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SENIOR CIVIL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

ASSISTANCE BY THE ARMED FORCES TO THE CIVIL DEFENCE

Report by the Civil Defence Committee

At their last meeting held on 19th and 20th November 1957, the Civil Defence Committee considered the problem of assistance by the Armed Forces to Civil Defence and discussed the document prepared on this subject by the United Kingdom Delegation (AC/23(CD)D/203).

2. As a result of the discussion, countries were invited to submit papers outlining their arrangements in that field and the International Staff were invited to prepare a document for discussion at the next meeting.

3. The present document has been based on the information provided by Canada, France, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States, whose papers have already been circulated.

I. IMPORTANCE OF THE ASSISTANCE TO BE GIVEN BY THE ARMED FORCES TO THE CIVIL DEFENCE

4. All countries admit the vital importance of the assistance which can be given in wartime by the Armed Forces to Civil Defence. It is clearly realised that the conditions likely to be experienced by the civilian authorities in a nuclear war will be such that the struggle for survival will require not only the total intervention of the Civil Defence Services, but the fullest co-operation possible from the Armed Forces, in so far as they are not engaged in active operations against the enemy.

5. In some countries, the necessity of assistance by the Armed Forces to Civil Defence has been embodied either in a formal agreement between the Civilian and Military Authorities or in special directives issued by the Military. This is the case in Norway, where the Chief of the Defence Staff has laid down "Directives for the Home Guard as a link in total defence", and in the United States, where a formal agreement has been reached

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between the Department of Defence, the FCDA and the office of Defence Mobilisation. In other countries co-operation between the Armed Forces and the Civil Defence is provided under the framework of the general planning for the survival period.

6. As it is essential to carry out preparations in peacetime for the co-operation of the Armed Forces to the Civil Defence tasks, it is suggested that governments should clearly define either by means of Regulations or Directives, or by any other method which is considered to be suitable, the nature of the assistance to be given by the Armed Forces in wartime.

II. FORM OF THE ASSISTANCE TO BE GIVEN BY THE ARMED FORCES

7. So far, there are differences in the various countries in the form of assistance to be expected from the Armed Forces. In some countries, in addition to the support that might be given to the Civil Defence Forces by military units available at the time, specific tasks have been allotted to the Forces. For example, in Greece, the Armed Forces will be responsible for the disposal of unexploded bombs and shells; in France, they will place reserve officers at the disposal of the National Civil Defence Service for assignment to staff work, or as stiffening for the local services and for operation of the alert and warning system.

8. Although it is not intended to lay down strict rules applying commonly to all countries, it appears that the measures to be envisaged under this heading should cover the general support to be given by the Armed Forces to the Civil Defence Organization during the survival period, in case of nuclear attack. By this, is meant that military units should co-operate with Civil Defence Forces, when necessary, in target areas or reception areas, in the main tasks of Civil Defence.

9. A good example of the form of assistance which could be given by the Armed Forces appears in the Netherlands paper on this subject. It is obvious that the Forces can co-operate very efficiently in the measures taken for the maintenance of public order all over the country. They will therefore be of great help for the control of the population, both in target areas and in reception zones. By use of their own physical resources (equipment and matériel), they might give very valuable assistance in the field of mass evacuation or dispersal, especially of homeless, from target areas. They would also be particularly helpful in carrying out specialised and technical tasks, by use of engineering units, communications facilities and equipment, transportation, etc.

10. It must be emphasised that military assistance is only complementary and not a substitute for Civil Defence action. Therefore, military assistance should be requested only in those places where the civilian authorities are facing a situation which exceeds their capabilities. It is, however, probable

that such circumstances will be experienced frequently during the survival period.

11. It might easily happen that in some cases, the civil control or leadership could be destroyed or otherwise unable to function; in these extreme emergency conditions, the military authorities might take over control from the Civil Defence Authorities. This is contemplated at least in Canada and the United States. But in all circumstances this substitution should be as short as possible; and as soon as the civil authority is re-established the military action will take again the form of technical assistance or auxiliary support.

