

# NATO STRATEGY DOCUMENTS 1949-1969

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## Foreword

The end of the Cold War as symbolised by the opening of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, and the many changes in NATO that soon followed, led in 1991 to a major revision of NATO strategy, taking it away from its previous Cold War focus. One of the key aspects of the new, post-Cold War NATO has been transparency. This new policy was most clearly demonstrated when the new NATO Strategic Concept of 1991 was issued as an unclassified document and released to the public.

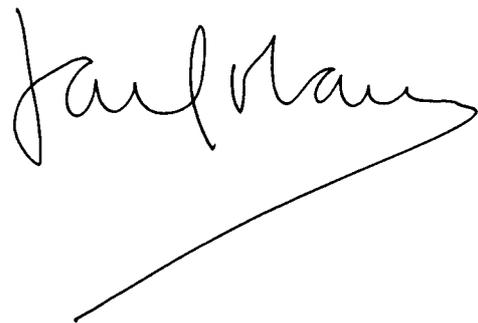
NATO's new openness, combined with growing historical interest in the history of NATO during the Cold War, led a number of historians and political scientists to ask in 1992 whether NATO could declassify and release a number of its important strategy documents from the 1950s and 1960s. The North Atlantic Council therefore began to consider these requests while at the same time working on the development of policies and procedures for the declassification and public disclosure of older NATO documents in general, not just those related to NATO's strategy.

Although steps were soon underway to begin the process of identifying and reviewing NATO documents for declassification and release, the North Atlantic Council recognized that considerable time would be required before all of the NATO strategy documents that had been requested by researchers would become available through this process, so in 1995 the Council decided to declassify NATO's older strategy documents as a complete package.

Aware that these strategy documents had been developed under greatly different international circumstances, the Council also decided that the publication should include an introductory essay describing the evolution of NATO strategy during the 1950s and 1960s, so that the strategy documents may be seen in their proper historical context. The essay by Dr. Gregory W. Pedlow that follows, describes these historical circumstances.

Publication of the enclosed NATO strategy documents clearly demonstrates the Alliance's commitment to transparency and openness in the new Euro-Atlantic security environment. It is my hope that all who read these documents will be enlightened about the foundation upon which the success of NATO has been built since its inception in 1949.

October 1997



**Javier SOLANA**

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# THE EVOLUTION OF NATO STRATEGY 1949-1969

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① *At that time there was no Military Committee in Permanent Session, and the Military Committee (Chiefs of Staff) met very infrequently. As a result, the Standing Group (which was composed of senior military representatives from France, the United Kingdom and the United States) enjoyed considerable power. The other members of the Alliance could send Military Representatives Accredited to the Standing Group to Washington, but these representatives had little real power. In December 1950 the status of these representatives increased with the formation of the Military Representatives Committee meeting on a permanent basis, but this committee should not be seen as the equivalent of a permanent session of the Military Committee, so the Standing Group remained the dominant body in overseeing military strategy and plans during the early 1950s. For an analysis of the Alliance's military structures during the 1950s see Douglas L. Bland, *The Military Committee of the North Atlantic Alliance: A Study of Structure and Strategy* (New York, 1991), pp. 135-155.*

② *Doris M. Condit, *The Test of War, 1950-1953, History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, vol. 2* (Washington, 1988), p. 313.*

③ *Documents submitted to and approved by the Military Committee are all numbered in the MC series, but not all such documents relate to strategic issues. MC 3 is therefore the first MC document to set forth the NATO Strategic Concept. Defence Committee documents bear DC numbers, while documents issued by the Standing Group are in the SG series. The initial draft of the Strategic Concept, SG 1, is not included in the present collection because it is virtually identical to MC 3.*

The signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington on 4 April 1949 was the first step in the development of a comprehensive strategy for the new Alliance. Article 3 of the treaty called for the signatories to "maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack", while Article 5 stated that "the Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or America shall be considered an attack against them all" and in such an event, each of them would exercise the right of individual or collective self-defence. Article 9 then began the process of giving the Alliance an organisational structure by establishing the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and calling for it to "set up such subsidiary bodies as may be necessary; in particular it shall establish immediately a defence committee which shall recommend measures for the implementation of Articles 3 and 5."

Once the process of ratifying the Treaty was completed in August 1949, the North Atlantic Council (at that time composed solely of the Foreign Ministers of the member nations) set about creating the structure that would be needed to carry out the process of planning for collective self-defence, a key aspect of which would be the development of an overall strategic concept for the Alliance. In September 1949 the Council created the Defence Committee (DC), which was composed of the Defence Ministers of the member nations; the Defence Committee was tasked with drawing up unified defence plans for the North Atlantic area. The Council also created the Military Committee (MC), made up of the Chiefs of Staff of the member nations, along with a three-nation executive body known as the Standing Group (SG) tasked to oversee the military planning process while the Military Committee was not in session<sup>(1)</sup>. The Alliance did not yet have an integrated military command structure; instead there was a looser committee system with five Regional Planning Groups composed of representatives from the member nations. Chart 1 shows the

NATO structure that had come into existence by the end of 1949<sup>(2)</sup>.

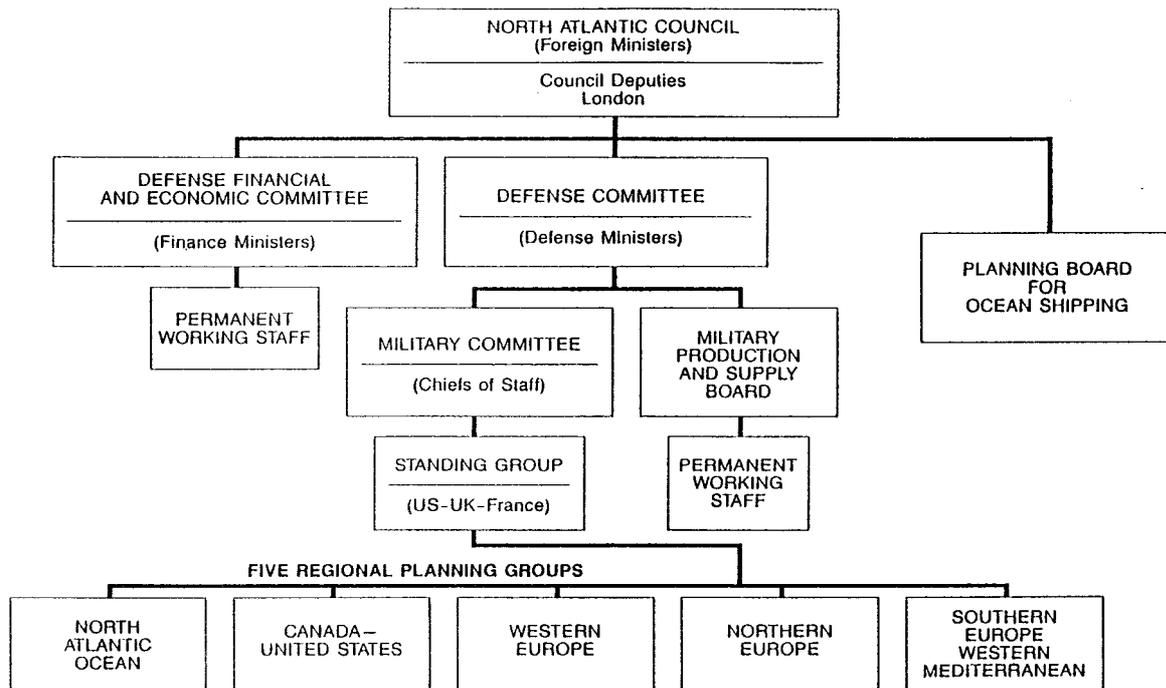
The new NATO bodies immediately set about developing an overall strategy for the Alliance. One of the key factors that would be considered in this process was the use of nuclear weapons to defend the North Atlantic area. At this time most Western military planners believed that NATO was greatly inferior in conventional military strength to the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites. This perception, along with the United States' preeminence in the nuclear field, therefore profoundly influenced the development of NATO strategy.

