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Standing Group

Groupe Permanent

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SGM-1546-53

Per Authority IMSM-431-99

13 October 1953

By IAC/DARE... Date 15-11-94

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER EUROPE

SUBJECT: Supplementary Planning Project

Reference: AG 1220 SAC, dated 24 September 1953  
(SGM-1456-53)

Attached for your information are three copies of a memorandum summarising your informal discussion on the 9th October 1953, with the Standing Group on the paper at reference above.

FOR THE STANDING GROUP:

W. F. LAMB  
Gp. Capt., RAF  
Deputy Secretary

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9 October 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

The Standing Group held an informal meeting with SACEUR at 11:30 on Friday, 9 October. The discussion dealt with SACEUR's proposal for a supplementary planning project (AG 1220 SAC dated 24 September, circulated under SGM-1456-53 dated 28 September). The following is a summary record of the discussion.

1. General Gruenther outlined the background to SHAPE's proposal. Up to the present there have been two types of plan:

- a. The Emergency Plan
- b. The Requirements Plan.

The latter however was open to criticism in that it was necessarily somewhat divorced from reality. SHAPE 704/53 had been subjected to similar criticism in that it was a requirements study based on new weapons possibly available in 1956 and it was questionable whether the forces indicated as a result would ever be available. SHAPE therefore considered that there was a requirement for a longer range capabilities plan than that provided by the Emergency Plan. The basic objective of this would be to apply the factor of new weapons to forces more likely to be attainable than those produced by SHAPE 704.

This would involve making assumptions on Strategic Objectives and on the effect which might be anticipated from Strategic Air Action, on which at present SHAPE had little information. As a result it should be possible to outline a Strategic Concept for Allied Command Europe and propose any modifications which might appear desirable in the composition of national forces.

SHAPE proposed to start work on this paper at once but felt that it should be regarded purely as a working paper

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on which criticism would be welcome. Any comments which the Standing Group might have would perhaps best be made informally and he did not feel that at this stage official national positions need be taken up. He suggested that, if necessary, staff officers or a team from the Standing Group might be sent to SHAPE to discuss the matter or vice versa.

2. General Valluy stressed, and there was general agreement that SHAPE could not complete this task alone. The Standing Group and SHAPE must work together on these problems, SHAPE dealing with the operational aspect and the Standing Group with the politico-military.

It would however be some time before the Standing Group could come to a conclusion on these matters, since it would be essential first to know what resources were likely to be available and this would not be until the present Annual Review had been concluded. In addition it would be essential to have the minimum necessary information on the capabilities of the Strategic Air Force and New Weapons. Methods to be employed in this connection were of less importance than the effect which might be anticipated from their employment. Only the United States could decide what information could be made available and when, and this would be passed to SACEUR through the Standing Group.

3. In reply to a question by Admiral Davis as to how SHAPE would propose to estimate future availabilities of forces, General Gruenther replied that in order to get ahead with the task, SHAPE proposed to make the best guess they could based on their experience in the Annual Review. Nations could not be expected even to make a guess on availabilities more than one or two years ahead lest any forecast be taken as a commitment.

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In cases where figures for 1956 were given in the Annual Review SHAPE would probably apply those to 1957, but present indications were that most countries did not wish to give figures so far ahead.

4. General Collins referred to para 5 a of AG 1220 (SAC) and asked whether the "right combination of forces" referred to therein was applicable to requirements or availabilities.

General Gruenther replied that basically these would be estimated availabilities, but might include certain recommendations reflecting requirements, e.g., if some comparatively small increase or adjustment in forces would make important differences in the Strategic Objectives which might be attained, recommendations for these increases or adjustments would be made. SHAPE recognized, however, that in an Alliance it was not possible to have progressive strategic objectives and that there was no alternative to a Strategic Concept which involved holding all the territory of all nations in the Alliance.

SHAPE's study would not therefore lead to a modification of the Strategic Concept but had as its objective to continue to fulfill the same basic mission with the forces likely to be available, subject, however, to recommendations for increases or modifications where these appear essential.

5. Admiral Davis felt that the implications of SACEUR's proposal must be considered:-

a. On the mission assigned to SACEUR's Forces. Would the initiation of such planning raise any question of modification of the Strategic Concept?

b. On the relationship of NATO to global strategic questions since NATO and non-NATO forces were referred to.

c. On Force Requirements. Would the fact that this plan would be based on future availabilities give rise to

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the impression that Force Requirements were being discounted? Any hint of this reaching the political level might have unfortunate consequences.

6. General Collins considered that the Standing Group should not exclude reconsideration of SACEUR's basic objectives, nor reconsideration of the future status of Force Requirements.

General Gruenther agreed that the initiation of this planning would have some effect on force requirements but questioned whether these were not out-dated already.

7. With regard to the impact which this might have on the political level, it was agreed that the danger of this should not really arise until SHAPE's plan had been submitted to the Standing Group. Meanwhile approval to proceed with this planning was not necessary and SACEUR had both full authority and indeed the obligation to initiate it.

8. Summing up the discussion, General Collins stressed that he considered that the Standing Group should in future take a more active part in planning of this nature with the object of assisting Supreme Allied Commanders in obtaining the guidance they required and of putting forward their views to the political leaders who were responsible for decisions.

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