

DES (94)2- XI

MILITARY ORGANIZATION RECORDS, 1949-1958

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MILITARY ORGANIZATION RECORDS, 1949-1958A. Introduction

1. The military structure of NATO remained largely static from the time it came into existence in 1949 through 1957. The only important organizational change in these early years was the setting up of the Military Representatives Committee (MRC) in 1950.¹

2. The Standing Group Liaison Officer (SGLO) was appointed by the Standing Group (SG) to meet with the Council (first in London and then in Paris) to serve as the information link with the SG in Washington, but he had no powers of decision. The MRC served primarily as a link between the SG and national military authorities. The Military Committee (MC) - composed of Chiefs of Staff of the member countries - met only periodically and important business frequently was delayed pending their meetings.²

B. Reorganization of the Military Committee and the Military Representatives Committee, 1956-1958

1. The Military Committee (MC) underwent a major organizational change in 1957. The change was the outgrowth of criticism of the prevailing higher NATO military structure. The Standing Group (SG) was fully aware of the rising criticism and tasked the International Planning Team (IPT) in 1956 to study the issue of possible reorganization of the higher NATO military structure. The initial report by the IPT to the SG (IPT 20/21 (2nd Revised Final Draft) of 20.10.56) examined the views expressed by several sources and explored their implications for use in discussion for possible further action. The report was forwarded to the Military Representatives for submission of further personal suggestions and was included on the agenda for the October 1956 meeting of the Military Committee.

2. The MC had a preliminary exchange of views on the higher military structure of NATO at its Fourteenth Session on 19th October 1956. A brief of the salient points raised was provided to the Council (SGM-733-56 of 26.10.56). The MC reached no conclusions and no decisions were taken. The SG was directed to continue studying the problem in close consultation with the Military Representatives. The MC would be prepared to discuss the matter with the Council when they met in December 1956.

¹ The Military Committee (MC) adopted the arrangements proposed by the Defence Committee (in Part I of D.C. 24/3) to establish a Military Representatives Committee at the MC's fourth meeting of its Fourth Session in London on 12.12.50. The Defense Committee approved the proposal on 15.12.50 (D.C. 4th Session). It was approved by the Council at a joint session with the DC on 18.12.50 at its 6th Session (MRC 1 of 26.12.50).

² The organization of the military elements of NATO in 1949-1952 and their early records are described in DES(92)1, paragraphs 232 to 253. Most of the Part IV appendices to that report have been superseded by annexes to this Part.

3. The IPT was instructed by the SG to revise the draft report to exclude any suggestions which clearly would be impractical and to group the remaining proposals into those of an evolutionary nature and those suggesting radical change. The resulting revised report (IPT 20/21 (5th Revised Final Draft) of 16.11.56) was transmitted to the members of the MC in time for consideration at their Fifteenth Session and for forwarding to their respective members of the Council. The Council discussed the report at a meeting with the Standing Group on 28th November 1956 (C-R(56)61).

4. The Canadian representative urged two principles which should form the basis for the reorganization:

- (a) that there should be a much closer coordination between the political, economic and military organizations of NATO; and
- (b) that all NATO partners should have equal responsibility for planning and coordination in the military field, as was the case in the political field (paragraph 43 of CR(56)61).

These proposed principles were expanded in a memorandum circulated to the Council prior to their meeting with the MC on 7th December 1956 (RDC/522/56 of 5.12.56). The Canadian principles were discussed along with the IPT's revised report at the Fifteenth Session of the MC on 5th and 6th December 1956 (MC Fifteenth Session, Item 9; see also Enclosure "B," a statement by the Netherlands representative on pp. 46-53).

5. The MC agreed that further study was necessary and that it should be based on the two principles enunciated by the Canadian representative. It directed the SG, in conjunction with the MRC, to take the first steps toward the implementation of the evolutionary measures and to investigate what additional steps might be taken in the practical expression of those principles. The SG and MRC were to take full account of the necessity for obtaining the greatest possible efficiency in the functioning of the higher military structure (Decision on Item 9, MC Fifteenth Session). The Council discussed the whole matter further at its meeting on 7th December 1956 (C-R(56)67) and deferred to the MC's directive to the SG as the appropriate action to be taken at that time (MRM-159-56, quoted in M.C. 71 of 19.3.57).