### Initial Strategic Planning, 1949-1950

The first NATO strategy document was known as "The Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Area". An initial draft bearing this title was prepared by the Standing Group on 10 October 1949 as document SG 1 and then circulated to their Chiefs of Staff for comments. After incorporating a few minor editorial changes into the document, the Standing Group submitted the Strategic Concept to the Military Committee as MC 3 on 19 October 1949<sup>(3)</sup>. As the Standing Group's transmittal letter noted, MC 3 was "drawn up in broad terms which take into account both political and strategic considerations". The Standing Group added that in the future it would issue "more detailed strategic guidance of a purely military nature" for use by the Regional Planning Groups.

MC 3's main objective was "adequate military strength accompanied by economy of effort, resources and manpower". It is important to note that even the earliest drafts of NATO's strategic concept already mentioned nuclear weapons. Thus MC 3's section on "Military Measures to Implement Defense Concept" called for the Alliance to "insure the ability to deliver the atomic bomb promptly. This is primarily a US responsibility assisted as practicable by the nations". In addition to this proposed use

**CHART 1**  
**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION**  
**JUNE 1950**



of nuclear weapons to defend the North Atlantic area, MC 3 called for the member nations to "arrest and counter as soon as practicable the enemy offensives against North Atlantic Treaty powers by all means available, including air, naval, land and psychological operations", noting that initially the "hard core" of ground power would have to come from the European nations while the others were mobilising. Other military measures included neutralising enemy air operations, securing and controlling the sea and air lines of communication, defending the main support areas and bases that would be essential to the defence of the Alliance, and mobilising and expanding the overall power of the Allied nations for "later offensive operations designed to maintain the security of the North Atlantic Treaty area".

Comments by the Military Committee and some of the national delegations led to

minor revisions in the document, which was issued under the same title as MC 3/1 on 19 November 1949 and MC 3/2 on 28 November 1949. MC 3/2's revised section on military measures strengthened the wording of the statement on nuclear weapons by stating that the Alliance should "insure the ability to carry out strategic bombing including the prompt delivery of the atomic bomb". At this point, however, MC 3/2 was not yet an approved NATO strategy document, for it lacked the final step-Ministerial approval.

On 29 November 1949 the Military Committee transmitted its strategic concept to the Defence Committee as document DC 6, still with the title of "Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Area". The statement on the "prompt delivery of the atomic bomb" remained unchanged from MC 3/2, and when the Defence Committee met to dis-

- ④ *Minutes of the Defence Committee, 2nd Meeting, 1 December 1949, Item 8.*
- ⑤ *Lord Ismay, NATO: The First Five Years, 1949-1954 (Paris, 1954), p. 27. In 1951 the NAC absorbed the Defence Committee; thereafter the Council's membership was not limited solely to Foreign Ministers.*
- ⑥ *SG 13/16 has not been reprinted separately in the present volume because the entire document is included as the Enclosure to MC 14.*

cuss DC 6 on 1 December 1949, the Danish Defence Minister expressed his government's concerns about the strategic concept containing such an explicit statement on the use of the atomic bomb. Other defence ministers wished to retain the statement, and the Defence Committee finally accepted a compromise offered by the Chairman, U.S. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson - to strike out reference to the atomic bomb "with the understanding that the striking out recognizes no change of position". The agreed wording was that the Alliance should "insure the ability to carry out strategic bombing promptly by all means possible with all types of weapons, without exception"<sup>(4)</sup>.

The new wording on strategic bombing was the only major change to DC 6, and a revised version incorporating the changes made by the Defence Committee was issued as DC 6/1 on 1 December 1949. DC 6/1 was thus the first NATO strategy document to receive ministerial approval, since the Defence Committee was composed of the NATO Defence Ministers and was preparing the Alliance's strategy at the behest of the North Atlantic Council. On 6 January 1950 the NAC gave its approval to the new strategic concept at the third Council meeting in Washington<sup>(5)</sup>.

Like the MC 3 series documents from which it was derived, DC 6/1 emphasised that each nation's contribution to defence should be in proportion to its geographical position, industrial capacity, population and military capabilities. The document also noted that in developing their military strength consistent with overall plans, the allies "should bear in mind that economic recovery and the attainment of economic stability constitute important elements of their security"; thus the goal of NATO defence planning was to be a "successful defence of the North Atlantic Treaty nations through maximum efficiency of their armed forces with the minimum necessary expenditures of manpower, money and materials".

DC 6/1 provided an overall strategic concept for the Alliance, but much more detailed strategic guidance was needed for use by the Regional Planning Groups in developing their regional defence plans, so at its second meeting on 29 November 1949, the Military Committee directed the Standing Group to prepare detailed "Strategic Guidance for North Atlantic Regional Planning" and then submit a draft to the Military Representatives Accredited to the Standing Group so that comments could be solicited from the nations and incorporated into the Strategic Guidance paper. Once this process of incorporating national comments was completed, the Strategic Guidance paper (SG 13/16) was sent to the Regional Planning Groups on 6 January 1950. Formal approval of the "Strategic Guidance for North Atlantic Regional Planning" came at the third meeting of the Military Committee on 28 March 1950, at which SG 13/16 was approved as MC 14<sup>(6)</sup>.

MC 14 provided additional strategic guidance to permit regional planning groups to develop detailed defence plans to meet contingencies up to July 1954. The Standing Group's introductory directive to the Regional Planning Groups warned that "the North Atlantic Treaty nations should not be misled into planning in the frame of mind prevailing at the end of World War II, which was largely based on the enormous military power available to the Allies at that time." Noting that NATO nations would require many years to raise similar forces while the USSR had "maintained, if not increased, her technical, military and economic capabilities", the Standing Group stated that "special emphasis must be laid on the necessity for developing methods to compensate for numerical inferiority".

The key objectives of NATO's defence policy as set forth in MC 14 were "to convince the USSR that war does not pay, and should war occur, to ensure a successful defence" of the NATO area. MC 14 assumed that in the event of war, the Soviet Union would attempt to defeat NATO forces and reach

the Atlantic coast, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Another key assumption was that "all types of weapons, without exception, might be used by either side". MC 14 instructed military planners in the Regional Planning Groups to develop plans aimed at holding the enemy as far to the east as possible in Germany, as far to the east and north as possible in Italy, and "outside a defensible area" in Northern Europe. MC 14 also included detailed intelligence guidance for regional planning, including an assessment of Soviet strategic intentions.

Even before MC 14 was officially adopted, its source document - SG 13/16 - was serving as the basis for the defence plans being prepared by the Regional Planning Groups during the early months of 1950. The Standing Group then consolidated these plans into the "North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medium Term Plan", which was approved by the Military Committee on 28 March 1950 and forwarded to the Defence Committee as DC 13. Defence Committee approval followed on 1 April 1950.

