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FURTHER ASSUMPTIONS FOR CIVIL EMERGENCY PLANNING

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.

(1) Annex III of SPB/6/50 dated 30th June 1950

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.

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 Wartime Commodity Problems, the Industrial Raw Materials Planning Committee, the Food and Agriculture 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

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