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*Mr. Gumbrevé*

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To: Secretary General  
c.o. Deputy Secretary General  
DSG/ASG for Economics and Finance

From: Executive Secretary

MR OZCERI

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Summary Record of a Private Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, 23rd October, 1962, at 11.00 a.m.

BERLIN CONTINGENCY PLANNING

In the light of the reports of US-Soviet conversations made by the United States Representative (x), the BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE asked whether it might not be advisable to postpone discussion of the political aspects of Berlin Contingency Planning to a subsequent meeting.

2. The CHAIRMAN, in reply, thought that a session specially devoted to the political aspects of the question should be held as soon as possible. He pointed out, however, that the time at which this could be arranged would partly depend on the wishes of the Four Powers concerning such a discussion. Meanwhile, the Council should continue its study of the other more strictly technical and military aspects of Berlin Contingency Planning.

3. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that discussion of the technical and military aspects should not exclude discussion of the political aspects. Continuing study of the political situation was necessary, especially in view of the developments communicated to the Council the previous evening.

4. The TURKISH REPRESENTATIVE agreed on the necessity for continuous study of this kind. He went on to recall that, at the meeting the previous evening, Mr. Acheson had, in a reference to Berlin, implied the possibility of a bargain being struck in relation to the Cuban problem. He thought that discussion of such points as they arose would be useful.

5. The NETHERLANDS REPRESENTATIVE, also referring to the meeting of the previous evening, asked whether the United States was in a position to provide clarification on the repercussions

(x) See Private Record of same day on "Reports on various Soviet-American Conversations"

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which were foreseen. He had been struck by the fact that Mr. Acheson had stated that the conversation between President Kennedy and Mr. Gromyko had also touched on the question of Cuba. No indication of this, however, appeared on the report of the conversation just given to the Council by the United States Representative.

6. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE assured the Netherlands Representative that he had read the full text of the telegram he had received concerning the conversation. He could not imagine that such a telegram would omit matters of this nature.

7. The CHAIRMAN suggested that further discussion of matters arising from the meeting of the previous evening might more fruitfully be deferred until the afternoon of Wednesday, 24th October, provided that developments did not render earlier consideration imperative. On this understanding, he proposed that study of the Berlin Contingency Plans be resumed immediately, and accordingly invited Général Guérin (Standing Group Representative) to reply to the question raised by the Canadian Representative in a previous session.

8. General GUERIN made the following statement (x):

"As indicated in the Standing Group appraisal SGA-479-62, selective use of nuclear weapons for demonstration purposes would be primarily political and psychological in nature intended to persuade the Soviets of NATO determination in order to obtain a political decision. They are not currently designed to have significantly military value. However, selective use of nuclear weapons in connection with a particular plan for both demonstration purposes and direct military value, could be an optional course of action. Further the Standing Group has pointed out that in the case of "No Target" demonstration, NATO intentions should be clearly made manifest to the Soviet authorities including the fact that this is a deliberate use and not an error.

Accordingly, the general concept for the selective use of nuclear weapons as expressed in the BERCON B series is as follows:

- BERCON BI provides a "No Target" and to the extent possible a "No Damage" nuclear demonstration detonated over selected areas preferably near military complex. The objective will be to minimise damage to persons and/or property and yet assure that the explosion is seen from the ground.

- BERCON BII consists of an air burst on a military target detonated away from population centres. The strictly military targets include attacking aircraft, airfields, SAM sites, troop concentration, etc.

From an operational view point selective use of tactical nuclear weapons in BERCON plans is covered by specific procedures and constraints which provide for employment of nuclear weapons either singly or in limited numbers, for specific purposes, and in specific areas.

To minimise danger of escalation to general war, SACEUR's policy is to exercise centralised control of nuclear weapons by retaining for himself the sole authority in ACE for directing their employment in conformity with a specific political decision at the time to employ nuclear weapons selectively."

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9. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE thanked the military authorities for their careful consideration of the question raised by his delegation, and requested a written copy of the Standing Group's reply for transmission to his authorities. He went on to say that he wished to make it clear that the question raised by his delegation, and his own subsequent intervention, had been calculated to determine whether this particular measure was appropriate for inclusion in a catalogue of probing measures whose aim was primarily to achieve a political and psychological effect. Was there any assumption that there would be no retaliation in kind? The Council would do well to reflect on this matter before approving the plans. A further question to be settled, as indicated in PO/62/647, was the final form of the action which the Council would take with respect to the Contingency Plans. There had been several suggestions in past sessions to the effect that the Council should approve them in principle, or as a catalogue of possible measures, or take note of them etc. He would be greatly assisted if some indication could be given of the formula which would be finally adopted. As to economic counter-measures, to be discussed on Wednesday, 24th October, he had not yet received any new instructions from his authorities, but had been requested to seek clarification on the links between economic and military counter-measures.