As the most detailed strategy-related document produced heretofore by NATO, DC 13 bore a cover sheet stating, "Because of the secrecy of the contents of this document, it is being given a specially limited distribution." Although titled simply a "Medium Term Plan", DC 13 included considerable strategic guidance; in fact, a subsequent strategy document, MC 14/1, stated that DC 13 had "provided the basis for all NATO strategic planning". In its section on Defence Policy, DC 13 incorporated the strategic concepts of DC 6/1 and the strategic guidance of MC 14. DC 13 stated that the overall strategic aim of NATO, should war break out, would be "to destroy by a strategic offensive in Western Eurasia the will and capabilities of the USSR and her satellites to wage war". The document envisaged four phases for the operations that would occur after the outbreak of hostilities:

PHASE I - D-Day to the stabilization of initial Soviet offensive, to include the initiation of the Allied air offensive.

PHASE 2 - Stabilization of initial Soviet offensive to allied initiation of major offensive operations.

PHASE 3 - Allied initiation of major offensive operations until Soviet capitulation is obtained.

PHASE 4 - Final Achievement of Allied War Objectives.

DC 13 also set forth a concept of operations for Phase 1 operations. The three European Regions of NATO were considered to constitute the "couverture" facing east of the North Atlantic Treaty Area. Their primary task was thus to "delay and arrest the enemy advance" and they were to do this "as far to the East as possible" while "making full use of mobility and offensive action whenever opportunity offers". Sabotage and subversive action were seen as means of providing some additional delay, and "maximum support" was to be given to "such psychological measures as might be taken against the enemy". Through all these means the forces constituting the major element of the "couverture" of the North Atlantic Treaty Area would "gain time for reinforcements to arrive and for cumulative effect of the strategic air offensive to be felt". As for the North American Area, its "initial basic undertaking is to initiate the strategic air offensive against the enemy at the outset of hostilities".

DC 13 also contained an estimate of the force requirements considered necessary for the implementation of these plans by the target year of 1954. In addition to 2,324 warships of varying sizes from battleships down to minesweepers and 3,264 naval aircraft, DC 13 called for 90 divisions in NATO's land forces and 8,004 combat aircraft in NATO's air forces.

The adoption of DC 13 on 1 April 1950, almost exactly one year after the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, marked the end of the initial formulation of NATO's strategy. This strategy was contained in three basic documents: DC 6/1, which set forth the overall strategic concept; MC 14, which

- 7 *Condit, Test of War, pp. 344-347. For the evolution of NATO's military command structure during the 1950s and the political disputes that had to be overcome in this process, see Gregory W. Pedlow, "The Politics of NATO Command, 1950-1962" in U.S. Military Forces in Europe: The Early Years, ed. by Simon W. Duke and Wolfgang Krieger (Boulder, 1993), pp. 15-42.*
- 8 *The revised document was not called DC 6/2 because the Defence Committee no longer existed, having been absorbed by the NAC in 1951. All military strategy documents would henceforth bear MC numbers.*
- 9 *Although listed as "superseded" by MC 3/5 (Final), SG 1/7 had never been a strategy document in its own right but simply a proposal for modifications to DC 6/1.*

provided more specific strategic guidance for use in defence planning; and DC 13, which included both of these aspects as well as considerable detailed regional planning. It is important to note that the key elements of NATO strategy, including the use of atomic weapons to defend Europe, were thus already in place before the outbreak of the Korean War.

### Evolution of NATO, 1950-1952

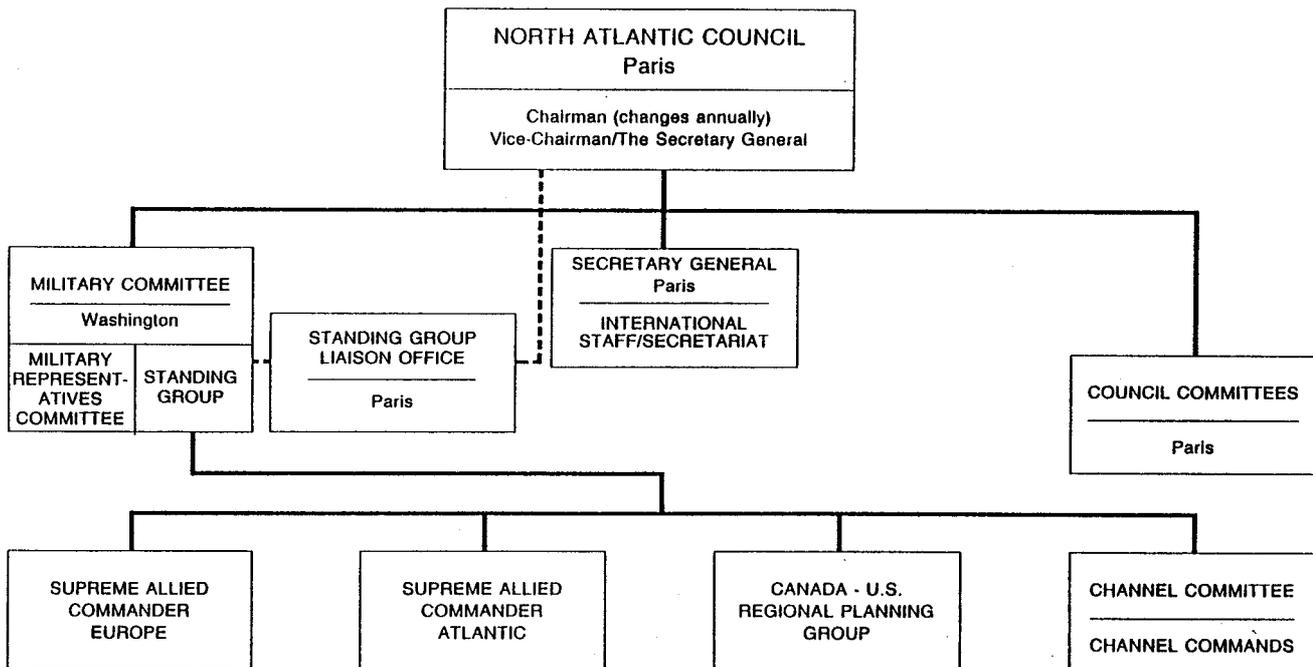
When North Korean forces launched their invasion of South Korea on 25 June 1950, starting a conflict that soon saw troops of the United States and other NATO members fighting there on behalf of the United Nations, fear quickly grew that Western Europe, which also contained one-half of a country divided along ideological lines, might be the next target of Soviet-sponsored aggression. Recognising that the existing loose NATO structure of planning groups would not prove adequate in such a conflict, the North Atlantic Council on 26 September 1950 approved the establishment of an integrated military force under centralised command. Then on 19 December 1950 the Council requested the nomination of General Dwight D. Eisenhower as the first Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), and he soon arrived in Europe to supervise the work of the planning group preparing for the creation of his new headquarters, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). On 2 April 1951 General Eisenhower's command - Allied Command Europe (ACE) - and its new headquarters SHAPE were activated, and the new headquarters took over the work of the three European Regional Planning Groups, which were abolished. The North Atlantic Ocean Regional Planning Group was replaced in 1952 by Allied Command Atlantic (headed by a second Supreme Commander known as SACLANT - Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic), leaving only the Canada-US Regional Planning Group still in existence out of the original five. That same year a third major NATO command area was established to deal with

the English Channel and adjoining coastal waters - a Channel Committee overseeing naval and air commands for the Channel area. On 18 February 1952 Greece and Turkey joined the Alliance. Shortly afterward, at the North Atlantic Council meeting in Lisbon on 20-25 February 1952, the Alliance improved its organisational structure, creating the post of Secretary General and establishing a permanent session of the Council. Chart 2 shows the Alliance's organisational structure after the changes of 1952<sup>(7)</sup>.

