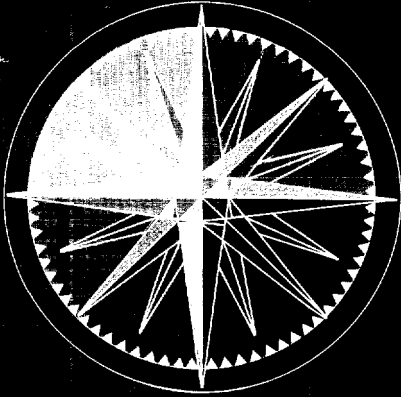


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SPECIAL REPORT

PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING

State Dept. review completed

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

OSD has no objection to declassification and release.

OSD review(s) completed.

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PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING

The annual NATO ministerial meeting to be held in Paris from 16 to 18 December will be concerned chiefly with questions of the use and control of NATO's nuclear arsenal. The NATO Force Planning exercise approved by the ministers a year ago has brought to the surface deep differences of view over NATO's strategy, centered on the extent to which the alliance should rely on its nuclear deterrent force. This basic question is not likely to be resolved soon, however, and the US proposal for sharing nuclear control in a multilateral force (MLF) is still in the exploratory phase. The ministers meeting in Paris will again review East-West relations, with special attention focusing on the problem of a common credit policy toward the bloc. Reorganization of NATO's military structure and a prospective replacement for Secretary General Stikker will also be considered.

Divergent Views on Strategy

Every effort is being made to prevent the eruption of a public dispute over NATO strategy at the meeting, but the question of strategy will, nonetheless, be raised when Stikker reports on the progress of the NATO Force Planning exercise. This exercise is essentially a basic review of the interrelated questions of strategy, force requirements, and the resources available to meet them. Proposed by the US, this review is intended to bridge, if possible, the "gap" between the minimum requirements set by the military authorities, and the defense efforts which the member governments find it politically feasible to make.

The exercise, as initially envisaged, was to have been conducted in two stages. The first stage would determine what

forces NATO countries actually plan to maintain in the next three to five years, and what force posture the NATO commanders would recommend for the period 1966-1970. Alternative force levels, based on several strategic concepts, would be considered. With such data in hand, the second phase would proceed with the formulation of a NATO force plan for 1966-70, including proposals on the forces each country should contribute.

Present NATO strategic military doctrine calls not only for nuclear responses to nuclear attack, but also for early use of nuclear weapons should Western forces be unable to cope with a large-scale Soviet conventional attack. The NATO military posture tends to reflect this doctrine. The US, however, has proposed increasing the Alliance's

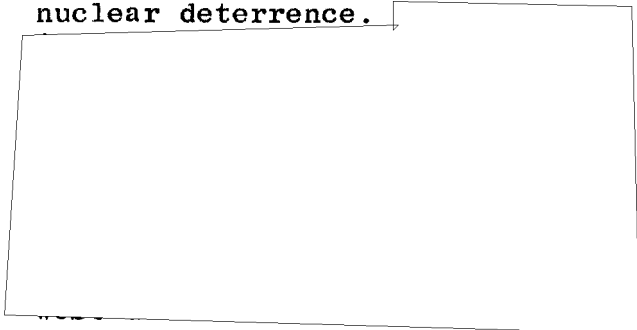
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conventional capability in order to place less reliance on the use of nuclear weapons in circumstances other than general war and to achieve greater flexibility in dealing with situations like Berlin.

The major European countries, particularly France and West Germany, hold that the more loosely knit Western forces are incapable of defeating the forces the Soviets command in central Europe without using nuclear weapons. The French, in particular, argue that there is therefore no justification for a further costly build-up of conventional forces and that heavy emphasis on increasing conventional strength tends to detract from the deterrent value of the West's nuclear strength.

While Bonn is better disposed toward the build-up of conventional forces, it too deems it necessary to rely mainly on nuclear deterrence.



Status of NATO Forces

The uncertainty among the European countries over what is required to assure their security is reflected in their defense efforts. The European forces--

particularly in the central front--chronically fall far short of NATO targets. In consequence, NATO's over-all forces are inadequate to support the "forward defense" desired by the military authorities.



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The French defense budget is being channeled increasingly into the national nuclear deterrent, an increased UK defense effort is unlikely, and contributions of the smaller countries to the central front will probably remain small. On the northern flank neither Norway nor Denmark is prepared to increase defense spending, while on the southern flank the defense efforts of Turkey and Greece are directly related to the amount of external aid they receive.

