

31st January 1962

Enclosures 1 and 2 to BQD-M-22

There has not been time to make a careful analysis of these two enclosures in relation to the basic paper (BQD-M-22) and the comments submitted on the latter yesterday. A first glance does however call for the following general observations.

(a) There seems a marked tendency on the part of the three Powers if there were a violent reaction to a probe to lower the threshold at which NATO as a whole, rather than the 3 Powers, would assume responsibility for further operations.

(b) The view is reinforced that the separation of responsibility for planning and conducting operations as between the 3 Berlin Powers of the Alliance as a whole is artificial. In fact, this follows automatically from (a).

Enclosure 1. It is difficult to comment on this paper, which in itself is a speculation on different hypotheses. But perhaps the most important point is contained in the last part of paragraph 1, assuming that what is meant is a NATO political decision (as opposed to a tripartite decision) when a small probe had been fired upon. This might be regarded by other non-member countries as some sort of a safeguard against being dragged into a large-scale operation as a result of tripartite initiative without having had a chance for Council consideration. The point is covered generally in BQD-M-22 in the last sentence of paragraph 5b(3)(b) but there may be something to be said for explaining rather more precisely what is meant by this rather obscure phrase.

Much the same considerations apply in the case of Enclosure 2 which deals with air operations, and further elaboration of 5b.(3)(b) last sentence might be desirable in the interests of bringing the Council along in support of the 3 Powers.

In general it is a matter for judgement whether the members of the Council other than the 3 Powers would prefer to become directly involved in political decisions from the very first signs of trouble, or whether they would rather "not know about it" and leave matters in the hands of the 3 Powers until the situation reached a point where the Alliance could no longer ignore its responsibilities.