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REPORT BY THE STANDING GROUP

to the

NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE

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on

Per Authority **IMS M-130-96**

AN ESTIMATE OF THE MILITARY RISK IN 1953 CREUSEM Date 22/1/57

THE PROBLEM

1. To determine the military risk in the event of a war in the NATO area in 1953.

DISCUSSION

2. It is not possible at this stage to forecast the degree of risk entailed by the acceptance of the Force Goals until the pattern and detail of this year's Annual Review become clearer and national comments are incorporated. Therefore, this paper is based on the actual forces now in being.

3. Although there has been considerable progress in the NATO build-up as compared with what was in being when NATO was established, including the addition of Greece and Turkey to the North Atlantic Treaty alliance, there is an apparent tendency emerging from the Annual Review towards a prolongation of the build-up of NATO military strength beyond that proposed at the Lisbon Meeting of the Council. While the necessity for such prolongation does not lie within the province of the Military Committee, it is nevertheless their duty to point out the military risk resulting from any such prolongation.

4. The NATO military build-up is designed to fulfill two purposes: firstly, together with the complementary threat of Allied atomic air bombing, to deter the Soviet from going to war; and secondly, in the event of war, to provide sufficient initial protection

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of the NATO area to enable mobilization and expansion of the overall power of the Treaty nations to take place.

5. It is evident that existing NATO forces cannot, in the event of war, provide an effective defense of Europe; further, they appear to be insufficient to deter the Soviet Bloc from war. The point in the build-up at which our forces become an effective deterrent can only be assessed in conjunction with non-military factors. After this point is reached, the risk of Soviet aggression will decrease in direct proportion to the level reached in the build-up of NATO forces.

6. With respect to the opposing forces it is considered prudent to assume that the Soviet Bloc will be able to carry out a partial and undetected mobilization and redeployment, whereas, on the Allied side, the actual forces in being now represent the bulk of the forces with which a battle in 1953 would be fought, even with some prior warning of attack.

7. The land and supporting air forces now available, even when assessed in conjunction with the effects of new weapons, indicate that significant territorial losses in all theaters must be expected. It is highly problematical whether land and tactical air forces of the size now available could retain their integrity. Although in certain cases they may be able to consolidate positions on major natural defensive barriers, nevertheless, reverses would probably occur in certain cases and later withdrawals then become inevitable.

8. The naval forces which are now available to NATO would probably prove inadequate to counter the threat to sea communications which Soviet naval or air forces could exert without any preliminary mobilization. There is, therefore, a real danger that shipping might be lost at a rate which, over a period of time, would be unacceptably heavy, and that the flow of supplies and the flank support of the land forces would be jeopardized.

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9. In general, the air forces which are now available would be insufficient to meet all demands. In addition to the shortage of tactical air forces to support land operations, there would also be a deficiency in the air defense forces and it is probable that Soviet strategic air operations would meet with some success, and that losses of and damage to both civilian and military installations must be expected. Furthermore, in building up the front-line squadrons, the air forces will be without reserves so that our air strength will be a diminishing asset dependent for its survival on maintaining a superior attrition rate over the enemy air forces. On the other hand, Allied strategic air forces would be able to initiate offensive operations and it is considered that in this field of operations the advantage will continue to lie with the Allies at least through 1954.

10. While we must continue to adhere to the "forward strategy" the fact must be faced that forces of the order now existing are not sufficient to execute that strategy. Specifically, if war should come in 1953, we may have to face the loss of substantial areas to enemy invasion and considerable devastation from air attack together with losses in shipping and closure of ports which might jeopardize the support of the military forces and the sustenance of the civilian populations.

11. Although the 1953 force goals are not yet firmly established, the annual review, at its present stage, shows clearly that the size of forces will not significantly be increased during 1953. Furthermore, forces available in 1953 will not include any German contribution, although such a contribution has been accepted as being necessary for the implementation of the "forward strategy".

CONCLUSIONS

12. It is therefore concluded that:

a. Although significant progress in the military build-up

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has been achieved since the creation of NATO, current achievements do not provide forces sufficient for the security of the NATO area.

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b. Any slackening in the rate of build-up planned at Lisbon will involve a further continuation of this existing insecurity of NATO.

c. Any presently planned force goals should not, therefore, be considered as an end in themselves, but only as steps toward the realization of the forces necessary for the effective security for the Allies. They should be related to the build-up as a whole.

d. The above conclusions emphasize the essential need:

(1) For continuing the implementation of the plans of force build-up.

(2) For an early German contribution to the defense, if the "forward strategy" is to be implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. It is recommended that the Military Committee approve this report and transmit it to the North Atlantic Council.

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