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ALL SUBJECTS was considered at 605(57) 86R Meeting Min. 3
CIRCULATED FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE CHIEFS OF STAFF

JP(57)128(Final)

6th November, 1957

U.K. EYES ONLY

CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

JOINT PLANNING STAFF

ALLIED COMMAND CHANNEL

MINIMUM FORCES STUDY, 1958-1965

Report by the Joint Planning Staff

In accordance with Standing Group Instructions[&], ACCHAN's study "Allied Command Channel Minimum Forces Study 1958-1965"⁸ has been forwarded to all NATO countries for information and examination by national authorities.

2. The United Kingdom representative in Washington has requested^{*} preliminary guidance from the Chiefs of Staff Committee on how ACCHAN's study should be handled during the process of writing MC 70.

3. In accordance with instructions² we have examined ACCHAN's study and our report is at Annex. We have consulted the Foreign Office and the Joint Intelligence Committee.

Recommendation

4. We recommend that if the Chiefs of Staff approve our report it should be forwarded to the United Kingdom representative in Washington for guidance during the processing of ACCHAN's study.

(Signed) E.D.G. LEWIN
 D.H. FITZGERALD
 J.G. DAVIS

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, S.O.1.

- & STAND 2088
- 8 Ch.001053/6 RCH 15175 dated 31st July, 1957
- * COS(57)72nd Meeting, Minute 2
- 2 COS(57)77th Meeting, Minute 3

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TOP SECRETUK EYES ONLYAnnex to JP(57)128(Final)ALLIED COMMAND CHANNELMINIMUM FORCES STUDY - 1958/1965INTRODUCTION

1. Arising from the adoption of the new "Overall Strategic Concept"⁺ and "Measures to Implement the Overall Strategic Concept"[@] major NATO Commanders were each instructed[£] to prepare a Minimum Essential Forces Study for the period 1958-62. The next stage is the combining of the three studies by the Standing Group into one document, "Minimum Essential Forces Requirements"[¥].

2. In order to give nations the opportunity to examine the problems involved before they are invited to comment on MC 70 officially, the Standing Group decided[£] that Supreme Commanders' studies should be forwarded to all Ministries of Defence for information and examination.

3. The United Kingdom representative in Washington has requested[¥] preliminary guidance from the Chiefs of Staff Committee concerning each of the three studies in order that he may endeavour to inject the views of the Chiefs of Staff into MC 70 during its initial production.

AIM

4. The aim of this report is to examine ACCIAN's study for the purpose of providing guidance to the United Kingdom representative in Washington on the handling of the study by the Standing Group during the preparation of MC 70.

NATO STRATEGIC CONCEPT

5. The Overall Strategic Concept for the Defence of the NATO Area⁺ states that:-

"... the objective is to prevent war by maintaining adequate military strength in being, consistent with economy of effort, resources and manpower, which will demonstrate to a potential aggressor that fatal risks could be involved if he launched or supported an armed attack against NATO and, should war be forced upon us, to have the capability to bring it to successful conclusion".

6. It defines the strategic objectives in the English Channel and North Sea as:-

"(a) To defend the Allied bases and lines of communication.

+ MC 14/2
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¥ MC 70
¥ COS(57)72nd Meeting,
Minute 2

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- (b) To support Allied land and air operations in Western Europe and Scandinavia.
- (c) To protect the merchant shipping in the area by timely evacuation, dispersal, and thereafter by all means practicable.
- (d) Subsequently to make every effort to speed the establishment of resupply of Western Europe and the British Isles".

ACCHAN'S STUDY

7. ACCHAN first states its aim. It then assesses the Soviet threat and reviews tactical and technical developments affecting its mission. From this appreciation it concludes the pattern of forces it requires.

8. In the following paragraphs, we examine ACCHAN's study to determine whether:-

- (a) It departs from the agreed NATO Strategic Concept⁺.
- (b) It is in accord with United Kingdom defence policy and current thought.

