

26. Confidential Supplement to the Report 24 April 1957

CONFIDENTIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF PROGRESS DURING THE PERIOD APRIL 1952 TO APRIL 1957(...)

FOREWORD

My Progress Report has been drafted in such a way as to admit its publication, if the North Atlantic Council so desire.

This supplement contains a certain amount of confidential information which ought not to be released to the public, together with my personal observations on some of the problems which are included in the main Report,

THE COUNCIL OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

1. In my Report I have referred to the desirability of dispelling the idea that there is any firm distinction between the decisions of Ministerial Meetings and of those of other meetings of the Council. I would, indeed, go further, and submit that for, the settlement of any problems which involve long and detailed negotiation the Permanent Council is an almost preferable forum. In the first place, they can discuss any problem, day in, day out, in complete secrecy; whereas, the full glare of publicity is turned on immediate Ministers come together. Secondly, Permanent Representatives, by the fact that they live in the same town and are constantly together, not only around the Council table, but also on social occasions, get to know each other exceedingly well. An intimate relationship is of great value in the transaction of delicate negotiations. Thirdly, it is my experience that men who are continually working on international problems in an international atmosphere like NATO, acquire the habit of looking at these problems from the international rather than the strictly national point of view.

2. It must, of course, be recognised that the Permanent Council cannot operate with full efficiency unless governments are prepared to:

- a continue to select their representatives very carefully. If they are not men with prestige in their own countries, they will not carry this necessary weight with their colleagues;
- b keep Permanent Representatives fully informed on all matters which affect NATO-directly or indirectly;

- c make such arrangements at Governmental Headquarters as ensure that the Permanent Representative can get instructions on any point with the least possible delay;
- d give the Permanent Representatives a considerable measure of discretion on points of detail. If they are too closely tied to the strict-letter of their instructions, there is inordinate delay in reaching decisions.

SECRETARY GENERAL'S WORK

3. In my Report, paragraph 79, I mentioned the recommendation of the Committee of Three that the Secretary General should submit an annual report to the Council analysing the major political problems of the alliance for the consideration of the Council at its Spring meeting each year.

4. It will be realised that neither the Secretary General, nor the officers of the International Staff who will advise him in the preparation of this Report, have any sources of information of their own. Consequently their only hope of coping successfully with this problem is for them, to receive a systematic and continuous flow of information from delegations. How this should be done is now being studied; but it is clear that whatever arrangements are decided upon will be much easier to implement when the International Staff and most of the delegations are housed in the same building.

THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF

5. In my Report (paragraph 27), I have referred to the handicaps which militate against the efficiency of the International Staff. These, as I have said, are inherent and perhaps inescapable. On the other hand there is a good deal which individual governments might do to improve the situation.

6. I will not dwell on the desirability, indeed the necessity offering terms of service and scales of emoluments which are sufficiently generous to attract suitable candidates, since this question is now subjudice. But there are certain other matters which I desire to bring to notice.

7. In the first place, I regret to report that at the present time the International Staff includes a number of persons who cannot pull their weight. This is due to the fact that they have been appointed to the staff not because they possess any particular qualifications for the appointment in question, but, because, they are worthy men for whom their governments desired to find employment. The International Staff cannot be as effective as it should unless none but thoroughly suitable candidates are selected for service therein,.

8. Secondly, the International Staff tend to have a feeling of “out of sight, out of mind”. It is important that governments should make it clear, both in principle and in practice, that good work done by one of their nationals while seconded to NATO will be adequately recognised: in other words that service in the international field is just as sure a road to advancement a service performed nearer home.

DEFENCE-POLICY

9. The strategic concept, or defence-policy, of the Alliance can be stated in a few words: it is to avert war by making plain to the potential aggressor that war will not pay. This is the policy that was approved by the North Atlantic Council in January 1950, and this is the policy which is still being pursued. The means at our disposal for making it effective have undergone changes over the years, as have our-plans for dealing with aggressions should we fail in our primary aim. But any account of such changes must begin with a ‘restatement of NATO’s basic defence concept – the concept of the deterrent: and it is necessary to refer to events which took place prior to the period covered by this Report.

