

NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE

COMITE MILITAIRE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

Standing Group

Groupe Permanent

SGM-675-55

12 September 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER ATLANTIC

SUBJECT: Phonetic Alphabet for NATO Use

References: a. SACLANT Ser 876 of 21 Jul 55  
b. SGM-217-55

1. With one exception, ("N") which is now being resolved, the alphabet contained in reference b is the same as that now under consideration for adoption by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). It is known that the latter has been prepared only after the most exhaustive tests on a scientific basis by several nations. One of the firmest conclusions reached was that it was not practical to make an isolated change to clear confusion between one pair of letters. To change one word involves reconsideration of the whole alphabet to ensure that the change proposed to clear one confusion does not itself introduce others.

2. A change to the alphabet is therefore a considerable undertaking and would delay the introduction of a common NATO alphabet which has so long been desired. It might also result in losing the advantage of uniformity between the NATO military and a major international civil organization which is on the point of being achieved.

3. You are therefore requested to reconsider the desirability of pressing your point at this time. It is noted that your objection to the ZERO/SIERRA combination is, in part, met by the procedure detailed in ACP 125 paragraph 105 a for the use of the proword "FIGURES".

FOR THE STANDING GROUP:



C. H. SAMPSON  
Commander, USN  
Deputy Secretary

IMS Control N° ...0396

DISTR: A1-6,10,11,13,16; E1,2,3; G

UNCLASSIFIED - NATO

SGM-675-55

DECLASSIFIED-PUBLIC DISCLOSURE IMSM-0431-99 DECLASSIFIE-MISE EN LECTURE PUBLIQUE

312.76

See 1