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UNITED STATES DELEGATION
TO THE
NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

OTAN-NATO
PLACE DU MARÉCHAL DE LATTRE DE TASSIGNY
PARIS XVI^e - FRANCE

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February 2, 1962

Dear Colleague:

The U.S. Delegation has been queried recently regarding press articles and stories that imply the U.S. now views the Berlin situation as less critical than formerly and that it therefore considers the Berlin military build-up as less urgent. In this connection, our attention has been called to articles appearing recently in the New York papers, reporting the impending release of thousands of soldiers from the U.S. Army whose service had been involuntarily extended as a part of the Berlin military build-up.

In the interest of avoiding any misinterpretation of the current U.S. attitude on Berlin and on the Berlin military build-up, I have been authorized to inform the Council that the U.S. has certainly not come to any conclusion that the Berlin situation will have eased by mid-summer, the reported target date of this operation. To the contrary, the U.S. continues to believe it is an urgent necessity for all members of the Alliance to follow-up on the build-up measures called for by the NATO military authorities to meet the requirements of the Berlin crisis.

As regards the reported impending release of some 88,500 soldiers, the fact is that in the month of August of last year the United States Army announced the four-months' involuntary extension of active duty for enlisted men. The personnel so retained were required during the interim transition period to meet the training, priority deployment and readiness measures of the U.S. Army which was expanding to meet the need of the Berlin build-up. At the present time, new accessions including an increased number

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of draftees are now completing their training cycle and thus have permitted the Army to carry through on its intention, announced in August, to carry out a phased release of personnel involuntarily extended.

The actual figure for these releases is much less than the 88,500 cited in press reports, which are based on August 1961 estimates, due to re-enlistments, voluntary extensions and to a revised release schedule that has been adopted for enlisted personnel.

The U.S. intention to maintain its military build-up is clearly indicated in the President's recent budget message to Congress which provides for a U.S. Army strength in 1963 of 960,000 men, a substantial increase over the 875,000 that were authorized before the Berlin crisis. It should also be noted that there is no change in the U.S. intention to maintain 16 Army combat divisions rather than the 14 of previous years.

It is clear, from the above facts, that there is no justification for any interpretation that the release of involuntarily extended personnel, as reported in the press, represents any phasing down of U.S. Army strength to levels existing before the Berlin crisis. The fact of the matter is quite to the contrary, and our army strength will continue to be maintained at the high level demanded by the requirements of the critical Berlin situation.

I am circulating this note in lieu of seeking a Council meeting, and request that this information be conveyed to your national authorities.



ELBRIDGE DURBROW
Acting Permanent Representative

To: All Permanent Representatives
cc: Secretary General

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