10. With regard to the need for parallel political planning, he recalled that, at the last session, most members of the Council had been faced with the same difficulty of trying to foresee events in their proper perspective. This problem was now complicated by the grave developments in the Cuban affair. There was discussion in press reports of possible diplomatic and political moves. Such moves were relevant to the contingency plans, and should be held under constant review by the Council. He therefore suggested that the Council, when taking its decision on the military plans, should do so against the political back-ground.

11. The FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE welcomed the fact that the Council was pursuing its work as scheduled: it should continue to do so and not be diverted from its goal by Soviet moves. As to the action which it should take with regard to the military plans under consideration, he pointed out that, if an attempt were to be made to approve the BERCONS and MARCONS point by point, he would be instructed by his government to make considerable reservations. It was understood that at all times the governments had the final say concerning the execution or non-execution of the plans. It had been stated that the plans should be regarded as a catalogue of possible measures from which a choice could be made in the light of circumstances. France supported this view. To extract from this catalogue any particular measure would be a tactical error, the consequences of which could be very embarrassing for the Alliance. Secrets could always leak out, and if the Council removed from the catalogue, which it should not approve, the element concerning the selective use of nuclear weapons, the question would be asked if something had occurred to justify such a step. He personally could not see any modification of Mr. Khrushchev's position which could justify such a change of attitude by NATO. France had always found Mr. Khrushchev consistent in his aims, and not at all of the disposition required for negotiating peaceful settlements. He therefore urged once again that the Council pursue its course and avoid giving the Soviet Union the impression that it had taken a step backwards from its previous position.

12. The NETHERLANDS REPRESENTATIVE thought that certain of Canada's hesitations with regard to the selective use of nuclear weapons could be understood by reference to the history of Berlin Contingency Plans. He recalled that the previous year, the Council had discussed the nature of the instructions which it should give to the NATO military authorities for the establishment of the plans. These instructions had included the selective use of nuclear weapons for purposes of demonstration. The military authorities had consequently incorporated this element in their plans. It could be felt that exclusion of the selective use of nuclear weapons from the catalogue might be desirable; however, such a decision was rendered difficult by the emphasis which the military authorities had themselves placed on the political value of this measure. If the Council approved the catalogue of plans with the exception of this measure, it would achieve the opposite of what it had originally intended, i.e. to impress on the Soviet Union the will and determination of the Alliance. He was sure that selective use of nuclear weapons figured in Soviet Berlin Contingency plans; by excluding this element from its own plans, NATO would put itself at an artificial disadvantage. Maintaining this measure in the catalogue did not close the possibility of re-considering in the future the question of its implementation; excluding it from the catalogue would mean that its possible implementation in a Berlin crisis would not be studied and that its effectiveness would be consequently reduced.

13. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE supported the views expressed by the two last speakers. He wished to know whether delegations could still have any doubts with regard to General Guérin's closing statement to the effect that implementation of BERCONS BI and BII would be dependent on a specific political decision at the time. He personally could not see how this could be otherwise in view of the procedures outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of C-M(61)104. BERCONS BI and BII were, like all other plans, subject, so far as their implementation was concerned, to a specific political decision at the time. He agreed with the French Representative on excluding the possibility of studying the merits of each particular plan. This would be irrelevant, since none of the plans was such that its implementation could not be envisaged under any circumstances whatever. With reference to General Guérin's statement, he said that the validity of BERCON BI might possibly be doubted if it was considered as an act to be carried out by NATO in the first instance. However, it was impossible to say in advance that NATO would not resort to this act first in any circumstances. As for BERCON BII, he wished to know whether this would be implemented only in response to a first use by the Soviet Union.

14. General GUERIN replied that the selective use of nuclear weapons under BERCON BII would not be in response to a similar act by the Soviet Union. Its aim was to manifest to the Soviet Union NATO's will and ability to use nuclear weapons if the Soviet Union maintained its conventional attacks. This was in accordance with the provision of paragraph 6 (d) (iii) of C-M(61)104.

15. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE remarked that the provisions of C-M(61)104 were general considerations. It was not his understanding that paragraph 6 (d) (iii) only of the document applied to BERCON BII; paragraph 6 (d) (i) was also applicable. The texts of the BERCON B plans contained no specific mention of paragraph 6 (d)(iii). He understood that the contingency plans

were to be considered as a catalogue of measures which could be used to meet all circumstances. It was therefore incorrect to exclude the possibility of first use by the enemy of nuclear weapons for demonstration purposes. The plans should not be tied to any given state of affairs, but must be meaningful in a whole range of possible conditions, thus allowing a flexibility of response. From this point of view, he supported the French Representative on the need to maintain the catalogue of measures intact, and would hesitate to eliminate any plan as not usable by NATO in any circumstances or to place a restrictive interpretation on its use.

16. The TURKISH REPRESENTATIVE said that he had no specific instructions on the matter, but that he agreed with the French Representative that the Council should not enter into the details of each separate plan. However, he felt that the Council should in some cases know more precisely what was involved, for example, with regard to the question of the transfer of control from the Three Powers to NATO.

17. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE said that he fully shared the views expressed by the French and Netherlands Representatives on the danger of considering the plans in isolation from each other and thus reducing the general effect they were designed to produce. The plans were intended to provide the Supreme Commanders with a wide range of possible actions in accordance with the instructions contained in G-M(61)104. If the Council could not approve the plans, this would mean that it considered the plans to be wrong, or that it wished to go back on its previous decision. He did not feel that either case was true. The main point to decide was whether the plans submitted were responsive to the Council's instructions. If they were found to be responsive, he did not see how they could not be approved. He agreed that it would be dangerous to give the impression, especially in the present circumstances, that NATO was renouncing any possibility of action in the nuclear field. With reference to the statement of the Canadian Representative on the inconsistency of nuclear action of the type envisaged with the character of probing actions in general, he thought that some clarification of terminology was necessary. Probes were much narrower in scope, and would have been exhausted before the larger, expanded plans now under consideration came into play. Paragraph 5 of G-M(61)104 was a broad and satisfactory statement of this idea.

18. In discussing any further whether probes or more serious actions were involved, the Council would be deceiving itself. The concept of giving, by means of such actions, "signals" to the Soviet Union about NATO's further intentions was a more accurate indication of the function of the measures than "probes". If the plans of the NATO military authorities were responsive to the Council's instructions, but some of them were found to raise difficulties, it did not follow that the Council should regard the latter as falling into a different category. The plans formed a catalogue of measures to meet a general situation. He hoped that the Council did not take the view that nuclear action in the case of Berlin was admissible; if this were in fact so, the Council must accept the selective use of nuclear weapons. The catalogue should stand or fall as a whole. To reject or prefer some plans in comparison with others would raise difficulties. The Council should endorse the catalogue, on the understanding that it was not thereby endorsing each individual measure and also that the purpose of the plans was as stated in paragraph 5 of G-M(61)104.

19. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE said that "probe" should be used to describe only those exercises mentioned in paragraph 12 of FO/62/593, i.e. exercises not intended as fighting or war exercises. This interpretation might clarify the issue for the Canadian delegation. To place the BERCON plans in the context of probes would have no meaning.

20. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that Italy's interpretation of the plans corresponded with that of the United States, and that his government could approve the plans. On the other hand, he could understand why Canada sought clarification, and wished to know whether the reply of the Standing Group had given satisfaction. In conclusion, he said that the Council should continually seek to perfect the plans, especially their political aspect.

21. The NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that, like France, his government could not approve point by point the plans submitted by the NATO military authorities. The current military and political situation was dangerous to the survival of the free world, and required calmness on the part of NATO. The selective use of nuclear weapons was a serious question. When the Council had drawn up its instructions to the military authorities, some delegations had already voiced grave doubts on the matter, and these doubts had been confirmed by SACEUR. The declarations of the Standing Group did nothing to weaken these doubts. He agreed with the United States Representative that the plans were a catalogue of measures, and that the BERCON B series should be applicable to all circumstances to allow flexibility. However, he wished to recall that the Council had approved its instructions to the military authorities on the basis of assertions by the United States that nuclear weapons could only be employed when all other means were exhausted. There would not necessarily be time in an emergency for a choice of measures to be made from the catalogue. The last sentence of paragraph 15 c. of SGM-479-62 showed that the military authorities were conscious that the use of nuclear weapons under certain circumstances would go beyond those envisaged in paragraph 6 (d) of C-M(61)104. Could the Council approve plans which went beyond the instructions it had issued? He agreed that the Council must reach a decision and endorse the catalogue of measures, but urged that a formula of approval be found which would not commit NATO to the exercise of responsibilities which might subsequently be regretted.

22. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE was of the opinion that the Norwegian Representative had linked paragraph 15 c. of SGM-479-62 to paragraph 6 (d) (iii) of C-M(61)104, whereas it was relevant to paragraph 6 (d) (ii). If this were borne in mind, it would be seen that the military authorities had not gone beyond their instructions.

23. The NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVE replied that paragraph 15 c. of SGM-479-62 referred only to paragraph 6 (d) of C-M(61)104, which, as a whole, described all the circumstances in which nuclear weapons could be used.

24. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE said that paragraph 15 c. of SGM-479-62 could not be applied to paragraph 6 (d) (i) of C-M(61)104. This left paragraphs 6 (d) (ii) and 6 (d) (iii), between which a distinction must be drawn.

25. General GUERIN read the complete text of paragraph 15 c. of SGM-479-62, whereupon the CHAIRMAN commented that it indicated that the Norwegian Representative had raised a question which was not the same as that of the selective use of nuclear weapons.

26. General GUERIN went on to explain that paragraph 15 c. of SGM-479-62 described two cases in which SACEUR would recommend recourse to nuclear weapons. Of these two cases, that concerning the military need to extricate BERCON forces faced with annihilation corresponded to paragraph 6(d)(ii) of C-M(61)104. The Standing Group was of the opinion that the use of nuclear weapons would go beyond the circumstances envisaged in paragraph 6 (d) in the second case mentioned, i.e. "achievement of the aims of a specific operation which clearly could not be achieved without the use of nuclear weapons".

27. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE pointed out that the basic documents under discussion were C-M(61)104 and the response by the military authorities. In this light, paragraph 15 c. of SGM-479-62 was not to the point. It was merely an indication by SACEUR that he might ask to go beyond the frame of reference supplied by the Council. SACEUR could always make such a request, but whether it was granted or not would always be subject to political decision.

28. General GUERIN said that another point on which the Standing Group had indicated that the selective use of nuclear weapons would go beyond the framework of the Council's instructions concerned self-defence at sea. In this connection, he had received the following message from the Standing Group: (circulated as IO/62/680

"It is understood that, in the consideration of reference documents (x) at the governmental level, some question has been raised over whether North Atlantic Council current action on Berlin Contingency Plans would imply agreement in advance with the judgement expressed by SACEUR in paragraph 8 of enclosure 1 of reference (a) that 'when the decision is taken to execute those naval plans which involve a high risk of reprisal action, authority should simultaneously be delegated to the major Commanders concerned to use tactical nuclear weapons at sea in defence against direct and immediate hostile acts of serious proportions'.

The Standing Group considers that North Atlantic Council current action on references (a) and (c) will not constitute agreement in advance that such authority will necessarily be given to the major NATO commanders simultaneously with a political decision to order execution of a naval action which involves a high risk of reprisal.

The NATO military authorities recognise that the determination of the use of tactical nuclear weapons at sea in close defence is to be a matter of specific political judgement at the time and have set forth their position thereon in paragraph 7 (b) of Enclosure 1 to reference (b) as follows: 'specific political authority to use tactical nuclear weapons at sea, for immediate self-defence, should be considered concurrently with political decisions in those maritime measures containing a high risk of reprisal, since the major NATO commanders have expressed a need for this authority.

(It should be noted by the political authorities that some circumstances of the use of tactical nuclear weapons at sea for immediate self-defence would go beyond those envisaged in paragraph 6 (d) of C-M(61)104 for planned recourse to nuclear weapons".

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(x) (a) SHAPE 70A/62, 24 March, 1962 revised by Corrigendum of 10/9/62.  
 (b) SGM 479-62, 28 August, 1962  
 (c) SACLANT SER/3014/C-982, 15 August, 1962.