6. The SG recommended to the MC the adoption of several of the evolutionary measures proposed in the IPT paper (Appendix A of IPT 20/21 (5th Revised Final Draft) aimed at:

- (a) improving the working procedure between the SG and the MRC;
- (b) improving the working procedures with the Council (calling for frequent visits by SG to Paris, etc.);
- (c) internationalizing the SG Secretariat (which also served the MC

and the MRC); and

- (d) participation of non-Standing Group nations in the work of the NATO military agencies (M.C. 71 of 19.3.57; Final Decision³ on M.C. 71 by the MRC on 12.6.57).

7. The SG continued the study of the higher NATO military structure by considering all the additional proposals for reorganization in two further reports to the MC (M.C. 71/1 of 1.5.57, revised on 13.5.57 and M.C. 71/2 of 5.6.57). The Military Committee considered all three at its meeting on 9th and 10th July 1957 (MC Seventeenth Session).

8. General Leon Johnson, Chairman of the Standing Group, briefed the Council on the outcome at a meeting on 11th July 1957 (C-R(57)49). He reported that the MC issued a directive to the SG and MRC as follows:

- (a) that the Military Representatives Committee should in future be recognized and designated as the Military Committee in Permanent Session (MC/PS);
- (b) that the Standing Group should be the executive agency of the MC/PS, its functions being unchanged;
- (c) that the Chairman of the MC/PS should be appointed by the MC;
- (d) that the Standing Group Planning Staff should be expanded by inviting each non-Standing Group nation to provide one staff planner. The expanded staff would continue to function multilaterally.

9. To implement these decisions, the MC directed the SG, in conjunction with the MRC, to prepare revised terms of reference for the MC and to draft terms of reference for the Chairman of the MC/PS. When these were prepared and processed through the NATO military structure they were to be presented to the Council for consideration and final approval. The MC had agreed also that the Chairman of the MC/PS should be chosen from a non-Standing Group nation, act in an international capacity, and be free to attend all meetings of the SG. The Council took note of the report by the Chairman of the Standing Group and the comments on it made by the Canadian and Italian representatives (Item I of C-R(57)49).

10. The revised terms of reference which reorganized the Military Representatives Committee and redesignated it as the Military Committee in

³ "Final Decisions" on MC documents were documents - usually one page - which were issued separately to record the decision taken on that document at a meeting of the NAMC, MRC, MC/PS or the Council. Some of these decision sheets also noted corrections to be made, replaced parts or whole pages of the document, or noted the consequences of the decision taken at the meeting (e.g. supersession of another document). The decision sheets were also sometimes revised and replaced by later issued decision sheets or corrigenda. The MC decision sheets are not to be confused with decision sheets issued on the civil side of NATO which recorded in a single document all the decisions taken at a single meeting.

Permanent Session are in M.C. 52/1, a report by the MC to the Council on overall organization of the integrated NATO forces. It was prepared on 11th October 1957, revised on 5th December 1957, and approved by the Council on 13th December 1957.

C. Records of the Military Committee, 1949-1958

1. One of the consequences of this reorganization is apparent immediately in the designation of the records created by the MC and the MRC. The records of meetings of the Military Committee in Chiefs of Staff session are designated "MC/CS" to distinguish them from the meetings of the Military Committee in Permanent Session, "MC/PS." Beginning in 1958 the Military Representatives Committee discontinued creating separate memoranda, "MRM," and included its records in MC numbered memoranda. The number of 1958 MC Memoranda, "MCM," consequently grew from an average of 13 per year from 1953 through 1957 to 177 in 1958.

2. The early records of the MC (1949 through February 1952) are described in paragraphs 232 through 235 of DES(92)1. The three series of records (MC Documents, Records of Meetings and Memoranda) for this early period are listed in Appendices IV, A-1 through A-3. These three listings have been superseded by including all of the documents in these three series through 31st December 1958. They are Annexes XI, 1/1 through 1/3 of this Report. A description of the 1949-1958 Military Committee records is in Part IC of this Report.

3. The numbered series of Military Committee documents (listed in Annex XI, 1/1) are maintained in the IMS Registry in two files by language. There are a number of documents which exist only in the English language version. Most of the corrigenda/rectificatifs made changes by providing replacement pages and directing the destruction of the superseded pages. The listing identifies the pages which were replaced. The IMS Registry kept the superseded pages, marked them "VOID" and retained them in the files immediately after the revised page which replaced the voided page. In a few instances, however, the numerous voided pages were assembled following the final version of the document. The voided pages are counted with the final pages in the listing's page count or identified as such in a separate line with the count of pages which had been marked as "VOID." The voided pages should be included when microfilming these records as they often contain the version which was discussed and amended at MC and MRC meetings.

