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CHIEF ARCHIVES

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON NATO-TRIPARTITE RELATIONSHIPS

1988

1. During the NAC discussion of NATO-Tripartite Relationships on April 11, it was agreed that the basic paper on this subject, CTS-62-1, circulated to the Council on February 23, 1962, might be renumbered for greater clarity. This has now been done and the renumbered version is annexed hereto. At the same time, minor editorial changes have been made in paragraph 5 and in paragraph 9 (c), which was formerly paragraph 5 b (2) (b). The new wording is underlined in the new text.

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2. The Canadian Delegation raised several supplementary questions with regard to CTS-62-1 subsequent to the NAC discussion of April 11. The Delegations of the Tripartite countries have provided the International Staff with the explanation in paragraphs 3 and 4 below in response to the Canadian inquiry. (Paragraph references are based on the new re-numbered version of CTS-62-1).

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3. The first Canadian question concerned the desirability of NATO control mechanisms being able to take over at any time if a tripartite force is actually engaged in hostilities, rather than awaiting the outcome of that engagement. Paragraph 12 of CTS-62-1 covering the problem of transfer of control is considered to be the best compromise between avoiding premature political escalation and still achieving timely transfer of military operations, in view of the impossibility of precisely predicting the course of events. Transfer of control is, of course, inconvenient at whatever point it is undertaken. However, should conditions require earlier transfer of control, no serious difficulties are expected since SACEUR and the LIVE OAK Commander are the same individual. If tripartite forces have come under fire (thereby establishing a Soviet intent to use force) and are unable to withdraw they would then require reinforcement. Thus the question of awaiting the outcome of the engagement does not arise.

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4. The Canadian Delegation also asked for clarification of the phrase "or greater size" in paragraph 12 (a). The concept here is the unlikely one where a battalion level probe which had not been fired on but was stalled by passive obstacles and under threat of attack might be followed, as result of a political decision, by supporting elements up to a division, thus resulting in commitment of tripartite forces of "greater size" than a battalion before having drawn fire. In this context if a "greater size" force having been committed then came under attack reinforcements under NATO control might be necessary as stated in paragraph 12 (a). This latter is a different situation from that envisaged in paragraphs 6 and 7, wherein LIVE OAK would conduct planning, as contrasted to operations, up to and including division-level support of initial probes. Such planning is necessary to be prepared for the operational contingency of a stalled but not yet attacked battalion as described above.

5. In the April 11 NAC meeting, the Italian Delegation noted the apparent contradiction between the statement that "NATO forces should be put in an appropriate alert condition prior to tripartite operations," and the statement that "the three Governments will be ready, time permitting, to advise and enter into consultation with the North Atlantic Council prior to implementing LIVE OAK plans," since consultation would be necessary to obtain alert status.

The Delegations of the Tripartite countries have provided the following explanation.

The qualifying words "time permitting" were used to allow for possibility of a contingency requiring rapid tripartite response; for example, such as need to provide escort fighters for air transports which might be in imminent danger of attack. It is impossible to be absolutely certain that such contingencies would not be created by Soviet initiative. The probable and preferred sequence of events foreseen by the three Governments would be as stated in the basic paper, wherein Soviet/"GDR" action challenges tripartite responsibilities and vital interests regarding Berlin, thereby requiring tripartite decision to implement LIVE OAK plans. Tripartite powers would then

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advise and consult with NAC regarding their decision prior to implementation. NATO authorities would have an opportunity to implement required procedures for placing NATO forces on appropriate alert condition in keeping with normal military prudence in view of the imminence of tripartite military operations. Governments could take comparable measures for their national forces. Although tripartite consultation with NAC and implementation of the NATO alert system involve separate procedures, it is recognized that they are related and it is expected that they would be occurring simultaneously.

UNITED STATES DELEGATION

September 17, 1962

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