

CONSEIL DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD
NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

EXEMPLAIRE
COPY

N°

61

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH
13th June, 1955

NATO SECRET
DOCUMENT
AC/23(CD)D/109

CIVIL DEFENCE COMMITTEE

THE APPLICATION OF THE NEW ASSUMPTIONS TO THE
WORK OF THE EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEES*

Note by the Secretary

At their meeting on 26th May 1955**, the Council:

- (1) approved the attached paper as guidance for the future work of the committees concerned;
- (2) agreed that the emergency planning committees should proceed henceforth on the assumption that nuclear weapons would be used as described in C-M(55)8*** and paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the attached paper;
- (3) requested the emergency planning committees to make recommendations by 1st October, 1955, regarding the effect of the new assumptions on their current work.

(Signed) P. ANNINOS

Palais de Chaillot,
Paris, XVIe.

* This paper was previously circulated as C-M(55)48(Final) of 27th May, 1955.

** C-R(55)23

*** C-M(55)8 is reproduced as an annex to this document

NATO SECRET

CIVIL EMERGENCY PLANNING -
THE EFFECTS OF THERMO-NUCLEAR WARFARE

INTRODUCTION

The Council has adopted the assumptions set out in C-M(55)8. These assumptions are that on the outbreak of hostilities the enemy will launch thermo-nuclear attacks with first priority against allied atomic production and delivery capabilities. Other priority targets would be:

- allied centres of government;
- industrial and communication centres directly supporting the war effort;
- the major port complexes;
- major centres of population, the destruction of which would be likely to have the most serious effects on the war effort and particularly on civilian morale.

To mitigate the effects of these attacks, it is essential to take a certain number of preparatory measures in peacetime.

2. It is emphasised that thermo-nuclear weapons can create destruction and chaos on a scale exceeding anything hitherto contemplated. And it is considered that the first thirty days of war will be the most critical period and it is possible that the heaviest attacks will be concentrated in the first three or four days of war.

3. The assumptions adopted by the Council are stated in very general terms. But it is impossible at the present time to set them out any more precisely. Moreover, the studies envisaged do not call for such great precision, as clearly emerges from the survey which follows. Every country will have to interpret the agreed assumptions to fit its own particular circumstances and take preparatory measures accordingly.

4. National authorities and the NATO committees concerned are invited to give particular attention to certain assumptions which were accepted by the Council regarding the length and nature of a nuclear war. The views expressed by the military authorities, and accepted by the Council, envisage an initial period of violent nuclear attack but do not suggest that hostilities will be limited to this phase. They do suggest, however, that ability to defeat the enemy is dependent on ability to survive and gain superiority in the initial phase. Committees should, therefore, base their planning on the assumption that a future war would comprise:

- (a) the initial period referred to above;
- (b) a subsequent period of hostilities, in which the possibility exists of nuclear attacks, though less concentrated and violent than during the initial phase.

5. While priority should henceforth be given in NATO planning to studies of the measures needed to meet nuclear attacks in the initial phase, the Council believe that such planning should

take into account a subsequent period of hostilities as described in paragraph 4 (b). In that respect it will be useful to develop some of the studies already initiated by the Emergency Planning Committees.

6. The Council recognise that there must be flexibility in deciding how the new assumptions should be applied to the work of the Committees concerned, and that NATO planning must take account of the possibility that the situation in a nuclear war will develop differently in some regions from others.

THE NEED FOR PREPARATORY MEASURES

7. From the NATO standpoint, the need for such planning is self-evident since it is essential to ensure:

- (a) that the precautions taken by each nation will enable it to survive the initial period of total war, so as to avoid the loss to the Alliance of one of its members;
- (b) that the manpower potential on which the strength of NATO rests will be preserved and maintain its morale at the highest pitch;
- (c) that the industrial capacity of NATO will be maintained and so organised as to obtain the maximum possible production under the conditions described in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 above.

THE PURPOSE OF EMERGENCY PLANNING

8. The various NATO committees are therefore invited to study as early as possible the preparations which each government should make for dealing with situations arising out of the assumptions adopted.