While these structural changes were occurring, the Alliance continued to refine its strategy documents. On March 1950 Portugal and France proposed some small changes (MC 3/3 and 3/4 respectively) to the Strategic Concept; these were approved by the Defence Committee as DC 6/3 and DC 6/4 on 1 April and 24 May 1950 respectively. By the autumn of 1952 the Standing Group believed that a more comprehensive review of the Strategic Concept (DC 6/1 of 1 December 1949) was needed in order to reflect the addition of the two new member nations and the Alliance's substantial organizational changes since late 1950. The result was SG 1/7 ("The Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area") on 6 November 1952. SG 1/7 proposed a number of "minor factual amendments" to DC 6/1 but stated that "no substantive modification" was required.

The proposed amendments to DC 6/1 were accepted by the Military Representatives Committee as MC 3/5 and then approved by the NAC on 3 December 1952<sup>(8)</sup>. MC 3/5 (Final), "The Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Area", was now the official strategic concept for NATO, superseding DC 6/1 and SG 1/7<sup>(9)</sup>. Overall the wording of MC 3/5 was quite similar to DC 6/1. Thus the section on Military Measures still called for NATO defence plans to "insure the ability to carry out strategic bombing promptly by all means possible with all types of weapons, without exception".

**CHART 2**  
**NATO**  
**AFTER APRIL 1952**



Just as the Strategic Concept required revision to reflect new Alliance members and organisational structures, so did the Strategic Guidance. In addition there had been changes in intelligence estimates, and the planning period had been extended to 1956. The Standing Group therefore decided to carry out a major revision of MC 14 while at the same time incorporating most of the information that had previously been contained in DC 13. On 9 December 1952 the Military Committee approved MC 14/1, "Strategic Guidance", which superseded both MC 14 and DC 13. Approval by the NAC followed at the Ministerial Meeting in Paris on 15-18 December 1952.

MC 14/1 was far more detailed than MC 14 because the new document included many subjects previously covered by DC 13, including assumptions, estimated enemy capabilities, and courses of action. MC 14/1 stated that the Alliance's overall strategic aim was "to ensure the defense of the NATO area

and to destroy the will and capability of the Soviet Union and her satellites to wage war, initially by means of an air offensive, while at the same time conducting air, ground and sea operations". Allied strategic air attacks would use "all types of weapons". MC 14/1 also considered the possible impact of "weapons of mass destruction" upon NATO force goals and concluded that because "the conventional NATO forces at present in being fall far short of requirements, no relaxation can be allowed in their planned expansion" during the period 1953-54. However, "greater availability of such weapons and increased delivery capability during the period 1954-56 may then necessitate reevaluation of the requirements for a successful defense of the NAT [North Atlantic Treaty] area".

#### The New Look/New Approach, 1953-1954

The Lisbon NAC meeting in February 1952 had set very ambitious Force Goals by

- ⑩ NSC 162/2, *Basic National Security Policy, 30 October 1953*, in *Foreign Relations of the United States [hereafter cited as FRUS], 1952-1954, vol. 2, National Security Affairs, pp. 585-586, 593. For the evolution of U.S. nuclear policy during the Eisenhower Administration see David Alan Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945-1960," International Security, vol. 7, no. 4 (Spring 1983), pp. 3-71.*
- ⑪ Robert Wampler, *NATO Strategic Planning and Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear History Program Occasional Paper 6 (College Park, Maryland, 1990), p. 9; Lawrence S. Kaplan, NATO and the United States: The Enduring Alliance (Boston, 1988), p. 60.*
- ⑫ *North Atlantic Council, C-M(53)166(Final), Resolution on the 1954 Annual Review and Related Problems, 15 December 1953.*
- ⑬ *Statement by the Secretary of State to the North Atlantic Council Closed Ministerial Session, Paris, 23 April 1954, in FRUS, 1952-1953, vol. 5, Western European Security, pp. 511-512.*
- ⑭ Robert J. Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1953-1954, History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 5 (Washington, 1986), pp. 304-306, 311-313, 316-317; Wampler, NATO Strategic Planning, pp. 11-16; John S. Duffield, Power Rules: The Evolution of NATO's Conventional Force Posture (Stanford, 1995), pp. 85-87.*

1954 a total of 96 NATO divisions after 90 days of mobilisation, with almost half of the divisions to be ready at the start of hostilities - but fulfilling these goals proved financially and politically impossible for the members of the Alliance. Even the United States under the new administration of President Eisenhower began to look for ways to gain greater military effectiveness from a military budget that was no longer likely to increase substantially, and the growing availability of nuclear weapons seemed to offer "more bang for the buck". As a result, U.S. defence policy shifted in 1953 to the "New Look", which placed greater emphasis on the use of nuclear weapons. The new policy was set forth in NSC 162/2 of 30 October 1953, which stated: "In the event of hostilities, the United States will consider nuclear weapons to be as available for use as other weapons". NSC 162/2 also pointed out the importance of nuclear weapons to the defence of Europe: "The major deterrent to aggression against Western Europe is the manifest determination of the United States to use its atomic capability and massive retaliatory power if the area is attacked."<sup>(10)</sup>

Meanwhile the NATO Military Authorities were grappling with the question of how to integrate nuclear weapons into NATO strategy. On 10 July 1953 SACEUR Matthew B. Ridgway submitted to the Standing Group a report on estimated force requirements for 1956; this was the first extensive examination of NATO strategy to include nuclear weapons. Ridgway's report proved controversial because it concluded that the use of nuclear weapons would necessitate increases, not decreases, in force levels, due to expected high casualty rates<sup>(11)</sup>.

Soon after issuing the report, Ridgway was replaced as SACEUR by General Alfred Gruenther, who called for a fresh look at the integration of nuclear weapons into NATO strategy. Gruenther therefore established a "New Approach Group" at SHAPE in August 1953 to study this issue. While the "New Approach" studies were

still in progress, the NAC asked the NATO Military Authorities on 10 December 1953 to provide a reassessment of the military strength needed by the Alliance in the mid to late 1950s<sup>(12)</sup>.

At this time the United States - with the support of a number of European allies - was calling for the complete integration of nuclear weapons into NATO strategy. On 23 April 1954 U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles made a special address to the NAC in which he stressed the great numerical disparity between the conventional forces of NATO and the forces of the Soviet bloc and called for NATO's agreed policy to be "to use atomic weapons as conventional weapons against the military assets of the enemy whenever and wherever it would be of advantage to do so"<sup>(13)</sup>.

By the summer of 1954 SHAPE had completed its work on the "New Approach" and submitted two major studies to the Standing Group: SACEUR's Capabilities Study for 1957 and a paper on The Most Effective Pattern of NATO Military Strength for the Next Few Years. The Standing Group combined the latter study with submissions from the other NATO military commanders to produce a draft Standing Group report that ultimately became a major new NATO strategy document, MC 48<sup>(14)</sup>.