ACCHAN'S AIM

9. ACCHAN states its aim as "to preserve, protect and maintain shipping throughout the Command". This aim conforms with the NATO Strategic concept⁺ and does not conflict with the Government White Paper on Defence^{*}.

THE THREAT

10. ACCHAN assesses the threat to its area against a background of nuclear attack on United Kingdom and Continental port complexes, large concentrations of anchored shipping and naval and maritime air bases. It states the primary aim of the Soviet navy, as it affects ACCHAN, will be the sovereignty by submarine and air operations of those sea lines of communication chiefly centred in the Western Channel and its approaches. ACCHAN also states that "the need for shore-based maintenance facilities for conventionally powered submarines is not likely to arise until at least six months after the start of hostilities. Irrespective of the pattern of war on land, organised submarine activity at sea must, therefore, be expected to continue for a period of at least six months; depending on the results of the nuclear counter-offensive, it could last much longer".

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* Cmd. 124

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11. While we agree with ACCMAN's general assessment, we consider that, to avoid the possibility of duplication, it should be reconciled in detail with those of the other Supreme Commanders.

12. We believe Allied nuclear attacks on centres of communication for submarine control will restrict Soviet ability to wage a co-ordinated campaign. However, we agree that some submarine activity might continue for about six months.

TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

13. In its study, ACCMAN reviews the capabilities of anti-submarine, mine counter-measure and anti-surface forces. We agree with its review. Points of emphasis are:-

- (a) The anti-submarine vessel's net gain in operational effectiveness versus the submarine will be marginal.
- (b) Technical developments should enable the long range maritime aircraft to retain its all-round anti-submarine capability.
- (c) The joint employment of anti-submarine vessels and aircraft will continue to be the keynote of effective anti-submarine operations.
- (d) The potential value of the helicopter in the anti-submarine and mine counter-measure role. By the end of the period under review, it should have a day/night all-weather capability.

14. ACCMAN assumes that "The present level of Defence expenditure represents a maximum which is unlikely to be increased". While this is an acceptable assumption, reductions in defence expenditure, certainly by the United Kingdom, may be expected to result in a reduced level of forces.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONSVolume of Merchant Shipping Requiring Protection

15. ACCMAN considers that its mission throughout the period under review will be to preserve, protect and maintain merchant shipping during the nuclear exchange and subsequently. This policy, it states, does not mean that no supplies will reach Western Europe during the early stages of war but, in determining kind and quantity, a careful balance must be struck between need and risk. ACCMAN appears to have made no attempt to estimate the extent of its task regarding the volume of merchant shipping requiring protection. We consider that this should be done in HQ 70.

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Annex (Continued)

Control of Shipping

16. ACCHAN assumes that merchant shipping within the NATO area will be controlled immediately upon the declaration of a simple alert. This assumption is incorrect. The United Kingdom proposes to assume such control only on the declaration of a reinforced alert.

Evacuation of Shipping

(17) ACCHAN fully appreciates the extent of its task regarding the evacuation of shipping to avoid it being destroyed during the nuclear exchange. It states that this shipping will be evacuated "independently" into the ACLANT area and assumes that SACLANT will make the necessary arrangements for its protection.

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18. We consider that shipping should be evacuated in groups, as opposed to independently, and understand that ACCHAN is in fact amending its paper to this effect. We believe that this whole task requires further co-ordination with SACLANT, who appears to have under-estimated the enormous problem involved.

Anti-Submarine Forces

19. ACCHAN appreciates that the main submarine threat to shipping in the Channel area will occur in the western channel. It intends to form four Support Groups to deal with this. These support groups would operate as covering forces for merchant shipping, the main flow of which would be confined to coastal routes, so as to compel the enemy to operate close inshore. It is hoped that these Support Groups will impose unacceptable loss rates on the enemy and compel him to change his area of operations. In its eastern area ACCHAN plans to provide close escort for the protection of convoys.