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29. The CHAIRMAN said that the Council must try to reach as soon as possible the clearest possible agreement on the military contingency plans. His understanding of the questions which had been raised was that they were designed to make credible the final decision of the Council, both within and outside the Alliance. To examine the plans point by point would require months of study. However, the situation was even more urgent than when the Council had issued its instructions to the military authorities. It was therefore necessary to consider the compromise procedure which had been suggested, namely, that the catalogue of measures should be considered as responsive to the instructions issued. This would prove that the Alliance was not marking time, and allow the military authorities to make their preparations. On the other hand, once a general agreement had been reached on the catalogue, the Council should continue to hold under constant review all elements, and especially the political elements, of the situation. It would be premature to try to determine at the present meeting when the Council would have finished its examination of the plans. However, members should take note of the arguments advanced concerning the need to avoid giving the impression that the Council was moving backwards from its previous position. He thought that the Council must reach a decision in a matter of days, but, to make this decision a credible and responsible one, more time must be allowed for examination and general appreciation of the other aspects of the problem - that was to say, the economic, political and legal aspects and the question of alerts. Another important point to be settled was the establishment of a procedure by which the major NATO Commanders concerned could maintain regular contact with the Council. (See end of paragraph 27 of PO/62/641). He understood that General Guérin had studied this question with SHAPE.

30. General GUERIN said that arrangements were being made for suitable liaison with SHAPE.

31. The BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE asked whether more progress could not be made towards the elaboration of the formula to be adopted by the Council for its final decision on the plans. Once such a formula had been found, the economic and political questions would be easier to resolve.

32. The CHAIRMAN suggested that such a discussion should have as its starting point the text recommended in paragraph 8(b)(i) of PO/62/641, and supported a proposal by the German Representative that this discussion be turned over to a small drafting group.

33. The BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE proposed that those delegations which could not subscribe to the text recommended in paragraphs 8 (b) (i), (ii) and (iii) of PO/62/641 be requested to submit amendments. He himself could approve the proposed text, since it took into account his government's desire to accept the military plans only in a political perspective.

34. The NETHERLANDS REPRESENTATIVE said that, with certain modifications, he could also accept the proposed text.

35. The TURKISH REPRESENTATIVE asked whether the adoption of the proposed text or any other would not depend on clarification being given on the question of the transfer of control to NATO.

36. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that on this question the United States, on behalf of the Three Powers, had made an intervention on the 12th October, the text of which had been distributed to all delegations.

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37. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE agreed that the problem was to find the exact formula of the Council's final approval of the plans, and that this task should be entrusted to a small group. As to the problem of providing the military authorities with a basis for making their preparations, he wished to stress that demonstrative use of nuclear weapons by NATO in the first instance remained the object of a major policy decision.

38. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE concluded from this remark that Canada recognised that there must always be preliminary governmental approval for the implementation of any plans. He went on to say that he could not see in any of the plans presented an element of advance commitment by NATO to use nuclear weapons in the first instance. This question was left open to be decided one way or the other in the light of circumstances.

39. The DANISH REPRESENTATIVE asked when the Council would discuss the paper submitted by the Legal Adviser (PO/62/637), since this matter had a bearing on Denmark's approval of the plans.

40. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the cover note to the document requested governments to send in their views. So far he had received only one comment, and he therefore urged the other delegations to send in their comments at the earliest possible opportunity.

41. The BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that, while accepting the text recommended in paragraph 8 (b) of PO/62/641, he could agree with Canada that the Council had given unfortunate instructions to the military authorities concerning the selective use of nuclear weapons. However, all delegations had now expressed their points of view and it was time to finalise the text of the decision.

42. The GREEK REPRESENTATIVE said that he could accept the text recommended in paragraph 8 (b) of PO/62/641.

43. The FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE commented that NATO was a defensive alliance. He was convinced that all member governments would not resort to the use of nuclear weapons except in the most extreme emergency. To make plans regarding their use should therefore be regarded as a preventive move on the part of the Alliance, designed to convince the Soviet Union that the West was ready for an eventual nuclear conflict if forced to engage in one.

44. The CHAIRMAN said that the suggestion to have a small drafting group to prepare the text of the final decision to be taken by the Council was very useful. The International Staff would contact delegations on this matter.

45. The PORTUGUESE REPRESENTATIVE said that he had no instructions on the matter and that, in view of its importance, he must express a reservation.

46. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that he could agree in principle with the text proposed in paragraph 8 (b) of PO/62/641, and that he would like to have an opportunity to examine any amendments which might be presented.

26th October, 1962