Temporarily distracted in the autumn of 1954 by the collapse of the proposed European Defence Community and the subsequent negotiations that led to the admission of the Federal Republic of Germany into the Alliance, the Military Committee approved MC 48, "The Most Effective Pattern of NATO Military Strength for the Next Few Years", on 22 November 1954. This document was much broader than its title indicates, for MC 48 actually provided interim strategic guidance pending a review of MC 14/1 and therefore contained many concepts and assumptions that would later be included in MC 14/2. In contrast to previous strategy documents, which made only veiled references to

- 15 For an evaluation of the major shift in NATO strategy that came with the approval of MC 48, see Marc Trachtenberg, *"La formation du système de défense occidentale: les Etats-Unis, la France, et MC 48"* in France et l'OTAN, 1949-1996, ed. by Maurice Vaisse (Paris, 1996), pp. 115-126.
- 16 NATO Information Service, Texts of Final Communiqués 1949-1974, Issued by Ministerial Session of the North Atlantic Council, the Defence Planning Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group (Brussels, no date), p. 87.
- 17 North Atlantic Council, C-M(54)118(Final), *Resolution on the 1955 Annual Review and Related Problems, 17 December 1954.*

nuclear weapons by using the phrase "all types of weapons without exception", MC 48 explicitly discussed the use of nuclear weapons. The new document stated that "the advent of atomic weapons systems will drastically change the conditions of modern war". As a result, "superiority in atomic weapons and the capability to deliver them will be the most important factor in a major war in the foreseeable future".

MC 48 concluded that "essential NATO forces must first of all be forces-in-being" equipped with an "integrated atomic capability". While expecting that a future major war in Europe would start with a surprise Soviet attack and would involve massive nuclear exchanges, MC 48 did not limit NATO use of nuclear weapons to a retaliatory strike after Soviet first use. Thus MC 48 called for the NATO Military Authorities to be authorized to "plan and make preparations on the assumption that atomic and thermo-nuclear weapons will be used in defense from the outset". In the event of the "remote possibility that the Soviets might attempt to take advantage of their preponderance in land and tactical air forces to overrun Europe without employing atomic weapons," MC 48 argued that "NATO would be unable to prevent the rapid overrunning of Europe unless NATO immediately employed these weapons both strategically and tactically." The concept of "Massive Retaliation" that is normally associated with a later NATO strategy document, MC 14/2, can thus be more appropriately associated with MC 48 and its call for the massive use of nuclear weapons to defend Europe against aggression<sup>(15)</sup>.

On 17 December 1954 the NAC Ministerial Session approved MC 48 and thereby gave political approval for planning the defence of the NATO area using nuclear weapons. However, the ministers pointed out in the final communiqué that "this approval did not involve the delegation of the responsibility of governments to make decisions for putting plans into action in the event of hostilities"<sup>(16)</sup>.

### Discussions on Strategy, 1955-57

With military technology and planning changing so rapidly, the Council asked the Military Committee in December 1954 to "continue to examine, in conformity with the agreed strategic concept and within the resources which it is anticipated may be made available, the most effective pattern of military strength for the next few years" and also to indicate to the member governments "how the reassessment in MC 48 of the pattern of military strength should affect national defense programs"<sup>(17)</sup>. This request led the Military Committee to issue MC 48/1, "The Most Effective Pattern of NATO Military Strength for the Next Few Years - Report No. 2", on 26 September 1955. The Military Representatives Committee, acting on behalf of the Military Committee, approved the report on 14 November 1955, and final approval by the Military Committee itself, following incorporation of one amendment, came on 9 December 1955.

As the subtitle "Report No. 2" indicates, MC 48/1 did not supersede MC 48 but simply provided additional information. Thus MC 48/1 confirmed the forward defence strategy outlined in MC 48 but noted that because of delays in the German military contribution, effective implementation of the forward strategy would not occur before mid-1959 at the earliest. MC 48/1 described the status of NATO military planning and preparations for the concepts contained in MC 48 and called for additional priority improvements such as the provision of adequate early warning, modern alert systems and air defence.

Although the key decision to move toward substantial use of nuclear weapons to defend the NATO area had already been taken with the approval of MC 48 and MC 48/1, there was still a need to reconcile the new documents with the older strategy documents still in effect (MC 3/5 and MC 14/1, both dating from 1952). Thus in the summer of 1956, the Standing Group and the Military Committee began to work on

- 18 *Wampler, NATO Strategic Planning, pp. 35-38; Duffield, Power Rules, pp. 121-128.*
- 19 *North Atlantic Council, C-M(55)113(Revised), NATO Defence Planning: Note by the Secretary General, 8 December 1955.*
- 20 *Wampler, NATO Strategic Planning, pp. 36-37.*
- 21 *During this period NATO's forward deployed military forces were known as the "Shield", while the U.S. strategic bomber force was considered NATO's "Sword".*

two new documents (draft MC 14/2 and draft MC 48/2) to create a coherent set of strategy documents.

At first the intent was simply to edit the older papers to bring them into line with the concepts in MC 48 and MC 48/1, but new ideas soon began to enter into the process, including France's request for MC 14/2 to include sections dealing with the effects upon NATO of Soviet political and economic activities outside the NATO area. The importance of events outside the NATO area took on even greater significance in the autumn of 1956, when the United Kingdom and France attempted to regain control of the Suez Canal from Egypt, a move which met with strong opposition from the United States. The Soviet Union then took advantage of Western disunity and preoccupation with the Middle East by sending troops and tanks to suppress the attempt by Hungary to move toward a more democratic form of socialism, thus crushing Western hopes for better relations with the Soviets<sup>(18)</sup>.

While the NATO Military Authorities were working on a new strategy documents, the member nations were warning that "the safety of the Alliance cannot be secured by military means alone". This concern was noted by Secretary General Lord Ismay in a Council Memorandum on 8 December 1955, along with "a widespread feeling that it will become increasingly difficult to sustain popular support for defence expenditures as now planned unless governments can explain more clearly why the money is needed". Lord Ismay's memorandum also expressed governments' concerns that "considerable expenditure will be needed to achieve the basic objectives of our strategy", and he therefore called for a "more detailed appraisal of the implications of the New Look than has hitherto been possible"<sup>(19)</sup>.

The strongest advocate of the need for savings in defence expenditures was the United Kingdom, which began pushing for the North Atlantic Council to issue political guidance that would cause the NATO mili-

tary authorities to reduce force requirements by relying almost completely on nuclear weapons to defend Europe<sup>(20)</sup>. Other nations were not willing to go this far, however, and the resulting "political directive" of 13 December 1956 contained a considerable degree of flexibility. CM(56)138, "Directive to the NATO Military Authorities from the North Atlantic Council" called for a review of NATO defence planning "to determine how, within the resources likely to be available, the defence effort of the Alliance and of each individual member can best achieve the most effective pattern of forces". The document contained two parts, an analysis of Soviet intentions and the directive itself, which stated that the Alliance should maintain forces sufficient "to keep confidence in the military effectiveness of the NATO defence organization, and thereby to contribute to the deterrent to aggression" and also able to deal with armed aggression "in accordance with the concept of 'forward strategy', counting on the use of nuclear weapons at the outset". Despite this statement, however, the Political Directive did not support the idea of a "trip-wire" strategy for NATO. Thus the Political Directive stated that allied "Shield"<sup>(21)</sup> forces should have the ability to deal with infiltrations, incursions or hostile local actions "without necessarily having recourse to nuclear weapons". The importance of out-of-area events was reflected in the statement: "Although NATO defence planning is limited to the defence of the Treaty area, it is necessary to take account of the dangers which may arise for NATO because of developments outside that area."

The issuance of C-M(56)138 marked the first time that the North Atlantic Council had given such detailed political guidance to the NATO military authorities, and the Standing Group immediately took the new political directive into account in its ongoing revision of NATO strategy. The result was two new strategy documents - MC 14/2 (the new "Strategic Concept") and MC 48/2 ("Measures to Implement the

22 *This considerable degree of flexibility in MC 14/2 and MC 48/2 has led one recent study of NATO strategy to characterise the new strategy as one of "Differentiated Responses" or "Flexible Response I". Beatrice Heuser, NATO, Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949-2000 (London, 1997). p. 40.*

23 *North Atlantic Council, C-R(57)30, II, 9 May 1957.*

Strategic Concept") - which were approved by the Military Committee in April 1957 for submission to the Council.

