

SECRET - NATOCOPY NO. 1

NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE
COMITE MILITAIRE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

Standing Group

Groupe Permanent

SGWM-111-56

6 February 1956

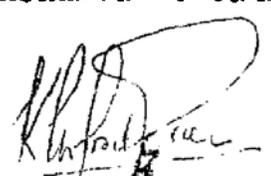
MEMORANDUM FOR THE STANDING GROUP

SUBJECT: 1956 NATO Common Infrastructure Program

References: a. LMP 21/250/D
b. LMP 21/251/D
c. USM-16-56
d. SHAPTO 1086

1. In connection with the processing of SACEUR's and SACLANT's proposed 1956 Infrastructure Programs, forwarded under references a and b, the United States Representative has drawn attention in his Memorandum of reference c, to differences which exist in National views concerning certain recommendations made by SACEUR in the signal of reference d.

2. A copy of this Memorandum is attached and will be considered at the next Meeting of the Standing Group scheduled to take place on 7 February.



K. G. COMERFORD-GREEM
Assistant Secretary

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of the airfields in Germany must be resolved so that the 1956 program can be presented to the Council as a whole representing an integrated statement of military requirements for the support of NATO objectives, plans and policies. If this is not done at once there is danger of loss of part of the 1956 construction season. Further, I am mindful of the time that may be required for the Council to arrange for the financing of these requirements. There is also to be considered the effect which those financial arrangements might have on the programming by Germany of all other elements of their forces buildup. All these are powerful reasons for an urgent resolution of the question. In this connection, you will recall that the Standing Group Liaison Officer (SGLO) has, in two signals since our receipt of SACFUR's recommendation, urged that our comment be expedited.

6. I am also concerned over the damage to the prestige of the Standing Group that could result from failure to agree on a recommendation for the Council in this matter, or, even more, from a recommendation inconsistent with military principles. The responsibility of the Standing Group in the processing of infrastructure programs is clearly stated in ref. b. It is "to review from the point of view of military necessity and adequacy the programs submitted by the Supreme Commanders in order to decide on the combined NATO common infrastructure program they will ask the Council to approve." I consider that, from the military point of view, the Standing Group should support SACFUR's recommendation.

7. While we would be less than realistic if we did not take into account the difficulties of time and finance on which the UK proposal is based, nevertheless a Standing Group position must be, first and foremost a statement of the military view. All the studies we have made on a proper military posture in the face of Soviet nuclear capabilities point to the necessity for greater dispersal of NATO forces. The keynote of M.C. 43 was dispersal. SACFUR's study on deployment and operation of air force units, which the Standing Group now has under review, emphasizes the need for greater dispersal. Even before we had received that study, in an effort to conserve resources which might be used to achieve greater dispersal, the Standing Group recommended and the Council agreed that construction of wing main airfields, as such, should be suspended. Surely all military considerations are against any further concentration of air force units and particularly so in NATO's Central European salient in Germany. Again, and still from the military viewpoint, it would appear that we should take advantage of the fact that the German Air Force is being newly formed,

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and should encourage the dispersal that is so militarily desirable where it will not be impeded by a necessity to reorganize units and change established methods of control and support.

8. Aside from military considerations, the United States does not share the UK doubt that the twenty-five airfields recommended by SACBUR could be provided in time. It may well be that full agreement on financing infrastructure in Germany may take considerable time. The Council has never, however, failed to find means to provide the facilities urgently required. In this case I am confident that the Council will fully appreciate the time element involved, and will adopt some measure to avoid delays. With respect to German construction capability it should be noted that previous construction programs in Germany have been carried out without undue delays, and in this case the Germans might reasonably be expected to find added incentive to expedite construction of airfields for their own forces. Germany was consulted by SACBUR on the twenty-five airfield program and concurred in its desirability and feasibility. In the past the greatest single source of delay has been in land acquisition. In this case, I understand that over 95% of the land has already been acquired.

9. In view of the importance and urgency of this problem, it is requested that it be brought before the Standing Group as soon as is practicable. For the reasons stated above the US strongly recommends that the Standing Group support SACBUR's proposal set out in ref. a.


J. LAWTON COLLINS
General, U.S. Army

Copy to:
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