4. In just a few instances (M.C. 32/12, M.C. 53, M.C. 54/1, M.C. 55/1, M.C. 57/1, M.C. 58, M.C. 59 and M.C. 83) corrigenda/rectificatifs to the MC documents were issued after 1959 while retaining still valid pages created prior to 1959. It is difficult to redivide these documents using 31st December 1958 as the cut-off date. The reviewing authorities are requested to review the final version of these eight documents with the correction/replacement pages as listed in Annex XI, 1/1.

D. Records of the Military Representatives Committee, 1950-1957

1. The records of the Military Representatives Committee for the period December 1950 through February 1952 are described in paragraphs 234 through 241 of DES(92)1. They are listed in Appendices IV, B-1 through B-3 to that Report. They are described also in Part IC of this Report.

2. The summary records of the meetings of the MRC from December 1950 through December 1957 are numbered in one continuous sequence (MRC 1st Meeting - MRC 147th Meeting). The reorganization and redesignation of the MRC as the Military Committee in Permanent Session (MC/PS) resulted in the establishment of a new series beginning with "1st Meeting," and, after September 1958, as "Record -MC/PS." The MC/PS held twenty meetings in 1958. All 147 MRC meetings are listed in Annex XI, 2/1 of this Report which supersedes Appendix IV, B-1 of our previous Report. The 20 summary records of meetings of the MC/PS are listed in Annex XI, 2/2 of this Report.

3. The Military Representatives Committee produced over 800 memoranda (MRM) from 1951 through 1957. The 43 memoranda created between January 1951 and February 1952 (*i.e.*, up to the Lisbon Council meetings) are listed in Appendix IV, B-2 to to DES(92)1. No attempt has been made to list the later MRM⁴. About 80% of them were destroyed by direction before the records were transferred from Washington in 1967 or later in order to gain space in the IMS Registry. The card index to them has been retained. It provides a brief description (not necessarily the title) and indicates the decimal file number under which that MRM was originally filed. If the MRM was not destroyed, it will be found in that place. About 95% of the MRM were addressed by the Secretariat to the members of the Military Representatives Committee. The remainder were used to transmit MRC documents to the Council, to the Secretary General or to SACEUR and other Commands.

4. The MRM announced meetings or briefings on various topics or papers before the MRC, referred papers and requests for comments, announced the availability of papers for examination, provided information on the status of papers, announced schedules of meetings, staffing (of the MC, MRC, SG and SGLO) and changes of membership of the MRC and bodies they dealt with, provided information on travel arrangements and assistance available at meetings of the NAMC and MC/CS, extended invitations, and transmitted copies of informal letters sent and received by the Chairman. Approximately 5% of the MRM have historical value as they transmit substantive comments or proposed changes in MC papers being considered by the MRC. Most of these MRM have been retained. Their declassification and release should be effected by the declassification and release of the basic document they concern.

5. The MRC also produced a series of reports denoted "M.R.C."⁵ Those

⁴ In 1952 there were 74 MRMs issued; in 1953, 104; in 1954, 117 [MRM-117-54 through MRM-120-54 were not issued]; in 1955, 138; in 1956, 164; and in 1957, 178. The memoranda of the MC/PS were issued as MCMs and are listed in Annex XI, 1/3.

⁵ The MRC series were erroneously characterized in paragraph 240 of DES(92)1 as "communications received addressed to the Committee," and as "Communications Received (MRC)" in the subtitle of Appendix IV, B-3.

produced between December 1950 and March 1952 are listed in Appendix IV, B-3 of DES(92)1. Six additional reports were produced before the "M.R.C." series was discontinued in June 1953.⁶ All of them are brought together in a single listing in Annex XI, 2/3 of this report.

6. The MRC was authorized, when the Military Committee was not in session, to deal with military matters requiring consideration of National Chiefs of Staff or Governments which might otherwise have to await a meeting of the Military Committee (except those which, by their nature and scope, would continue to receive full MC approval). The MRC was in fact acting on matters as, or on behalf of, the MC itself. Thus it was felt that there was no need to discriminate between the MC and the MRC documents. For record purposes, however, the practice was developed of stating on the separately issued Decision Sheet filed on top of MC reports those which were approved by the MRC acting "on behalf of the Military Committee,"⁷ and from 1958, those decisions of the Military Committee in Permanent Session.

E. Conclusions regarding the MC and MRC Records

1. Many of the MC, MRC and MC/PS documents described in DES(92)1 and in this report were regraded before they were transferred from Washington to Paris. The current classification marking appearing on each surviving document is indicated in the Annex. Usually the downgrading action taken was to remove the document from the COSMIC category and to downgrade from NATO Top Secret to NATO Secret. A small number were downgraded to NATO Restricted and a very few were regraded Unclassified.