MC 14/2, "Overall Strategic Concept for the Defence of the NATO Area", placed heavy emphasis placed upon the use of nuclear weapons in the defence of the NATO area. MC 14/2's section on the Strategic Concept stated:

Our chief objective is to prevent war by creating an effective deterrent to aggression. The principal elements of the deterrent are adequate nuclear and other ready forces and the manifest determination to retaliate against any aggressor with all the forces at our disposal, including nuclear weapons, which the defense of NATO would require.

In preparation for a general war, should one be forced upon us:

- a. We must first ensure the ability to carry out an instant and devastating nuclear counteroffensive by all available means and develop the capability to absorb and survive the enemy's onslaught.
- b. Concurrently and closely related to the attainment of this aim, we must develop our ability to use our land, sea and air forces for defense of their territories and sea areas of NATO as far forward as possible to maintain the integrity of the NATO area, counting on the use of nuclear weapons from the outset.

Although MC 14/2 is often characterised as a strategy of "massive retaliation" in which NATO conventional forces served merely as a "trip wire" for the launching of NATO's nuclear retaliatory forces, the actual document provided for some flexibility in dealing with "infiltration, incursions, or hostile local actions". In keeping with the Political Directive, MC 14/2 called for conventional forces to be able to deal with such lesser contingencies "without necessarily having recourse to nuclear weapons"<sup>(22)</sup>.

The companion document to MC 14/2 was MC 48/2 ("Measures to Implement the

Strategic Concept"), which set forth the military measures needed to implement the new strategy. MC 48/2 stated that there were two types of NATO forces, Nuclear Retaliatory Forces and Shield Forces, which would "defend the sea areas and NATO territories as far forward as possible in order to maintain the integrity of the NATO area, counting on the use of their nuclear weapons at the outset".

Although MC 48/2 focused primarily on nuclear warfare, the new document - like MC 14/2 - did contain an element of flexibility in its call for NATO to be able to deal with "a limited military situation in the NATO area which an aggressor might create in the belief that gains could be achieved without provoking NATO to general war". To deal with such an eventuality, NATO forces should be capable of acting "promptly to restore and maintain the security of the NATO area without necessarily having recourse to nuclear weapons". Such flexibility did not, however, include the idea of a limited war, for MC 48/2 repeated a statement contained in MC 14/2: "If the Soviets were involved in a hostile local action and sought to broaden the scope of such an incident or prolong it, the situation would call for the utilization of all weapons and forces at NATO's disposal, since in no case is there a concept of limited war with the Soviets."

The two new strategy documents received Council approval on 9 May 1957 after considerable discussion. The most controversial issue was the documents' declaration that "in no case is there a NATO concept of limited war with the Soviets", which the Netherlands Permanent Representative felt was too restrictive. He finally gave his approval to the document after stating that the Netherlands Delegation considered this statement "too categorical" and reserved the right to ask for a revision of the document if studies currently underway by SACEUR showed this to be necessary<sup>(23)</sup>. As part of this compromise, the Council agreed that "in communicating Council approval of the two documents to the military authorities,

- 24 J. Michael Legge, *Theater Nuclear Weapons and the NATO Strategy of Flexible Response* (Santa Monica, 1983), p. 9.
- 25 Although the records of the LIVE OAK organisation remain classified until the year 2005 by agreement of the four powers [the Federal Republic of Germany joined LIVE OAK in 1961], considerable detail about Allied planning for the Second Berlin Crisis can be found in declassified national documents, in particular from the United Kingdom and United States. See Gregory W. Pedlow, *Allied Crisis Management for Berlin: the LIVE OAK Organization, 1959-1963* in *International Cold War Military Records and History: Proceedings of the International Conference on Cold War Military Records and History Held in Washington D.C. 21-26 March 1994*, ed. by William W. Epley (Washington, 1996), pp. 87-116.
- 26 *Policy Directive, NATO and the Atlantic Nations, 20 April 1961*, in *FRUS, 1961-1963*, vol. 13, West Europe and Canada, p. 285. For a comprehensive review of the development of Kennedy Administration policies on nuclear strategy see Jane E. Stromseth, *The Origins of Flexible Response: NATO's Debate over Strategy in the 1960s* (London, 1988), pp. 26-41; Johannes Steinhoff and Reiner Pommerin, *Strategiewechsel: Bundesrepublik und Nuklearstrategie in der Ära Adenauer-Kennedy* (BadenBaden, 1992), pp. 72-81.

the latter should be given copies of the record of the present discussion". MC 14/2 and MC 48/2 together superseded the four strategic document that had until then been in effect: MC 3/5, MC 14/1, MC 48 and MC 48/1 [Chart 3 traces the evolution of NATO's strategy documents]. The two new strategy documents were issued in final form on 23 May 1957.

### Growing Disenchantment with "Massive Retaliation", 1957-1962

When NATO first began to rely upon U.S. strategic nuclear weapons for the defence of Europe, the territory of the United States was not threatened by nuclear weapons because the Soviet Union did not possess delivery systems with sufficient range to reach the United States. However, the United States' feeling of invulnerability began to diminish as the result of the deployment of Soviet longrange jet bombers in the mid-1950s and was then completely destroyed by the Soviet Union's successful launch of the first artificial earth satellite, Sputnik, in October 1957. If a rocket could boost a satellite into space, it could also be used to hurl nuclear weapons at the United States. Additional Soviet space successes during the next two years were accompanied by boasts of comparable progress in the development of an intercontinental ballistic missile, and soon there were fears that the Soviet Union was leading in this field (the so-called "missile gap" of 1960).

The perceived growth in the Soviet nuclear threat raised fears among the European allies that the United States might not be willing to use its nuclear weapons to defend Europe under all circumstances. All over Europe leaders were beginning to secretly fear that French President Charles de Gaulle might be right in his belief that "No U.S. President will exchange Chicago for Lyon."<sup>(24)</sup>

Concerns about the effectiveness of NATO's nuclear-based strategy began to increase in late 1958, when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev launched the Second

