

M.C. 3/4

28 March 1950

NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE

DECISION ON M.C. 3/4

A Report by the Standing Group

on

FRENCH PROPOSAL TO AMEND D.C. 6/1

REGARDING CERTAIN LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Note by the Secretary

1. At their Third Meeting on 28 March 1950 the North Atlantic Military Committee approved the recommendation in paragraph 5, page 28, M.C. 3/4. (The amendment was subsequently incorporated in the Medium Term Plan which was circulated as D.C. 13).

2. This decision now becomes a part of and shall be attached as the top sheet of M.C. 3/4.

C.H. DONNELLY
Colonel, U.S.A.
Secretary

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REPORT FROM THE STANDING GROUP

to the

MILITARY COMMITTEE

on

FRENCH PROPOSAL TO AMEND D.C. 6/1

REGARDING CERTAIN LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Reference : Para. 7 d of D.C. 6/1

appended hereto.

1. At the second meeting of the Defense Committee held on December 1, 1949, during discussion of the Strategic Concept for the Defence of the North Atlantic Area (D.C. 6), the Minister of Defence of France suggested an amendment to paragraph 7 d, with the object of showing that the lines of communication between France and North Africa were a national responsibility of France.

2. During this discussion, it was suggested this matter might well be resolved in the development of regional plans, but that failing this, it should be brought up in the next session of the Defence Committee. (The relevant excerpts of the minutes of the second session are given in Appendix "A").

3. The French Minister of Defence has now confirmed that he wishes this subject placed on the agenda of the third meeting of the Defence Committee.

4. The Standing Group consider that an appropriate place to recognize this national responsibility is in the Medium Term Plan - and has approved paragraph 51, subparagraph a (1) in consequence. (See Enclosure)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

5. It is recommended that the Military Committee approve the course described in paragraph 4, and forward this paper to the Defense Committee.

ENCLOSURE

Amend paragraph 51, subparagraph a (1) of Medium Term Plan, to read:

51. a. Defensive:

- (1) Protection of shipping along regional lines of communication, including essential ports and bases within the regional areas.

In this regard, the lines of communication linking the Metropolitan and North African territories of France, the control for which France is primarily responsible, are vital to the prosecution of operations by the Western and South European Regions.

APPENDIX "A"Excerpts of the Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Defense Committee, held on 1 December 1949, in Paris

Mr. Pleven (France) Interpreted:

Mr. Chairman, the reason we propose the second amendment concerning the lines of communication between France and North Africa is because we felt that this was not a question of detail but rather a fundamental question. It seems to us that the principal question there was a gap in the overall concept covering trans-oceanic communications, coastal communications, and the defense of ports. It did not speak of inter-Mediterranean or trans-Mediterranean communications.

We feel that it is essential for the component committees to view the measures to be taken in this respect because on the measures that concern inter-Mediterranean communications, and trans-Mediterranean communications to a large degree depends the efficiency of the possible stations for our country within the scope of an overall plan.

In view of the discussion to the amendment proposed by my Portuguese colleague, signed without prejudice to our amendment, it may be studied during the period between the immediate meetings and the final decision to be taken at our next session.

If my finding of this is correct, and it is to be studied by a competent committee during this period and final decision is to be taken at the next meeting, I accept the decision to carry it on to our next meeting.

Secretary Johnson (United States). The understanding is right and it is referred to the committee to be brought up for final consideration. Some will be brought up for consideration but you go far when you want me as Chairman, to guarantee that there will be a final decision.

Mr. Pleven (France) Interpreted: The guarantee asked for is that the question will be studied all the way through at the next meeting.

Secretary Johnson (United States). All of the people concerned and here present are notified that it will be on the agenda at the next meeting.

Mr. Alexander (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, I do not want to have any misunderstanding about this, but my view upon this matter, is not in any way apart from the objectives of Mr. Pleven. That is, that this question of communications between two parts of Metropolitan France, which are separated by water, is a matter for their control. That is my view. On the other hand, I do not think that this is a matter to be put into a general overall concept. I have every sympathy for having the matter studied, but my personal conclusion is study of the matter will show that it should be left to the Regional Planning Groups who will see to it that all of the French objectives are really met.

Secretary Johnson (United States): I had the same reservation and that is why we stated that it would be on the agenda without a commitment and without action as to conclusions. I think that any member on a major matter has a right to be given an opportunity for close study and with notification at least to bring it up on the agenda.

Mr. Alexander (United Kingdom): I agree, but it may well be that the position of our French comrade may be met in the meantime.

Mr. Plevin (France) Interpreted: The question worrying me is one of fundamental phases and not the outward form it may have inasmuch as the President accepted the proposition that this question be examined by the competent committees in the period between sessions and thoroughly going into it.

Inasmuch as the President accepted that, and if they judge it necessary it will be brought out in the next session, I accept that decision.

Secretary Johnson (United States): That is well because in the Military Committee they might find by unanimous agreement that by----

Mr. Alexander (United Kingdom): (Interposing) -- That is correct.

APPENDIX 'B'

7. d. Secure and control sea and air lines of communication, and ports and harbors, essential to the implementation of common defense plans. The defense and control of sea and air LOC's will be performed through common cooperation in accordance with each nation's capabilities and agreed responsibilities. In this regard it is recognized that the United States and United Kingdom will be primarily responsible for the organization and control of ocean lines of communication. Other nations will secure and maintain their own harbor defenses and coastal LOC's and participate in the organization and control of vital LOC's to their territories as may be indicated in over-all plans.

