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Rec'd: August 23, 1961
8:54 p.m.

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FROM: Paris

TO: Secretary of State

NO: POLTO Circular 9, August 23, 9 p.m. (SECTION ONE OF THREE)

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Reference: POLTO Circular 4

NAC Meeting August 23 -- SACEURs Presentation

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Authority EO 12958
Per OSD (PA-WFO-TSR)

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94-M-0123
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Summary

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SACEUR accompanied by senior UK, French and Canadian SHAPE officers, gave NAC briefing on nature of Soviet threat in Central Europe region and recent Communist troop dispositions related to Berlin, then stressed urgent need for speed-up in NATO military build-up to permit negotiation from strength or in case of need for military action. Soberly stressed danger implicit in any action involving use of military force and cautioned that western determination to defend its rights and position in Berlin urgently required increased military forces and improved NATO military posture. Added that NATO military authorities required early information on what forces would be available if needed in order to advise NAC on adequacy of military underpinning to support future political and diplomatic action. Stikker helped sharpen presentation by

eliciting from

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-2- POLTO Circular 9, August 23, 9 p.m., from Paris (SECTION ONE OF THREE)

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eliciting from SACEUR that, in absence of adequate forces danger escalation toward nuclear threshold increases, that NATO must be prepared face consequences in event of any western military probe and must therefore be prepared defend itself, and that 90 percent effectiveness level for NATO forces requested in Norstad paper is minimum requirement.

Council agreed that their countries would be requested report to NAC by September 4 steps they are undertaking to meet build-up requested in Norstad memorandum.

End Summary

SACEUR stated he regarded military threat related to Berlin crisis of greatest importance and urgency. Adverting to Rusk's August 8 statement on need for military build-up, he pointed out SHAPE had been planning for improvement of west's military posture at accelerated pace even before Rusk presentation. Norstad cited two aspects of proposed build-up: (1) Need for strong military posture to complement political, economic, and psychological stance of west and demonstrate its strength and unity; (2) need to meet actual military needs as defined by NATO mission, and necessity of speeding up schedule and building up at an increased rate because of Berlin situation. His presentation would deal with latter aspect.

Using chart and referring to familiar order of battle figures, SACEUR outlined nature of Communist military posture stating there had been no significant change in basic or general threats posed by Soviet and satellite military forces. However, Soviet ground and air forces in East Germany are better trained this year than previously, since training program advanced by 4-6 weeks. Furthermore, present normal rotation period for

Soviet troops

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Soviet troops in GDR would permit bringing forces up to greater strength if desired simply by keeping on troops due to be sent home. He cited specific Communist deployments in connection with August 13 measures including deployment of three Soviet divisions for GDR to form ring around Berlin, return of most of these divisions to normal positions several days later, some evidence elements of two Soviet divisions deployed closer to Autobahn, regrouping of East German units on southwest frontier and some evidence other GDR units deployed toward Berlin. GDR also seeking to improve manning strength of their units. By these actions, SACEUR noted Soviets appeared to be leaving actions largely to GDR, but have supported GDR by Soviet troop deployments. Other Soviet support measures include (1) appointment of Konev as commander-in-chief of Soviet forces in GDR, and (2) political support for closing of sector border. Both Soviets and GDR have avoided giving appearance of impeding western access to Berlin. Finally, there has been no significant Soviet air activity in GDR.

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11:27 p.m.

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TO: Secretary of State

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NO: POLTO Circular 9, August 23, 9 p.m. (SECTION TWO OF THREE)

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SACEUR concluded August 13 deployments were relatively minor actions which did not go beyond normal internal security precautions and were no more than necessary to support recent Berlin move. He then cited two actions available to Soviets if they wished to set up GDR as "independent entity": (1)

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to attack or erode West Berlin situation thus enhancing GDR's position and (2) to counter allied position and any allied reaction to Soviet measures undertaken. He outlined following range of possible Soviet steps:

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P.A.
C.C.S.
J.C.S.
Army
Navy

A. Do nothing; permit allied access under Soviet auspices with some delays in allied movement.

B. Close Autobahn for repairs with policing by GDR.

C. Cause demonstrators to block Autobahn.

D. Hand over access control to GDR after peace treaty signed.

E. Join GDR in imposing road and rail restrictions using force if necessary.

F. Impose

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DEFENSE SECTION, EXOS

- F. Impose corresponding air traffic restrictions.
- G. Take action to bring forces in East Germany to war strength, with or without publicity.
- H. Move Soviet divisions in USSR nearer to western Soviet border; put Soviet munitions plants on longer workday.
- I. Bring new Soviet divisions or possibly satellite divisions into East Germany.
- J. Concentrate troops on western border or Autobahn or Berlin.
- K. Move against West Berlin.
- L. Take other military action leading to likelihood of general war.

SACEUR noted USSR would be guided by desire to maintain position of military strength either for negotiations or in eventuality of war Soviets would desire to portray western allies as war mongers while Soviets were defending themselves against allied provocations.