2. All of the records described above and listed in Annexes XI, 1/1, 1/2, 1/3, 2/1, 2/2 and 2/3 of this Report are of major historical value. They should be microfilmed to ensure their preservation and to facilitate their review. All of them should be reviewed concurrently for declassification and possible release by the Military Committee or the Military Committee in Permanent Session. Those Committees should then advise the Council of their recommendations for release or for continued classification or withholding of specific documents. The Consultants recommend that all of the records which are declassified be released.

F. Records of the Standing Group, 1949-1958

1. A description of the records of the Standing Group (SG) created between 1949 and February 1952 is in DES(92)1, paragraphs 242 to 250 along with a few paragraphs describing the origins of that organization. While the staff of the SG became more international in composition following the reorganization decisions in 1957 (described in subpart B above), the SG continued to operate as the executive agency of the MC and MC/PS in all military matters, and was made up of representatives of three member countries: France, the U.K. and the U.S.

⁶ The series was discontinued as it was felt to be somewhat confusing to the recipients - the Council, the Ministers of Defense and the Supreme Commanders.

⁷ MRM80-56, "Short title, heading, and styling of MRC reports," 26.2.56 in IMS Registry file 312.4/SG.

2. The SG originated 1,266 documents in 255 series between October 1949 and December 1958. Those created through February 1952 are listed in Appendix IV, C-1 to DES(92)1. The SG records through 1958 are described in Part IC of this Report. The Consultants have prepared a revised listing of all of the SG documents issued through December 1958. It is Annex XI, 3/1 to this Report. All should be microfilmed in order to preserve these records which are of clear historical value and to facilitate their review.

3. The SG held 416 regular meetings and numerous special meetings between October 1949 and December 1958. The early meeting records are described in paragraph 245 of DES(92)1 and are listed in Appendix IV, C-2 to that report. That listing was revised and continued through the records of the 416th meeting of the SG on 31st December 1958. It is Annex XI, 3/2 to this report. These meeting records are of clear historical value and also should be microfilmed for preservation and review purposes.

4. The records of the SG were downgraded before the records were transferred from Washington upon the demise of that organization in 1967. In most instances the COSMIC Top Secret documents were regraded Secret. Very few documents were originally created as Unclassified or were regraded as NATO Unclassified. The national military authorities of France, the U.K. and the U.S. should review the SG records for both declassification and release. Consultation with other member countries' authorities should be initiated by the three authorities after joint consultation. The three national military authorities should inform the Council of their determinations. The Consultants recommend the release of all of the 1949-1958 SG documents and records of meeting which do not require continued security classification.

5. The surviving memoranda, "SGM," and the cable messages sent by the SG, "STAND," have been segregated from the original decimal file and placed in separate files in the IMS Registry.⁸ These are closely related to the SG documents and discussions in the SG meetings. The decisions on those series of records should determine the declassification and release of these communications. The NATO release authority should notify all holders of NATO historical files of the determination reached on these record items as copies are found in national files.

G. Records of the Standing Group Liaison Office, 1951-1958

1. The Standing Group's Liaison Officer (SGLO) and his staff in the Liaison Branch sent 2,734 messages to the SG in Washington between July 1951 and December 1958, LOSTAN one - LOSTAN 2737. These messages relate to matters before the Council and its committees and many are of a procedural, administrative or facilitative nature. The Standing Group Liaison Office files were in the International Staff Registry. They were microfilmed in 1989 and the paper copies destroyed. The LOSTAN messages are on NISCA rolls 12 and 13.

2. The IS Registry microfilmed the surviving memoranda produced by the

⁸ The SGM occupy ca. 4 linear meters of shelf in the IMS Registry. Many more of the STAND messages were destroyed. The surviving records occupy less than .5 linear meters of shelf.

SGLO in Paris, "SGLP." Over 4,700 memoranda were produced between 18th April 1951 and 31st December 1958. Like the memoranda of the London Branch of the Standing Group, LBSG, described in paragraph 251 of DES(92)1 many of these SGLP memoranda deal with routine administrative matters, the processing of requests for information, the routing of responses from the SG, etc. A significant number of the SGLP, however, contain information of historical value.

3. The substantive memoranda relate to SG decisions and messages and their declassification and release should be determined by action on those documents and will not require separate review. The carbon copies of the typed memoranda which were microfilmed were the file copies retained in series order in the SGLO. They are reproduced on NISCA microfilm rolls 5 and 6. The NATO release authority should notify holders of NATO historical files of the determination reached on these record items as copies of many of these will be found in national files.