannot hope to maintain sea communications using World War II defensive methods. Offensive methods must, therefore, be used to reduce the threat to manageable proportions, before organised shipping crosses the Atlantic in volume. This requires all available A/S forces so employed to hunt and kill submarines wherever they may be found.
25. When the submarine GW threat has been reduced, therefore, two anti-submarine Carrier Groups would be redeployed to positions where they could best support the "Iceland" Forward Defence Zone. The remaining A/S Carrier Groups and escort vessels would be redeployed to cover all main focal areas of ocean shipping, escort urgent convoys or redeploy to support other ACLANT areas as required. SACLANT suggests this redeployment might start at D + 14. He states that timely availability of the force he proposes will reduce the submarine threat in the shortest possible time and permit the arrival of the large volume of shipping required to reinforce and re-supply Western Europe. He makes no attempt to estimate what the volume of shipping will be.

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Annex (Continued)

17 25. SACLANT stipulates that merchant shipping and fishing vessels will have to be cleared from areas of intensive anti-submarine operations on the declaration of an "Alert". He does not anticipate that there will be organised military and merchant ship convoys for the first few weeks, because the Defence Shipping Authority will not be in a position to assume immediate control. The initial defence of shipping will therefore consist of dispersal and re-routing to safe areas, allowing the maximum protection practicable while the forward defence concept is being implemented. Urgent military convoys will be escorted while other shipping will have to proceed independently under the general protection of other operations.

Our Views

18 27. The threat from submarine missiles is not directed primarily against sea communications, the preservation of which we believe to be SACLANT's primary task. For this reason, although he must undoubtedly take some action to combat the missile firing submarine, the initial employment of all American and Canadian A/S forces on this task at the expense of the protection of shipping is not justified. Moreover, he has taken no account of the capability of land based aircraft to counter sub-sonic missiles.

19 28. SACLANT's initial deployment would mean that Western Europe would have to provide from its own resources for the security of the sea communications in the Eastern Atlantic until the threat to the eastern seaboard of America had been mastered. We do not believe that Western European resources alone are ever likely to be sufficient for this task. Apart from this, we consider SACLANT's plan to be open to the following political objections:-

- (a) The impression that the United States was not prepared to sustain Europe in global war from the outset would cause dismay amongst the European NATO countries and might seriously weaken the Alliance.
- (b) If Russia became aware that a comparatively small threat to the American continent from national submarine GW attack had caused the United States to adopt a defensive posture, it might encourage Russia to adopt a bolder policy in Europe.

30 29. We do not agree with SACLANT's proposed redeployment of A/S Carrier Groups and escort vessels after he has reduced the submarine guided missile threat. All our experience in A/S ocean warfare shows that, when the available surface escorts are few, the greater is the necessity to employ what there is in direct support of shipping. We believe SACLANT's strategy may stem from his failure fully to appreciate that protection of shipping is an offensive operation and not completely defensive.

31 30. While we agree with SACLANT that the Defence Shipping Authority might not be able to take control of merchant shipping for the first thirty days or so, much could undoubtedly

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Annex (Continued)

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be done by naval and national authorities alone to get the shipping organised and escorted during this time.

- 31 31. It is essential that the first survival convoys start arriving soon after D + 30. Current Admiralty opinion believes that their best hope in doing so is to use all available escorts and anti-submarine warfare resources to fight a monster convoy through. While it is true that SACLANT's initial deployment of forces gives him an ability to meet such a plan, American public opinion may make it impossible for him to re-deploy forces meeting the submarine missile threat so soon after the first attacks.
- 32 32. With some 2,500 ships at sea, and more evacuating European ports, the task of clearing the Atlantic of merchant shipping might well take two to three weeks. In this respect we note that CINCHAN appreciates⁺ that it will be necessary to evacuate into the ACLANT area in the early days of war a large quantity of "ultimately indispensable" shipping and that he relies on SACLANT to protect it. We consider SACLANT greatly underestimates this enormous problem and the time it will take and that his initial allocation of A/S vessels as between WESTLANT and EASTLANT is out of all proportion to the magnitude of their respective tasks.
- 33 33. We consider that MC 70 should attempt to estimate SACLANT's task in terms of volume of merchant shipping to be escorted.