French Obstructionism

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The main objective of the NATO Force Planning (NFP) exercise is to provide a basis for correcting these shortfalls, but that it will do so is doubtful. For several months after last May's meeting in Ottawa of NATO foreign and defense ministers the French blocked the opening of the NFP exercise, objecting in the first instance to the independence of the proposed evaluating body, and, in the second, to any steps to determine force posture until a common strategy had been agreed

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upon. While the French objections on the first score were eventually overcome, the exercise now has been brought virtually to a halt by French refusal to permit force planning directives to be issued until NATO agrees on a single strategic concept.

There have been numerous indications in recent weeks that the French may intend, sooner or later, to provoke a "showdown" debate on strategy. Prospects are, however, that this debate will occur at a regular weekly meeting of the North Atlantic Council, rather than in the annual December meeting which is so closely followed by the press.

Control of NATO's Nuclear Power

The unresolved question of the manner in which NATO should use its nuclear deterrent is entangled with the equally knotty problem of how the deterrent should be controlled in the future.

At the Ottawa meeting, the ministers approved a number of specific steps designed to give the Europeans a sense of greater participation in the control of nuclear weapons and in the planning of their use. Under these new arrangements, the European NATO countries will obtain fuller information regarding nuclear defense. This will be accomplished, in part, by allowing officers to participate more fully in the nuclear activities of the Allied Command Europe as

well as in the coordination of targeting at the Strategic Air Command at Omaha. In addition, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) is to have a deputy for nuclear affairs, and Britain's V-Bomber force and three US Polaris submarines have been assigned to SACEUR.

These measures appear to have exhausted the immediate possibilities for increasing "nuclear sharing," and the future possibilities hinge on whether or not the MLF or some alternative project becomes a reality. Within the past few days the Netherlands became the eighth NATO country to join the discussions on the formation of an MLF. A mixed-manning demonstration designed to prove the MLF's feasibility has been recently approved in principle by the group, but concurrence of the individual countries to participate is still needed. Belgium has already opted out of the demonstration, which will take up to two years to complete.

The progress which the MLF studies is making offers little assurance, however, that the MLF will in fact provide the final answer to the nuclear control problem. Of those participating in the studies, only West Germany remains firmly committed; the others are all present on an expressly "no commitment" basis.

NATO Organizational Problems

NATO is beginning to consider a replacement for Secretary General Dirk U. Stikker,

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who has said he will resign in the spring because of failing health. It has become customary to have a secretary general from one of the smaller European members, and since the position has already been occupied by a Belgian and by a Dutchman, the present search will probably focus on Italy or one of the Scandinavian countries. Britain, however, has also indicated an interest in the post, but selection of a British national would risk stimulating French charges of Anglo-Saxon domination of the Alliance.

There is also concern over the liaison between the North Atlantic Council, which consists of political representatives and is based at Paris, and the Standing Group and Military Committee, which are located in Washington and are often accused of conducting their activities in a vacuum. The ministerial meeting is therefore likely to consider moving both to Paris.

West Germany's increasingly large contribution of land forces has raised the question of German representation on the Standing Group, now composed of the US, the UK, and France.

NATO Relations With the Bloc

Several aspects of the Western Alliance's relations with

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the Sino-Soviet bloc will be discussed at the ministerial meeting. NATO committees have been considering the implications of the Soviet-proposed nonaggression pact. There is a clear consensus that a nonaggression pact is unacceptable as an isolated measure and could only be approved as a part of a broader European security settlement including the problem of Berlin.

The Soviet suggestion for the establishment of observation posts is also being considered. On this, the general consensus is that the Soviet position linking the observation post arrangement with the denuclearization of central Europe and a thinning out of the troops there is unacceptable. A large majority also believe that any system of observation posts should include US and Soviet territory as well.

The question of developing a common NATO credit policy toward the bloc will be raised by a report from NATO's committee of economic advisers. Five of the six EEC countries and the US favor a common credit policy and want to discuss the item, while the UK strongly opposes such a policy and does not want it raised at this meeting. Efforts to find a compromise have focused in the last few weeks on the suggestion that any NATO country contemplating credits to the bloc longer than five years should notify the Alliance in advance. At the 10 December meeting of the NATO economic advisers, however, Britain refused to agree even to this.

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