This emergency planning, as regards the first thirty days of war, should be directed at ensuring the survival of the nations against which an attack is launched and their ability to bring their maximum contribution to the war effort. For this reason plans covering this period should subordinate everything to the maintenance in working order of the governmental and administrative machinery and to the preservation of human lives and tolerable living conditions in order to be able to take rapidly the action necessary for the war effort.

9. Both these aspects of the question, maintenance of the authority of the government and the preservation of human life, are dealt with in greater detail hereunder. The problems to be tackled are to a great extent inter-related, as will be seen, the links between them being both direct and indirect. As a result, if their work is to be effective, the various national services concerned within each country must first establish and maintain close and frequent contacts with each other; then, in order that NATO as a whole benefit from the studies of each country, each committee must examine national plans which concern it, and the closest contact must be maintained between the various committees themselves during this examination.

Maintenance of the authority of the government

10. Under this heading, each government should, without delay,

instruct its services responsible for emergency planning, to study questions such as:

- (a) legislative arrangements necessary to secure continuity of governmental action;
- (b) plans for the possible transfer of the government to a less exposed area;
- (c) arrangements for decentralising the essential public administrative services and defining the powers which would have to be delegated to regional and local authorities;
- (d) arrangements for establishing and maintaining contact and communications between the government, the central administrative services and the local and regional authorities;
- (e) arrangements for maintaining law and order, preventing confusion and panic, and keeping up public morale;
- (f) measures to check subversive (sabotage) activities carried out at the instigation or with the encouragement of the enemy;
- (g) arrangements to establish close liaison, particularly in respect of (e) and (f) above, between the civilian and the military authorities.

Preservation of human life

11. Under this heading, preparatory measures must cover not only the saving of lives but also the maintenance of tolerable living conditions. Each nation should see that the following points are studied in particular:

- (a) Measures applicable to the national territory as a whole:
 - essential public utilities: water, gas, electricity, sewage, etc.
 - storage, protection and distribution of essential food products, emergency cooking facilities;
 - inland transport facilities with particular attention to vital rail, roads and waterways;
 - supply of commodities (solid and liquid fuels for instance) necessary for the operation of essential services (transport, electricity, etc.);
 - port emergency facilities;
 - stockpiling of medical and pharmaceutical supplies;
 - arrangements for the maintenance of hospital and health services.

(b) Measures particularly applicable to probable target areas:

- protection of the population by means of pre-attack evacuation, dispersal (where practical) and shelters;
- organization and deployment of fully trained civil defence services including fire, medical, welfare, equipped with the necessary personnel, equipment and stocks.

METHOD OF WORK

At the national level

12. As already stated in paragraph 9 above, the study of the different problems cited will necessitate close co-operation in each country between the national services concerned. This might imply the setting up in each country of a co-ordinating agency to be responsible for national emergency planning (if one does not already exist).

13. At the end of these national consultations, the representatives on the different committees should be expected to be in a position to formulate the views of their governments on the major problems encountered by each committee.

At the international level

14. Preliminary discussions within each committee of their programme of work and of the implications of the new assumptions have already started on the basis of C-M(55)8. But the present document should help these committees in carrying out further their study of the problem.

15. In addition, the services of the Senior Civil Defence Adviser are at the disposal of all Committees. To assist him in his work, which now includes advice over a considerable field on the Civil planning work of NATO and on certain matters to NATO military authorities the Council have agreed that it is important for him to have scientific and technical advice from time to time. Member countries have agreed accordingly, subject to any national security requirements, to give all possible assistance in this field.

16. The Council have agreed that each committee should forthwith review its present programme of work in the light of the assumptions set out in C-M(55)8 and in this memorandum. The object of this review is to recommend for the Council's decision which current projects of each committee should be abandoned; which should be amended and, if so, how; and which should be continued in their present form.

