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NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE
COMITE MILITAIRE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

Standing Group

Groupe Permanent

NATO
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SGWM-666-55

23 November 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: War Reserve Stock Levels

Reference: LOSTAN 1443 (DA IN 177297 - 29 Oct 55)

1. By the above reference the Standing Group Liaison Officer refers to various questions which have arisen in the International Staff concerning validity of current planning factors for war reserve stock levels.

2. The International Planning Team considers that the Major NATO Commanders should be informed of the type of questions being raised and the Standing Group's answers.

3. The International Planning Team recommends that the Steering Committee:

a. Approve Enclosure "A" which provides guidance for the Standing Group Liaison Officer on this matter.

b. Approve Enclosure "B" which informs the Major NATO Commanders of the questions being raised and of the Standing Group views.

4. It is suggested that this paper be discussed at the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

R.A. Pigot

R. A. PIGOT
Deputy Secretary

NATO
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(IPT: Lt.Col. Enfru, Wg.Cdr. Newman, Col. Rudell)

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By *JER* Date *31 Jan 66*

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NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE

COMITE MILITAIRE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE STANDING GROUP LIAISON OFFICER

SUBJECT: War Reserve Stock Levels

1. During the course of the 1955 Annual Review questions regarding the validity of reserve stocks to cover the first 90 days of war were raised. These matters were considered during the preparation of M.C. 48, M.C. 48/1 and the new draft document on Military Planning Factors, M.C. 55.

2. The Standing Group is of the opinion that the planning factor for war reserve stock levels to cover the first 90 days of war is more valid than ever today as a minimum requirement. SGWM-657-55 again emphasizes the need for properly equipped land, sea and air forces. Without adequate supplies these forces could not carry out the mission which will be assigned to them. In discussing factors determining naval force composition for NATO, M.C. 48 states "the damage inflicted (by the enemy) may well be so great that in the early stages of a war seaborne supplies may well have to be largely handled through secondary harbors and over bridges. This would greatly reduce the total tonnage that could be properly handled." The question of wartime resupply is one of the major problems in NATO today. With sources of supply, port capacity and lines of communication likely to be drastically reduced during the first phase, it is considered essential to have a minimum of 90 days stocks readily available with which to fight until flow of supplies can be re-established. In this connection, foreseen conditions indicate that it will be extremely difficult to re-establish normal supply systems within the first 90 days of a war.

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3. In the draft M.C. 55 no distinction is made which separates the requirement for war reserves of aircraft from that of other types of equipment. However, the Standing Group recognizes that the question of war reserves of aircraft is intricately bound up with factors of attrition rates, quality versus quantity, etc. Experience has shown that while bombs, POL and other supplies are changed qualitatively only at infrequent intervals, combat aircraft are undergoing an almost day-by-day modernization program. Even aircraft in tactical units are continually being improved to make them more effective. Aircraft taken from storage may require extensive modification to bring them up to date before they could be used. While the NATO military would welcome aircraft reserves, the current problem is to attain agreed force levels.

4. In covering the attrition rates for Air Forces, M.C. 55 recognizes the difficulty in establishing attrition rates covering all areas and agrees that rates established by the Major NATO military authority concerned, in agreement with appropriate national authority, should be used. It may be true that in some areas the numbers of front-line aircraft might be drastically reduced through attrition, however, the intensive atomic exchange visualized in the initial phase of war might also destroy some war reserve stocks. Reserve stocks must, however, be held to allow those aircraft not damaged or destroyed to continue to operate.

5. The Standing Group has also to consider the inherent flexibility of air power. It is practically impossible to forecast the detailed paths of any war or forecast the areas which will suffer the most losses. Recently a complete unit of jet fighters flew non-stop from England to central United States in less than twelve hours. There are no areas in NATO Europe more than a few hours jet time apart - for the aircraft - but the POL and other supplies must be available. The ability to reinforce from one area

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to another will be greatly enhanced if there are stocks of POL, ammunition, etc., immediately available to reinforcing units instead of having to wait for the establishment of supply lines.

FOR THE STANDING GROUP:

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ENCLOSURE "B"

NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE

COMITE MILITAIRE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Supreme Allied Commander Europe
The Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic
The Channel Committee

SUBJECT: War Reserve Stock Levels

1. The Standing Group Liaison Officer, in LOSTAN 1443, has brought the attention of the Standing Group to various questions concerning war reserve stock levels which have been raised in the course of the Annual Review procedure. Questions of the type contained therein and questions concerning such things as the necessity for conventional forces will undoubtedly arise in the forthcoming December Ministerial Meeting. The Standing Group considers that you should be aware of its position in support of the war reserve levels as contained in SGM- -55* and on the need for conventional forces as contained in SGM- -55, copies of which are being forwarded to you separately.

2. LOSTAN 1443 has been passed to you by the Standing Group.

FOR THE STANDING GROUP:

Copy to: SGLO

* Enclosure "A"

*not to be sent
5 copies
24/11/55
30/11/55*

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Enclosure "B"

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