20. ACCHAN proposes that the Support Group should be composed of four anti-submarine vessels equipped with long range sonar and operating with two A/S detection helicopters and two A/S attack helicopters. Bearing in mind the vulnerability of shore bases, ACCHAN draws attention to the need for afloat support ships, and states a requirement to provide afloat support for helicopters. ACCHAN also states a requirement for a small number of A/S submarines.

21. We are in general agreement with ACCHAN's concept of A/S operations. We agree that the use of Support Groups in the confined and shallow waters of the Channel is correct and concur with ACCHAN's proposals for their composition. We agree that afloat support to establish emergency base facilities when necessary is desirable, but see no requirement for Under Way Replenishment Groups in the Channel Command. Whereas carriage of A/S helicopters in frigates is considered a potential possibility, no "small helicopter carriers" are at present contemplated and we do not consider they are warranted in the present economic climate, when helicopters could operate from almost any

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shore site, the loss of time on task at extreme ranges being acceptable. We consider the channel is an incorrect area in which to operate A/S submarines due to the problem of "mutual interference".

Mine Counter-measures

22. ACCHAN proposes to contain the enemy mine threat by providing an effective mine counter-measure control organisation ashore to establish danger areas and diversionary routes. ACCHAN recognises that, to discover mines laid outside the limits of shore detection, search sweeping operations would be necessary. It appreciates that the cost in minesweepers in searching all coastal routes would be prohibitive and, therefore, excepting in special cases, it accepts the principle of casualties initiating warning. In addition to minesweepers, it states a requirement for forty minesweeping helicopters, of which the United Kingdom is required to provide sixteen.

23. We agree with ACCHAN's Mine Counter-Measure Policy. We believe that financial restrictions will preclude the provision of a mine sweeping helicopter force of the size required and in any case consider that helicopters required in the A/S role should be given priority.

Anti-Surface Forces

24. ACCHAN considers a surface and amphibious threat to be possible should the exits to the Baltic be forced. We doubt this, but agree with its statement that it should rely on assistance from other Commands to counter this threat and that it should make no separate provision for it.

FORCE REQUIREMENTS

25. ACCHAN relates its requirements to the force goals already declared for 1960 by countries, including the United Kingdom. In these requirements, however, it has made no provision for care factors and maintenance which, when applied, would increase its total bill by about one-third. Provision for these factors should be made in MC 70, on a similar basis for all three NATO Commands.

26. We consider that no attempt can be made to propose revisions to ACCHAN's requirements until its operational concept has been reconciled by the Standing Group with that of S:CEUR and SA:CLANT. If a comparison between force availabilities 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.

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TOP SECRETUK EYES ONLYAnnex (Concluded)CONCLUSIONS

27. We conclude that:-

- (a) ACCHAN's study is in line with the NATO Strategic Concept and does not conflict with the United Kingdom White Paper on Defence.
- (b) The Soviet threat to ACCHAN should be reconciled with that to other Commands (paragraph 11).
- (c) HC 70 should estimate ACCHAN's task in terms of volume of merchant shipping to be protected (paragraph 15).
- (d) The task of evacuating shipping requires further co-ordination with SACLANF (paragraph 18).
- (e) While in general agreement with ACCHAN's concept of operations, we have the following comments of a minor nature:-
 - (i) Shipping leaving European ports to avoid the nuclear exchange should be evacuated in groups and not independently (paragraph 18).
 - (ii) The requirement for small helicopter carriers is not warranted (paragraph 21).
 - (iii) The Channel is an incorrect area in which to operate A/S submarines (paragraph 21).
 - (iv) If resources are limited, helicopters for the A/S role should be given priority over those for minesweeping (paragraph 23).
- (f) ACCHAN's force requirements take no account of damage or maintenance factors (paragraph 25).
- (g) No attempt can be made to propose revisions to ACCHAN's force requirements until its operational concept has been reconciled by the Standing Group with that of SACEUR and SACLANF (para 26).
- (h) 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 26).

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