Noting that present threat is not first against Berlin and referring especially to December 1958 threat, SACEUR cited creation of "Live Oak" group to determine Soviet intentions and to catalogue contingency plans in order to give alternatives between doing nothing and doing everything. He explained purpose of group was to develop full range of plans from which political authorities could make selection depending on need. Such planning has continued for past two years and covers (1) very small-scale probes, perhaps limited to a few individuals; (2) more extensive use of ground forces (battalion, division and even some consideration to corps); (3) air lifts of all types;

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-3- POLTO Circular 9, August 23, 9 p.m., from Paris (SECTION TWO OF THREE)

of all types; (4) use of air forces to support airlift and ground operations and (5) preparation and control of forces that might be involved. Norstad stated plans going beyond above level would involve NATO in political and military sense and falls within normal NATO planning under directive to SACEUR and not as part of "Live Oak" planning. "Live Oak" staff had been transferred physically from EUCOM to SHAPE grounds though as separate entity from SHAPE to allow Norstad more direct contact and to permit natural planning association between "Live Oak" staff and SHAPE.

SACEUR stated it was clear any military action which might be taken involves danger. In principle any action involving use of armed forces should not be undertaken without increased readiness of NATO forces, i. e., improve general posture, manning levels, equipment, effectiveness, and military vigilance or alert stance.

Noted he had submitted paper at Secretary General's request which suggest plan to bring NATO forces to higher state of readiness. This is capabilities proposal which appears to be within reasonable capacity of countries if political authorities decide it is urgent. SACEUR this was decision he felt they must reach. He stated all his proposals fall within MC-70 unless reduced by END-66 requirement. As exception, he had recommended additional units for covering forces. Noted US had taken action to provide M-day reserve forces in excess of MC-70 or END-66 forces which make up for some deficiency of existing forces. SACEUR then outlined in detail build-up recommended in his paper stressing goal of at least 90 percent effectiveness and for some countries 100 percent.

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In concluding Norstad stated if west is determined to support its position, its rights in and access to Berlin, and be able to defend itself against attack it must be ready to take clear action. Berlin crisis emphasizes earnestness of danger. Clear that any action involving even most minimum use of force involves danger and that no action involving danger should be undertaken without increased readiness of NATO forces, improvement in NATO military posture and some degree of vigilance or alert. No matter what nature of possible military probe by west -- by "three or four" or NATO -- this would be meaningless except on basis of collective NATO strength and could be "disastrous" unless west is prepared to meet requirements of mission NATO has accepted. As responsible military authority SACEUR urgently stressed need to increase NATO readiness to provide some degree of maneuverability.

German permanent representative led off brief NAC discussion with question re nature of Konev's responsibilities in GDR. SACEUR replied that while Konev would only be commander of Soviet forces

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CABLE SECTION EXOS

Soviet forces there, significance lay in appointment of man of Konev's stature to that job now. Danish acting permanent representative asked if SACEUR could confirm news reports of Soviet strengthening their forces up to GDR zonal border. Norstad answered that Khrushchev said he would do that and has capability of doing so but could not confirm this had taken place. Stressed Soviet capability to move forces to western boundary very quickly.

Stikker then alluded to SACEUR's use of word "disastrous" and asked if this meant that if military action were required and forces were weak this might require resort to nuclear weapons at earlier time than if forces were stronger. Secondly, asked explanation for "state of vigilance and alert" as used by SACEUR. Finally, requested spelling out of SACEUR's call for 90 percent effectiveness level as within reasonable defense capabilities of NATO nations.

Norstad replied that use of word "disastrous" meant if NATO forces are already inadequate they would need to resort to all weapons to defend themselves at earlier stage since mission is to defend. Even with use of nuclear weapons, present forces could not defend. It would not be question of choice since mission assigned to SACEUR to defend peoples and territories simply could not be carried out with forces and all weapons presently available. There is possibility of escalation by enemy which we must be prepared to meet. Increase would also have deterrent value.

Re "state of vigilance or alert" SACEUR explained he would advise putting ourselves in position to defend ourselves, e. g., deployments, before any military probe, however small when situation tense, since in case of rapid expansion of action must be ready to defend. Anything else fatal. Any probe would be without validity unless we prepared to face consequences.

Norstad explained

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-3- POLTO Circular 9, August 23, 9 p.m., from Paris (SECTION THREE OF THREE)

Norstad explained that he had used 90 percent figure in his paper to avoid let-down after January 1, 1962. Stressed that this was minimum figure which many countries could and must exceed and he was really counting on achieving 100 percent combat effectiveness.

Stikker emphasizing great seriousness current situation asked whether SACEUR thought it urgent to have country reactions to SACEUR guidance. Norstad said crisis could well intensify before end of year. Stressed we must know within a matter of days or weeks what means will be available, so that if NATO unable to meet full requirements SACEUR could inform NAC of limitations on what could be done. Stated NAC should know what military support would be available for political action which SACEUR could only give on basis of reports from countries. Therefore it was of greatest urgency that countries make their reports earliest.

Acting US permanent representative citing Mikoyan's Tokyo statements on instructions of Khrushchev stated Soviets had not changed position one iota. As stressed by Rusk west must be ready to talk from strength which was only language Soviets could understand. Concluded Soviets might change tone if they knew west was negotiating from strength.

Following SACEUR's departure from NAC meeting room, Stikker suggested September 4 deadline for countries to give information on measures they prepared to take. Asked NAC to agree to ask governments to provide such information on basis SACEUR guidance, and when information was available NAC could decide on next steps.

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