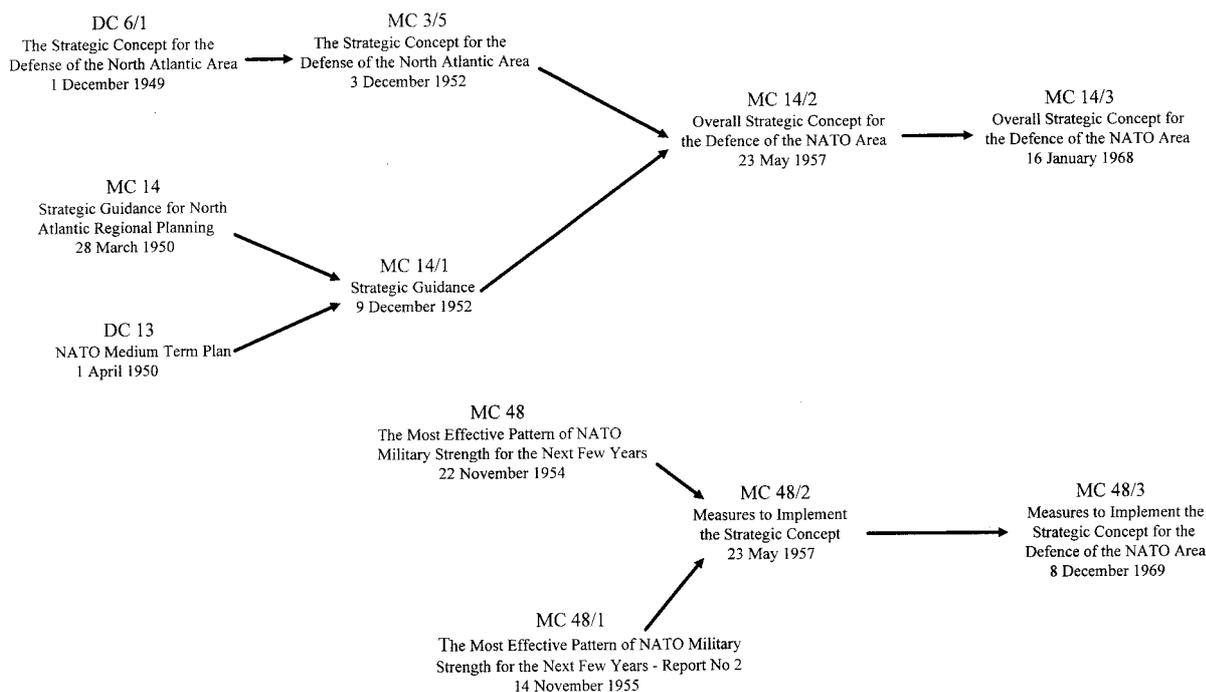
Berlin Crisis by demanding that the Western Allies give up their position in West Berlin. This crisis, which continued off and on until late 1962, raised the question of how the West should respond to Soviet threats below the level of an allout attack. General thermonuclear war did not seem to be the most appropriate response to a limited Soviet move such as blocking access routes to West Berlin, so in early 1959 France, the United Kingdom and the United States set up a tripartite planning staff under the code name "LIVE OAK" to develop a series of contingency plans involving increasing levels of force to deal with possible Soviet moves<sup>(25)</sup>.

Mid-way through the Second Berlin Crisis, in January 1961, the new administration of President John F. Kennedy arrived in Washington. Kennedy was much more concerned about the possibility of limited warfare than an all-out Soviet nuclear attack, and he also worried that war might start by accident or by miscalculation, so he directed his cabinet officials to reappraise U.S. defence strategy. On 20 April 1961 the National Security Council issued a secret policy directive known as National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 40, which set forth U.S. policy toward NATO. In its military section, NSAM 40 stated that the U.S. should urge that "first priority be given, in NATO programs for the European area, to preparing for the more likely contingencies, i.e., those short of nuclear or massive nonnuclear attack". Thus while the Alliance should continue to prepare to meet such an allout threat, these preparations should not "divert needed resources from nonnuclear theater programs to meet lesser threats". NSAM 40 called for the United States to try to implement this new policy within NATO "by a constructive interpretation of existing doctrine"; thus a new doctrine should only be prepared if that would be the only way to mobilise European energies and resources and if agreement on a revision could be reached<sup>(26)</sup>.

A few months later, tension over Berlin increased substantially, particularly after the

## CHART 3

## EVOLUTION OF NATO STRATEGY 1949-1969



<sup>27</sup> Pedlow, "LIVE OAK", pp. 102-103; Sean M. Maloney, "Notfallplanung für Berlin: Vorläufer der Flexible Response, 1958-1963," *Militärsgeschichte, Jahrgang 7, Heft 1* (1992), pp. 913.

<sup>28</sup> Address by Secretary of Defense McNamara at the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Paris, 14 December 1962, in FRUS, 1961-1963, vol. 8, National Security Policy, pp. 440, 445-446.

building of the Berlin Wall in August. Recognising that the tripartite LIVE OAK contingency plans might not be sufficient to deal with a serious escalation of the crisis resulting from a Soviet blockade of West Berlin, NATO also developed a series of Berlin Contingency Plans (BERCONs) that employed even greater levels of force than the tripartite plans, with land operations ranging from one to four divisions. The NATO BERCONs also contained nuclear options such as the use of a small number of low-yield nuclear weapons to demonstrate the West's determination. For the Berlin Crisis, at least, "flexible response" was already a reality by 1962<sup>(27)</sup>.

Just as the Berlin Crisis was beginning to fade away, a new international crisis, - this time over the introduction of Soviet mediumrange ballistic missiles into Cuba - occurred in October 1962. Two months later, while addressing the North Atlantic

Council in Paris, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara stated that during the Cuban Missile Crisis "the forces that were on the cutting edge of action were the non-nuclear ones. Nuclear force was not irrelevant but it was in the background. Non-nuclear forces were our sword, our nuclear forces were our shield." Noting that in the future, Soviet "probes, tests, exploitation of weak spots and efforts to divide" were far more likely than a nuclear attack or even an all-out conventional attack on Western Europe, McNamara argued for a "stronger non-nuclear posture" for NATO<sup>(28)</sup>.

### Initial NATO Discussion of a Change in Strategy

Reacting to the growing U.S. pressure for a modification of NATO's military strategy, the NATO Ministers meeting at Oslo on 8-10 May 1961 "invited the Council in Permanent Session, in close co-operation with the mili-

- 29 *NATO Information Service*, NATO Final Communiqués, 1949-1974, p. 138.
- 30 *Steinhoff and Pommerin*, Strategiewechsel, pp. 92-93.
- 31 *Address by Secretary of Defense McNamara at the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Athens, 5 May 1962*, in FRUS, 1961-1963, vol. 8, National Security Policy, pp. 278, 280281.
- 32 *Paul Buteux*, The Politics of Nuclear Consultation in NATO, 1965-1980 (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 102-103; *Steinhoff and Pommerin*, Strategiewechsel, pp. 100-102; *Circular Telegram from the Department of State, 9 May 1962*, in FRUS, 1961-1963, West Europe and Canada, pp. 389-393.
- 33 *United Kingdom Public Record Office*, DEFE 4/147, COS(62), Chiefs of Staff Committee, 60th Meeting, 2 October 1962, Minute 2, with attached paper JP(62)114(F), NATO Defence Policy - The Stikker Paper, 28 September 1962.
- 34 *Steinhoff and Pommerin*, Strategiewechsel, p. 174.

tary authorities, to continue its studies of all aspects of the military posture of the Alliance, with a view to improving its deterrent and defensive strength"<sup>(29)</sup>. Discussion of nuclear strategy continued at the next Ministerial Session of the North Atlantic Council in December 1961, when US Secretary of Defense McNamara spoke in favor of the need for a strategy of "flexible response", but no consensus was reached<sup>(30)</sup>.

Nuclear strategy was also on the agenda of the Ministerial Session at Athens in May 1962, and Secretary of Defense McNamara once again spoke out on the need for more flexibility in NATO nuclear strategy, warning that "our great nuclear superiority for general war does not solve all our problems of deterring and dealing with less than all-out direct assault." He noted that NATO's tactical weapons help to deter the Soviets from initiating the use of such weapons, but "NATO can no longer expect to avoid nuclear retaliation in the event that it initiates their use. Even a local nuclear exchange could have consequences for Europe that are most painful to contemplate." Noting that "recent events concerning Berlin may provide relevant evidence of the utility of limited but decisive action". McNamara again called for strong non-nuclear forces deployed "where the populations and territories begin"<sup>(31)</sup>.

During the Athens meeting Secretary General Stikker presented his special report on NATO Defence Policy [CM(62)48, 17 April 1962], which focused on the issue of political control of nuclear weapons. The report concluded with recommendations for consultation on the use of nuclear weapons under varying circumstances, with such use being virtually automatic in the event of a Soviet nuclear attack but subject to consultation - if time permitted - in the case of a full-scale Soviet conventional attack. In both cases the NATO nuclear response would be "on the scale appropriate to the circumstances". All of the nations except France, which did not wish to see NATO take any steps away from the policy of massive retaliation,

agreed with the report, which became the "Athens Guidelines" after the Secretary General found compromise wording on the applicability of these Guidelines that was acceptable to France<sup>(32)</sup>.