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

- 34 34. SACLANT argues that the Striking Fleet with its nuclear capability can effectively contribute to the nuclear offensive using all the advantages of mobility. The targets he selects, however, are "those enemy installations which support offensive action against Atlantic sea communications." He further claims that this force will be capable of renewing the Allied atomic offensive should the First Phase of the war end in a stalemate.

Our Views

- 35 35. We consider that SACLANT has widened the scope of his nuclear offensive strategy beyond that required by the Strategic Concept. Whereas we agree that he requires nuclear capability to deal with "those enemy installations which support offensive action against Atlantic sea communications" such action should be part of a co-ordinated NATO effort towards assuring the success of his role in the First Phase. We do not accept the need for SACLANT's forces to be capable of renewing the nuclear offensive should the First Phase end in a stalemate.

FORCE REQUIREMENTS

- 36 36. SACLANT does not state how his forces are allocated in detail to each task, some of which are complementary. His D-day force requirements show an increase on those at present declared to him.

⁺ CH. 001053/6 M.CH 15175 dated 31st July 1957.

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Our Views

38 ~~57~~. The need to provide forces for amphibious operations and the general defensive posture on the North American eastern seaboard, which SACLANT has proposed, may lead to inflated force requirements. We consider that no attempt can be made to propose revisions to his requirements until his operational concept has been reconciled by the Standing Group with that of SACEUR and CINCHAN. If a comparison between force availabilities and Minimum Force Requirements^o shows a substantial deficiency, it will then be for the Council to direct a re-appraisal designed to make the best use of the forces likely to be available.

POOLING OF RESOURCES

39 ~~38~~. SACLANT advocates the pooling of both technical development and the manufacture of new ships, aircraft and weapons, so that the most economical use can be made of collective resources.

Our Views

40 ~~39~~. We fully support SACLANT's view that pooling of resources, particularly technical development, will improve efficiency and achieve economies within NATO. It may however be necessary from time to time to make reservations to such a policy if Commonwealth and United Kingdom national interests are likely to be prejudiced.

CONCLUSIONS

41 ~~40~~ We conclude that:-

(a) SACLANT's study is broadly in line with the NATO Strategic Concept and with the United Kingdom White Paper on Defence.

"(b) SACLANT implies the possibility of limited war with the Soviets. This is not in accord with the NATO strategic concept or United Kingdom thought (paragraph 15).

(c) A forward defence by submarines and aircraft is a proper policy for war but SACLANT over-estimates its effectiveness. Political difficulties might prevent the establishment of such a force in peace other than the setting up of the necessary machinery. The United Kingdom could only contribute forces in periods of tension (paragraphs 25 and 24).

(e) SACLANT has adopted a concept of operations out of proportion to the assessed threat from the GW submarine. Over-insurance on this score, at the expense of the protection of shipping, might seriously weaken the Alliance (paragraphs 29 and 30).

MC 70

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- (f) (S) SACLANT's offensive A/S strategy is incorrect. When available escorts are few, they should be employed in direct support of shipping (paragraph 31).
- (g) (S) SACLANT has underestimated the problem of clearing the Atlantic of merchant shipping. His initial allocation of A/S vessels as between EASTLANT and WESTLANT requires revision (paragraph 34).
- (h) (S) MC 70 should estimate SACLANT's task in terms of volume of merchant shipping to be escorted (paragraph 35).
- (i) (S) SACLANT has widened the scope of his nuclear offensive strategy beyond that required by the Strategic Concept. It should be directed towards assuring the success of his role in Phase I without reservation against stalemate (paragraph 37).
- (j) (S) No attempt can be made to propose revisions to SACLANT's force requirements until his operational concept has been reconciled by the Standing Group with that of SACEUR and CINCHAN (paragraph 39).
- (k) (S) Should a comparison between force availabilities and Minimum Force Requirements show a substantial deficiency, it will be for the Council to direct a reappraisal designed to make the best use of the forces likely to be available (paragraph 39).
- (l) (S) Whilst fully supporting SACLANT's view that resources and technical development should be pooled, Commonwealth and United Kingdom national interests must be safeguarded (paragraph 41).

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