10. In April 1950, a strategic plan¹ was drawn up which entailed holding the enemy as far to the East as possible the so-called Forward Strategy. It was recognised at the time, and is axiomatic today, that it was imperative that the territory and peoples of the Alliance were protected against invasion; and that no strategy that contemplated major withdrawals and subsequent liberation was acceptable. This strategy of Forward Defence is still the cornerstone of our military plans. What has changed, and changed for the better, is our ability to carry it out.

11. Progress in 1950 was at first leisurely. But the Communist aggression in Korea brought home sharply to ‘member governments the dangers in Europe and made the military strengthening of the Alliance a matter of urgency. The decision was taken to form an integrated military force under a Supreme Commander appointed by NATO. At this, time, too, the first proposals were put forward for a German contribution, the necessity for which in support of the Forward Strategy was becoming increasingly evident. But the alternatives proposed namely, incorporation of German units in the integrated NATO force (as originally advocated by the United States) or their fusion in a European Army (as advocated later by France) – were fraught with political difficulties which the Council, though agreeing on the principle of German participations were unable immediately to resolve.

¹DC 13, The Medium Term Defence Plan.

12. The forces required to implement the strategic plan approved in April, 1950, had been assessed by the NATO military authorities in October, 1950 (and reassessed in November, 1951).² But economic stability in many of the NATO countries was threatened as a result of the Korean war, and the problems of reconciling practical measures of rearmament with other demands on resources seemed increasingly intractable. When the Council met in Ottawa at the end of the year, therefore, the Temporary Council Committee commonly called The Three Wise Men - was appointed to attempt this specific task of reconciliation. In essence, it was the military targets covering the years 1952 - 1954, recommended in their Report, which were finally adopted by the Council in Lisbon in February, 1952. These became known as the Lisbon Goals.

13. The goals for 1952, amounting to some 50 divisions, 4,000 aircraft, and strong-naval forces were not far from being met by the end of the year. The goals for 1954 included an appreciably larger number of active and reserve divisions: but by then three new factors of crucial importance had begun to make their impact on NATO's defence planning: first, a reassessment of the Soviet threat; secondly, improved prospects for a German contribution to NATO; and, thirdly, developments in nuclear weapons on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

14. The strategic reappraisal that at the end of 1954 wove these three strands into a single pattern had its origins in the events leading up to the Bermuda Conference of December, 1953. The death of Stalin and the more flexible, if more insidious, tactics of his successors, together with the mounting strength of the free world, made the danger of Soviet aggression seem less imminent. The United States were determined and able to use nuclear weapons to repulse an attack. The French proposals for a European Army had led, after difficult negotiations, to the signing, though not the ratification, of the European Defence Community Treaty. On the other hand, the United States no longer had a monopoly of nuclear weapons. It was clearly necessary to envisage a long period of uneasy stalemate, and to adjust our military thinking accordingly.

15. Discussions at Bermuda on the means of developing NATO's defences were followed in a few days by the December Ministerial meeting at which important new planning guidance was given to the military. First there was the assumption of a "long haul". The military authorities were invited to carry out studies of the military capabilities of the Alliance, based on the expectation of a continuing threat over a long period and on a levelling-off of defence expenditures, rather than on a rapid build-up to meet an emergency.

²DC 28 and M.C.26/1, The Medium Term Force Requirements.

Second, these studies were specifically to take into account the employment of new weapons. Finally, a German contribution, within the European Defence Community, was to be assumed for planning purposes.

16. The first of these studies,³ on the most effective pattern of military strength, that could be achieved with the resources likely to be available, was ready for Council approval at the end of 1954 and marked a turning point in our military planning. It now appeared possible for the first time to apply a realistic Forward Strategy with forces appreciably more compact than those envisaged at Lisbon in 1952.

17. At the very moment, however, when the goal of security seemed within sight, a major setback occurred. In the summer of 1954, the European Defence Community was rejected by the French Assembly. A solution was found in October by revising and extending the Brussels Treaty of 1948 so as to associate Italy and Germany with the former Brussels Treaty powers in a new Western European Union; and by bringing a fully sovereign Germany into NATO. But precious time and impetus had been lost; and other difficulties have arisen. The German build-up has so-far-gone slowly; and we are now confronted with another difficult problem the United Kingdom's proposals for reducing their forces on the European mainland.

18. A further cause for concern since 1954 has been the situation in Algeria, which has necessitated withdrawals of French forces from Europe. The Council have recognised the importance to NATO of security in this area, and France has reiterated her determination to restore as soon as possible her full contribution to the NATO shield in Europe.

