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Annex (Continued)

## CONCEPT - A SHIELD FOR NATO

### Role in the Deterrent

16. SACEUR states "the danger of war will be regulated by the value that our posture compels the USSR to place upon our ability to do whatever is needed. That ability, if it is to remain persuasive, must rest on adequate and balanced forces in being - air, land and sea - all highly trained and equipped, all properly deployed for a forward strategy, and all unmistakably ready. In themselves these forces will be proof not only of NATO's military power, but of something even more important .... the West's will to act decisively." Thus SACEUR claims a role for the Shield Forces in the broad deterrent.

### Role in General War

17. SACEUR states that, in the event of general war, the defence of Western Europe will stand or fall according to the speed and resolution with which the Alliance commits its total ready strength, particularly nuclear. The war would impose three great tasks on ACE:-

- (a) To protect NATO's offensive striking power.
- (b) To join in the nuclear counter-offensive which will destroy the enemy's ability and will to pursue general war.
- (c) To hold the enemy forces until our nuclear counter-offensive has registered its full effect.

18. He considers that between now and 1963, the growth in Soviet nuclear delivery systems will shorten the time the Soviets need to mount a powerful offensive. The defence of Europe, therefore, demands "ready forces" capable of discharging their war tasks with the utmost rapidity, if the deterrent should fail. He adds "Clearly, they should have first call on the resources of the Alliance."

19. SACEUR divides the war into two phases as in the Strategic Concept and goes on to say that Phase I would decide the fate of NATO Europe. He considers that his "ready forces" must be designed to hold for the duration of Phase I, not likely to exceed 30 days, and that in Phase II their operations would necessarily be limited, although their submarine forces could fight on for some time. He concludes that his "call for military forces is almost entirely for those needed in the critical opening phase," although subsequently SACEUR mentions the requirement for moving the strategic reserve from the North American continent.

### Role in Limited Actions

20. SACEUR recognises an obligation to preserve nations from local aggression without inevitably bringing on general war. This, he states, demands "ready forces" which are highly

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**TOP SECRET**Annex (Continued)

mobile, highly versatile and trained and equipped for both nuclear and conventional action. He emphasises that "so long as we are able to repel limited aggression with conventional weapons, or if necessary, with low yield nuclear weapons - it is the enemy, not us, who in this case would face the terrible decision of starting a general nuclear war."

Our Views

21. SACEUR's claim that his shield forces constitute a part of the broad deterrent is in line with the Strategic Concept<sup>+</sup> and the United Kingdom White Paper on Defence, paragraph 20.

22. We agree with the three general war tasks stated by SACEUR, provided that in stating a requirement to join in the nuclear counter-offensive, he only intends to support his own shield forces. To do more than this would result in inflated force requirements.

*Need in  
CAS  
Agree*

23. We feel that the statement that Phase I would decide the fate of NATO Europe may be too sweeping. If it is not, much of NATO planning for Phase II is irrelevant.

24. We accept the need for "ready forces". Their priority, however, can only be considered against all other force requirements for the free world.

25. The Strategic Concept recognises a requirement to deal instantly and in appropriate strength with infiltrations, incursions and hostile actions. We believe that SACEUR is considering situations far beyond those envisaged by the Strategic Concept when he speaks of repelling them with low yield nuclear weapons. This would be large-scale limited war in Europe, the possibility of which is not accepted by NATO and certainly not by the United Kingdom. Although SACEUR has exceeded the directions of the Military Committee in allowing for limited war, he emphasises that the forces involved are contained within those for general war and have, therefore, not resulted in an inflated force requirement. If SACEUR's thesis were generally accepted by NATO, however, we doubt if the force requirements could be held at the level at present specified by him.

CERTAIN MEASURES REQUIRED BY SACEURAir Defence

26. SACEUR states that the effectiveness of the West's deterrent will rest increasingly on the Soviet assessment of the comparative ability of the two systems to absorb damage. Whilst technically and economically it is impossible to establish an impenetrable air defence, there remains a responsibility to provide NATO nations with a reasonable measure of protection from air attack. Militarily, the prime need, SACEUR states, is to give sufficient protection to enable his strike and shield forces to operate.