17. The International Staff will circulate, for the information of the committees concerned with Emergency Planning, a note containing a summary of their current activities. It is hoped that this will assist the committees to make their recommendations to the Council by 1st October 1955. The Council have emphasised that this review of current work should not interfere with the programme to be started forthwith whereby each is to report on its initial study of the application of the new assumptions to its field of work.

18. As an interim measure, to assist committees in the co-ordination of these reports or of any other emergency planning matters, the Council have instructed the International Staff to arrange for a further meeting of the Chairmen of the various planning committees. National representatives will also be invited to attend this meeting, and it is hoped that, insofar as possible, officials in charge of national co-ordinating agencies (see paragraph 12 above) will be present.

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FURTHER ASSUMPTIONS FOR CIVIL EMERGENCY PLANNING(2)

Note by the Secretary General and Vice-Chairman
of the Council

The various Council Committees studying questions of supply and transport in time of war have adopted as a basis for their work certain assumptions which were first formulated in 1950.⁽¹⁾ These assumptions were drawn up to cover a possible war in which nuclear weapons would not be employed.

2. These studies relate mainly to the support of a prolonged war effort, and it seems quite appropriate that work in this regard should go forward. At the same time it would seem desirable for all committees engaged in civil emergency planning to undertake another series of studies on the basis of assumptions which are more consistent with the line established in MC.48(Final). These would take into account the possible effects of the use of nuclear weapons in the first days or weeks of a future war. Even if such assumptions have to be somewhat vague, the ensuing studies would provide member governments with a clear idea of additional readiness measures which would serve to diminish losses in the civil economy and population, as well as in the armed forces, and to provide the least unfavourable conditions for the subsequent period of readjustment.

3. I therefore suggest that the Council should direct the appropriate Committees in the field of civil emergency planning to assume in their further work, in addition to the assumptions already in use, that from the outset of hostilities the enemy, without prejudice to their use of conventional weapons, will launch nuclear attacks with first priority against allied atomic production and delivery capabilities. Other priority targets would be allied centres of government, industrial and communication centres directly supporting the war effort, the major port complexes and centres of population, the destruction of which would be likely to have the most serious effects on the war effort and particularly on civilian morale.

4. For the purpose of NATO planning in this field it does not seem necessary to make precise assumptions about the weight of attack or targets to be attacked, but rather to consider, as a first step, what kind of planning should be undertaken in peacetime on the understanding that atomic attacks may be made on centres of civilian population.

5. Without prejudging the total length of the war and without prejudice to measures which would be needed for a prolonged war effort, these studies should, in the first place, cover peacetime readiness and other measures related to the first 30 days of war, which is considered to be the most critical period. It is, moreover, possible that the heaviest attacks would be concentrated in the first three or four days.

(1) Annex III of SPB/6/50 dated 30th June 1950
(2) Previously circulated as C-M(55)8 of 19th January 1955

6. If the assumptions set out in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 find favour with the Council, the Council may also wish to consider inviting all of these Committees to plan their further work in such a way that a co-ordinated report on progress achieved in this field would be presented to the Council by approximately April, 1956. This would apply, in the transport field, to the Planning Board for Ocean Shipping and to the Planning Board for European Inland Surface Transport; in the commodity field, to the Committee on Maritime Commodity Problems, the Industrial Raw Materials Planning Committee, the Food and Agricultural Planning Committee, the Coal and Steel Planning Committee and the Petroleum Planning Committee; in the civil field, to the Committee on Civil Organization in Time of War, the Civil Defence Committee, the Committee on Refugees and Evacuees, the Medical Committee and the Expert Working Group on Manpower; and in the production field, the Defence Production Committee.

7. The Council is accordingly invited:

- (a) to adopt the planning assumptions outlined in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 above;
- (b) to instruct the committees concerned, as mentioned in paragraph 6, to use these new assumptions, in addition to their present ones, in their future work;
- (c) to invite these same committees to plan their work, in co-operation with the International Staff, in such a way that a co-ordinated report of progress achieved can be presented to the Council by approximately April, 1956.

(Signed) ISMAY