19. The difficulties that have beset the implementation of our defence policy should not be allowed to detract from the practical achievement peace has been preserved, the forces of the Alliance are immeasurably stronger than at the time of Lisbon, and our military planning has been kept flexible enough to meet changing circumstances.

20. NATO is sometimes accused of being behind the times in its military thinking. This is hardly fair. For a period, during 1955 and during the first half of 1956, the Soviets succeeded in inducing an apparent relaxation of tension, which, in conjunction with the growing concern of governments with the long-term economic burden of maintaining modern forces, led to a widespread demand for an overall review of our defence planning.

³M.C.48, The Most Effective Pattern of NATO Military Strength for the Next Few Years.

Such a review is indeed now under way; but the events of last autumn have ensured that it will be carried out in the light of a realistic estimate of Soviet intentions, and with a greater community of purpose, than seemed possible a year ago.

21. This section, of my Report may well be concluded with some observations about this review. First, it has been technically well prepared. In order to make sure that all member governments were familiar with the latest developments in military techniques, a series of multilateral discussions were held in the Palais de Chaillot during February, 1956, at which presentations were made by members of the Standing Group, the Supreme Commanders and senior national military authorities. The presentations and the frank exchanges of views which followed, covered a number of specific defence problems, including the organization, dispersal and readiness of air forces, air defence, army divisional organization, the tasks and organization of naval forces, and the introduction of new weapons and equipment. This experiment – the first of its kind – was a success and will I hope, be repeated.

22. Secondly, the review will be based on a directive⁴ approved by the Council in December last, which takes account of Soviet intentions, the continued rise in Soviet capabilities, the new weapons available for NATO defence, and the importance of economic stability. The directive contains important new elements e.g. a sharper definition of the military and non-military threats and a recognition of the dangers that may arise for NATO because of developments outside the NATO area. But it is to be noted that the basis has not changed – the deterrent concept and the Forward Strategy.

23. This brings me to the third and last point. It is tempting nowadays, with a wider appreciation of the devastating effect of the megaton bomb, to rule out nuclear warfare as unthinkable, and, by implication, to discount the value of NATO's nuclear retaliatory forces. We must not fall into this trap. A first principle of insurance is to cover the most serious risk, even if it is not the most likely. For NATO the most dangerous, though not the most probable, military threat is that of a general war. Nuclear weapons alone will not be appropriate to deter every form of hostile action; but it is certain that without them there is no practical possibility of maintaining an effective deterrent to general war. Our policy of averting war altogether would therefore be seriously compromised if there were any faltering in our determination to use these terrible weapons in self-defence when necessary. The Council's present directive to the military authorities leaves no room for doubt on this score.

⁴C-M(56)138, Directive to the NATO Military Authorities from the North Atlantic Council.

THE ANNUAL REVIEW

24. In Progress Report, paragraphs 43-48, I have dealt with the Annual Review mainly from the procedural point of view. I feel that I ought to supplement this with my personal observations on the present procedure, and my suggestions for its improvement.

25. As indicated in very general terms in my Progress Report, there are two principal difficulties with which we have had to contend in the Annual Review: namely, the problem of adequate liaison between the civilian staff and the NATO military authorities, and the need for closer integration of national defence planning with mutual aid planning.

26. The first of these problems is beginning to yield to treatment. The enhanced status of the Standing Group representation in the Palais de Chaillot, the association of my staff with the military visiting teams and with the work of the Standing Group planners at various stages of the Annual Review and the Standing Group's readiness to come to Paris more often are steps in the right direction. But a good deal more needs to be done. The Council will recall that the original screening and costing staff under General Mc Narney had a military element. It is my opinion that we should aim at devising methods and machinery that offer something like the same facilities for working together with the military. It may be that more frequent and longer visits to Paris by Standing Group detachments will give us the answer. Another solution might be to arrange for the examination of military planning proposals emanating from the NATO military authorities by a subordinate civilian authority - for instance, the Annual Review Committee - before action is taken on them by the Council. The Annual Review Committee of course already performs this function in respect of national plans.