Balance of Forces

27. SACEUR believes that the balancing of forces on an allied, as opposed to a national, basis is essential if the

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- 6 -

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**TOP SECRET**

# TOP SECRET

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Annex (Continued)

maximum economy and efficiency is to be achieved. He realises the implications of these proposals both on national and traditional Service interests.

### Withdrawals for Non-NATO Purposes

28. SACEUR states that a minimum force, being small in number and composed of inter-dependent forces, cannot be reduced by temporary national withdrawals without serious effect upon his strategic plan. He recognises, however, that such withdrawals may from time to time be inevitable.

### Our Views

29. We do not entirely agree with SACEUR's view that the ability to absorb damage seriously affects the broad deterrent. An obvious inability to withstand offensive action, however, might invite attack, if the enemy thought that such an attack could prevent the despatch of allied nuclear retaliatory forces. We consider that SACEUR's air defence forces should be directed firstly, towards making possible the timely despatch of the nuclear retaliatory forces; secondly, to the defence of the holding shield forces; and thirdly, to defending centres of population.

30. We agree that the principle of balanced collective forces within NATO would make the best use of available resources. The United Kingdom's concessions to this problem will however, be limited by her obligations under other alliances and by the responsibilities of her world-wide position. Some progress may be possible, starting with specialist functions and associated equipment.

31. We do not believe that SACEUR's statement concerning temporary force withdrawals is aimed particularly against the United Kingdom but rather against the French for their withdrawal of four divisions for Algeria. However, if it is decided to station part of the United Kingdom strategic reserve in West Germany up to 1960, the status of this force must be made clear, so that its removal at any time will not seriously embarrass Allied Command Europe defence plans.

### FORCE TOTALS

32. Detailed comments on SACEUR's force requirements cannot be made until his operational concept and the threat has been reconciled by the Standing Group with those of SACLANT and CINCHAN. (If a comparison between force availability and Minimum Force Requirements shows a substantial deficiency, it will then be for the Council to direct a reappraisal designed to make the best use of the forces likely to be available.) *deleted from COS PAPER*

33. We comment below on certain aspects of operations leading up to SACEUR's force requirements in each of the three Services.

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Annex (Continued)

Ground Forces

34. SACEUR's general concept of operations involves a forward deployment of ground forces, which have the additional role of stopping any aggression less than a major overt action. Other shield forces, deployed in depth, give him the ability in general war to exploit opportunities as they develop.

35. His assessment of ground forces is based on a series of planning assumptions for general war. These include the following points:-

- (a) The critical period is assumed to be for a few days only.
- (b) An assessment of Soviet ability to build up their own ground forces, without prejudice to surprise.
- (c) The length of frontage which one division can be expected to hold is, in general, 30 kilometres.
- (d) Tactics will be based on counter-attacking and destroying the enemy formations with nuclear fire.
- (e) Initially, forces required in depth must be found from M-day divisions.

Our Views

36. We consider that SACEUR's strategy and planning assumptions are sound. His forward defence concept affects only the degree of readiness of a part of his shield forces and has not directly affected his total force requirements.

Air Forces

37. SACEUR's broad concept of air operations requires three types of forces:-

- (a) Strike forces to conduct nuclear offensive action for the neutralisation of enemy nuclear delivery means within his area of responsibility, interdiction, and assisting surface and air defence forces.
- (b) Support forces to render maximum assistance to his strike forces by providing escort, diversion, armed reconnaissance, electronic counter-measures and attacks on targets open to destruction by conventional weapons.
- (c) Air defence forces primarily "to help to make the deterrent effective" and to provide limited protection to important strategic, political and industrial areas.

Our Views

38. We consider that SACEUR's concept of operations is sound, subject to our comments at paragraph 22 regarding the

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