In September 1962 Secretary General Dirk Stikker circulated a paper on NATO Defence Policy [NDP/62/10, 3 September 1962] calling for an early resumption of the Council's discussion on NATO defence issues, including the deployment of Medium Range Ballistic Missiles in NATO, the possibility of developing a NATO nuclear force and the U.S. proposals for more flexibility in NATO nuclear strategy. The Stikker paper expressed concern that "because the inevitability of escalation of nuclear warfare is often assumed, the idea is being encouraged that no choice is open between conventional defence and all-out nuclear warfare."<sup>(33)</sup> This call for more flexibility was not supported by several NATO nations, and the issue was temporarily set aside due to the pressure of events in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Soon afterward, at the start of 1963, Secretary General Stikker began a major NATO Force Planning Exercise designed to relate strategy, force requirements and the resources that the member nations were able to provide. To provide Strategic guidance for this process, the NAC directed the Military Committee to prepare an "Appreciation of the Military Situation as It Affects NATO up to 1970". When completed in September 1963, this document known as MC 100/1 (Draft) called for a much greater degree of flexibility in Alliance strategy. The document envisioned three stages of defence: an attempt to contain aggression with conventional weapons, a rapid escalation to the use of tactical nuclear weapons under certain circumstances, and a gradual strategic use of nuclear weapons<sup>(34)</sup>.

MC 100/1 (Draft)'s criticism of a trip-wire strategy and its calls for flexibility in NATO's responses to aggression (including the possibility of limited tactical nuclear warfare)

35 *Duffield, Power Rules*, p. 171; *Stromseth, Origins of Flexible Response*, pp. 53-54.

36 *For a recent examination of France's relations with NATO during this period, see Frederic Bozo, La France et l'OTAN: De la guerre froide au nouvel ordre européen (Paris, 1991), pp. 65-91. See also Michael M. Harrison, The Reluctant Ally: France and Atlantic Security (Baltimore, 1981).*

37 *In her recent examination of NATO strategy, Beatrice Heuser characterises MC 14/3 as being a strategy of "Flexible Escalation", because the more commonly used term of "Flexible Response" applies equally well to earlier strategic thinking, including MC 14/2. Heuser, Nuclear Strategies and Forces, p. 53.*

were so far removed from the strategy of massive retaliation that there was no possibility of France accepting it, even with reservations, and several other nations were also uncomfortable with some of its radical concepts, so work on the document and on the entire NATO Force Planning Exercise - ceased in the autumn of 1963<sup>(35)</sup>. At this point the issue of revising NATO strategy faded into the background; there seemed no hope of overcoming French opposition to a change in strategy. Furthermore, U.S. President Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963, and the administration of his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, soon became increasingly preoccupied with the growing U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia. There would be no further progress on revising NATO strategy until after the French government announced its withdrawal from the NATO integrated military structure in March 1966<sup>(36)</sup>.

### Rapid Progress on a New Strategy, 1966-1967

The French withdrawal from the integrated military command structure led to a number of organisational changes within NATO. Of primary importance for the further development of NATO strategy was the decision to give responsibility for all defence matters in which France did not participate to the Defence Planning Committee (DPC), which had originally been established in 1963 to oversee NATO force planning. The DPC was simply the NAC when it was meeting without France on defence issues (thus at Fourteen instead of at Fifteen). With the main opponent of a more flexible strategy no longer present, the process of drafting a new strategy moved forward quickly. On 7 October 1966 an informal session of the Military Committee reassessed the threat facing NATO and re-examined allied strategic objectives region by region. The Military Committee then called for allied flexibility of choice to meet varying contingencies. This recommendation was then discussed at the 12-13 December 1966 meeting of

the Military Committee in Chiefs of Staff Session, which called for the preparation of a new draft document to replace MC 14/2.

Political approval for a new strategy came on 9 May 1967, when the DPC in Ministerial Session issued its Guidance to the NATO Military Authorities. This document (DPC/D(67)23, Decisions of the Defence Planning Committee in Ministerial Session, 11 May 1967) stated that "the overall strategic concept for NATO should be revised to allow NATO a greater flexibility and to provide for the employment as appropriate of one or more of direct defence, deliberate escalation and general nuclear response, thus confronting the enemy with a credible threat of escalation in response to any aggression below the level of a major nuclear attack". Thus the key feature of the new NATO strategy that was evolving in 1967 was not just flexibility, which had already been a feature of earlier NATO strategy documents to some degree, but the idea of escalation, which would be further developed in the new strategy documents, MC 14/3 and MC 48/3<sup>(37)</sup>.

The new draft Strategic Concept, MC 14/3, stressed the need for flexibility: "The deterrent concept of the Alliance is based on a flexibility which will prevent the potential aggressor from predicting with confidence NATO's specific response to aggression and which will lead him to conclude that an unacceptable degree of risk would be involved regardless of the nature of his attack". MC 14/3 then spelled out three types of military responses to aggression against NATO. Direct Defence would attempt to "defeat the aggression on the level at which the enemy chooses to fight". Deliberate Escalation added a series of possible steps "to defeat aggression by raising but where possible controlling, the scope and intensity of combat" with the "threat of nuclear response progressively more imminent. Among the examples given were "broadening or intensifying a non-nuclear engagement, possibly by opening another front or initiating action at sea in response to low-intensity aggression", "demonstrative use of

nuclear weapons", and "selective nuclear strikes on interdiction targets". The "ultimate military response" foreseen by MC 14/3 was General Nuclear Response, which was also seen as the "ultimate deterrent".

On 16 September 1967 the Military Committee in Chiefs of Staff Session approved MC 14/3 ("Overall Strategic Concept for the Defence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Area") and issued it as a Military Decision on 22 September 1967. On 12 December 1967 the DPC in Ministerial Session adopted MC 14/3, and the Final version was issued on 16 January 1968. The DPC noted that the new strategy was intended to reflect the substance and intent of the ministerial guidance of 9 May 1967, and in questions of interpretation, the ministerial guidance must prevail.

The companion document to MC 14/3 was MC 48/3, "Measures to Implement the Strategic Concept for the Defence of the NATO Area". After summarising the essential features of MC 14/3, MC 48/3 described the measures required for defending NATO, including improved intelligence and early warning, prompt coordinated action during the period of warning time, increased readiness, flexibility, offensive capability, improved air defence, immediate reaction and reinforcement forces, mobilization and force expansion and logistics. MC 48/3 then provided an analysis of strategic considerations in the different geographic areas of NATO. On 6 May 1969 the Military Committee approved MC 48/3 as a Military Decision and forwarded it to the Secretary General for submission to the DPC. Approval by the DPC in Ministerial Session followed on 4 December 1969, and MC 48/3 was issued in final form on 8 December 1969.

As a result of the inherent flexibility (both of strategy and of interpretation) in the new doctrine of "Flexible Response", its two basic documents - MC 14/3 and MC 48/3 - remained in effect far longer than any previous NATO strategy documents. It was not until the end of the Cold War

completely changed both the face of Europe and the overall military situation that these two documents were replaced at the end of 1991 by the new NATO strategy, whose far less confrontational nature was symbolised by the fact that the new Strategic Concept for the Alliance was published as an unclassified document.



# DOCUMENTS