27. The second problem has been aired repeatedly in recent Annual Reviews. The main difficulty is that countries receiving aid are seriously embarrassed in their defence planning and in endeavouring to fix force goals for three years ahead by the absence of long-term commitments as to aid on the part of the donor countries. Since the granting of aid depends to some extent on the inclusion of units in approved NATO force goals, there is an inducement to report force plans that are not fully realistic, with consequences with which we are all-familiar. The political and constitutional difficulties that beset the making of long-term aid commitments are manifest but I would hope that some intermediate solution might be found, such perhaps as the indication in some detail of long-term programmes without final commitment.

28. In addition to these two major problems, there are some points of weakness in existing Annual Review procedures, which are not mentioned in my Progress Report. For example, the man hours devoted to the Annual Review, here and in capitals, and the amount of paper work it generates, are on occasion disproportionate both to the practical results achieved in terms of influence on national force plans, and to the limited range of decisions called for from Ministers when they consider the Annual Review in December of each year.

29. This disproportion can be tackled from both angles. First, though the Review is essentially a multilateral exercise and must remain so, much time and paper could undoubtedly be saved if governments were prepared to accept less emphasis on the multilateral aspects of the Review in its early stages. Secondly, the December meetings of the Council in ministerial Session might be prepared in such a way to promote fuller discussion by Ministers of specific defence problems, national and international, and to encourage decisions which go beyond the approval of force goals and the adoption of a general resolution. We should also examine carefully, in this context, the merits of arranging a meeting of Defence Ministers only, in the spring of each year, designed to follow up the decisions taken in December and thereby to clear the ground for the coming Review.

30. Finally, I am impressed by the fact that the state of our defence planning today, with the problems it presents for the Annual Review, is almost the inverse of our position at Lisbon five years ago. At that time our, overall strategic requirements were not in question, but country contributions remained to be negotiated. Now our strategic concepts and overall defensive posture are being re-examined; but national contributions have become relatively inflexible, or at least are not expected to increase significantly. In these circumstances, it is worth considering whether there might not be advantages to the Alliance as a whole if member governments were to back up their force commitments by also entering into financial commitments. I believe there are possibilities here for broadening the base of mutual aid, perhaps by an extension of multilateral financing, which have as yet been insufficiently explored.

CIVIL EMERGENCY PLANNING

31. In my Progress Report (paragraphs 65-73) I have confined myself to explaining the organization of NATO civil emergency planning. The following more confidential information explains how the problem is being tackled.

32. Initially, civil emergency planning was based on the assumption of a war waged with conventional weapons: but in January, 1955, on the recommendation of the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee, a drastic change was made. The assumptions on which civil emergency planning is now based are as follows: that there will be a strategic warning period of a few days; that the enemy will launch thermonuclear attacks; that the first 30 days of war will be the most critical period, the heaviest attacks probably being concentrated in the first three or four days; and that all committees should concentrate in the first instance on the measures essential for survival during this period.

33. The order of priority which has been assigned to the plans and preparations is as follows:-

(1) Measures needed for the immediate purpose of survival, e.g. maintenance of governmental control, an adequate communications network, certain vital Civil Defence measures, and a stock of 30 days fuel and food.

(2) Measures of prime importance which must be carried out before or during the survival period in order to preserve valuable assets, e.g. evacuation of shipping, means of inland transport and aircraft, and the activation of international agencies.

(3) Measures which have a limited importance in the survival period, but are mainly needed for the subsequent phase, e.g. port emergency planning and industrial production..

I believe that the adoption of limited objectives on the above lines has brought more realism into our planning,

SPECIAL COMMITTEE

34. At the end of 1952 the Council set up the NATO Special Committee to serve as a forum for the exchange of information between member governments on experiences in their efforts to counteract subversive activities and on the ways and means of counteracting and uncovering such activities.

35. The first meeting of the Committee was probably the first occasion on which the heads or senior officials of the Security Services of a number of countries had ever met together round the same table. This was in itself an event of note. From this first meeting there has developed a spirit of co-operation and mutual understanding which is of inestimable value in enabling the NATO nations to fight the common problems of Soviet and Satellite subversion and espionage.

36. More recently this Committee has been able to lay before the Council agreed appreciations on certain of the security threats facing the Alliance as a whole: and it is now examining the measures to be taken by member nations in the event of war in order that the threats, which may well be serious, from enemy-inspired subversion, espionage and sabotage may be neutralised.
