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CIVIL DEFENCE COMMITTEE

CO-ORDINATION OF CIVIL DEFENCE RADIO FREQUENCIES

Comments by the French Delegation
on AC/23(CD)D/99

The body and conclusions of the above document take no account of the positions previously taken up by the Brussels Treaty Organization.

2. In 1953, the Secretariat of the latter circulated, under reference A. 1898, proposals by the French Delegation, covering in particular the matter of frequency co-ordination with a view to the continued use of equipment already in service. The various member countries (United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Belgium, Netherlands) gave an agreement of principle.

3. It is therefore felt that the NATO Civil Defence Committee Secretariat should apply itself to the solution of purely technical problems still outstanding rather than to re-examination of questions of principle.

4. The French authorities can therefore not consider discussing point by point the document circulated on 7th January 1955.

5. However, they cannot regard protection against possibilities of interference in the VHF field as a formality, nor agree that the advantages of using common frequencies for Civil Defence purposes are dependent upon a co-ordinated plan for telecommunications as a whole.

6. Paragraph 4 states that "it is clear that what the meeting was seeking was some international body who would co-ordinate the internal civil use of specific frequency channels in individual countries - at least in the European ITU Region. In fact, no such body exists".

7. But for the Civil Defence authorities, co-ordination can only apply to their own frequencies and they must disregard all problems facing civilian services not concerned with Civil Defence.

8. Viewed from this more realistic angle, there would appear to be no particular difficulty with regard to the designation of the appropriate body.

9. There is a major difference between Civil Defence transmissions and other civilian transmissions in that the former must function in wartime, which means taking into consideration the extensive use which will be made by the military of most portions of the radio-frequency spectrum.

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10. Strictly speaking, the European Radio Frequency Agency (ERFA) is not responsible for co-ordinating civilian plans for the peacetime use of frequencies in NATO countries. It does, however, take account of civilian usage in military planning for wartime and when, in peacetime, the frequencies to be used by the NATO civilian services in wartime are arranged, it states whether these frequencies are likely to disturb, or be disturbed by, existing military transmission facilities.

11. Thus, although ERFA is not an authority, it is at least a body in a position to make reasoned recommendations on any frequency allocations envisaged by NATO countries in peacetime or in wartime, mainly because of its frequency index system and the records which it has accumulated over a number of years.

12. ERFA is therefore a body with whom close co-operation is essential for the drawing up of practical wartime tele-communications plans.

13. Although the co-ordination which can be achieved by ERFA does not extend to non-NATO countries, there would appear to be no real reason why an agreement on Civil Defence, sponsored by NATO, should not embrace non-NATO countries.

14. It will, moreover, be recalled that at its plenary meetings of 2nd and 3rd December 1952, ERFA discussed Civil Defence frequency requirements and that all members representing Continental European countries signified their agreement.

15. In conclusion, the French authorities are convinced of the necessity of continuing the study of this question with a view to designating a body (possibly ERFA) qualified to allocate, within the framework of NATO, a frequency band reserved for the wartime use of the Civil Defence services of member countries in the European area.

Palais de Chaillot,
Paris, XVIIe.