12. The internal organization of the Armed Forces, when they come to the assistance of the Civil Defence Services, may vary from one country to another. In Canada, it is intended to organize self-contained columns for limited period. In France, units of national forces will be placed under the authority of the Minister of Interior. Greece proposes to make military units available, if practicable. In the Netherlands, mobile columns, which are military formations, are at the disposal of the National Civil Defence Commander in wartime. In Norway, the Home Guard is considered as the best qualified for assisting Civil Defence. In the United Kingdom, in addition to the Mobile Defence Corps and the "Class H" scheme (vide AC/23(CD)D/203), all armed forces, whether regular or reserve, located in the United Kingdom and not engaged in active operations against the enemy will be used for giving assistance to the Civil Defence Services.

From the information given by the delegations, therefore, it appears that it is generally intended to use military forces as independent and self-contained units, giving their support to the Civil Defence Organization.

III. CONTROL

13. No common rule exists in the various countries on the control or command of the military units assisting Civil Defence. While in the United States, it is underlined that "Civil Defence Authorities do not command nor directly control the military units made available to them", in the Netherlands the Civil Defence Commander gives the Commander Mobile Columns the "necessary instructions"; and in France units of the national forces will be put under the authority of the Minister of Interior.

14. It is certainly desirable that the military units engaged on Civil Defence tasks are kept under their normal chain of command and military discipline. This goes with the fact that it is generally intended to use military units as a whole. Therefore, it is suggested that the best way to utilise the Armed Forces is for the Civil Defence Authorities to assign them specific missions in the area where they operate.

15. Co-ordination between the Civil Defence Authorities and the Military Authorities is vitally important and must be carefully worked out, even in peacetime. It is generally planned to have some form of regional co-ordination, e.g. at the level of Continental Army Commands (US), Army District Commands (UK), Home Guard District Commander (Norway), etc. It is, however, necessary that a close co-ordination exists at all levels, including the lowest possible echelons of military and civil control. This is particularly true as regards operational co-ordination.

16. The question of determining how requests for Armed Forces assistance will be made is also of vital importance. In Canada these requests will normally be made by provincial authorities to appropriate Army Commands. No particular procedure is described in the information provided by other delegations. For the purpose of avoiding duplication, errors of judgment, waste of efforts, etc., it is thought that normally requests should be made where an overall picture of the situation is available, and this is probably at regional level.

IV. TRAINING

17. If the Armed Forces are to give efficient assistance to Civil Defence in wartime, they will have to perform various tasks of a quite different nature from those for which they are normally prepared. The necessity of a special training in the Civil Defence field has therefore been admitted by all countries.

18. In nations where mobile columns are built up in peacetime, training is already satisfactory. In other countries where planning is still under way, it is suggested that training arrangements should be worked out as quickly as possible, so that the technical instruction of the military forces can start rapidly. It is obvious that training facilities are equally important. In that field, the Civil Defence Authorities could co-operate very efficiently in peacetime, either by co-opting military instructors in their training establishments, or by making their facilities available to the Forces.

V. EQUIPMENT

19. It is thought that generally speaking the Forces will have enough equipment to perform their Civil Defence tasks. There should be no problem as far as transportation, reconnaissance (including radiological monitoring) communications, emergency feeding and first aid are concerned. Some difficulty might appear in the field of fire-fighting and rescue equipment. In most countries Civil Defence has planned for the stockpiling of reserve equipment to be used in wartime. In case of nuclear emergency, however, it is doubtful if enough equipment could be made available everywhere for immediate use. It is therefore suggested that the Military Authorities should also build up reserves of equipment, which might well be of help in wartime for their own needs.

VI. CONCLUSION

20. In many countries the problem of assistance by the Armed Forces to the Civil Defence Authorities is still under consideration, while in other nations the plans might be subject to periodical revision. It is hoped that the present document will be of value for the preparation of plans and will help in their implementation.

On the other hand it is thought that any changes in the planning, as well as any new information available in a country will be of great interest to NATO. It is therefore suggested that such information should be forwarded to the International Secretariat.

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