

NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL DEPUTIES  
SUPPLEANTS DU CONSEIL DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD <sup>51</sup>SECRETDOCUMENTAC/2-D/15OR. ENG.6th December, 1951ASSESSMENT OF NATO MILITARY AND ECONOMIC  
CAPABILITIES IN RELATION TO THOSE OF THE  
SOVIET BLOC.Summary of Discussion on Council Agenda  
Items V to VIIINote by the Executive Secretary

The annexed document is a preliminary draft submitted to the Deputies as a possible basis for implementing paragraph (a) of resolution C8-D/13(Final): to prepare for Ministers a confidential document based on reports and statements presented to the Eighth Session of the Council under Items V to VIII of its Agenda.

This draft has not yet been submitted to the military agencies. As requested in resolution C8-D/13(Final), the final document should be prepared with the collaboration of the military agencies.

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ASSESSMENT OF NATO MILITARY AND ECONOMIC  
CAPABILITIES IN RELATION TO THOSE OF THE  
SOVIET BLOC.

Summary of Discussion on Council Agenda  
Items V to VIII

1. INTRODUCTION

The North Atlantic Council at its Rome Session considered the question of the relative strength and capabilities of NATO and Soviet Bloc forces.

The fundamental aspects of this question - the political, the military and the economic aspects - were submitted to the Council in appropriate reports and statements. They emphasise that the task of building up an adequate defence force is within the capabilities of NATO countries taken as a whole but that certain additional steps must be taken if this task is to be accomplished within the time limits already established. The reports and statements which were presented to the Council in order to arrive at a clear picture of this question were the following:

- A report by the Military Committee and the Council Deputies on an estimate of the relative strength and capabilities of NATO and Soviet Bloc forces (document C8-D/4(MC.33))
- Reports by the Military Committee on
  - Revised Medium Term Force Requirements and Recommended National Contributions (MC.26/1 Final)
  - Readiness and Effectiveness of NATO forces (MC.31 Final)
- Statements by:
  - General Gruenther, Chief of Staff, SHAPE
  - General Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe
  - Mr. A. Harriman, Chairman of the Temporary Council Committee
  - Sir Edwin Plowden, Vice-Chairman of the Temporary Council Committee.

The following paragraphs give a brief summary of the principal points mentioned in these reports and statements.

2. SOVIET BLOC STRENGTH AND CAPABILITIES

In the Military Field

The Soviet Bloc forces, including satellites, amount to some 230 to 250 divisions with some 20,000 aircraft in operational units. The position of these forces and their logistic facilities are such that the Soviet Bloc is capable of launching an attack towards Central Europe with some 100 divisions and 8,000 aircraft.

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The Soviet economy is to-day in a better position to sustain a major war effort than the Germany economy was in World War II. Its production which is already in many cases about twice its pre-war levels, is expanding rapidly.

Although the Soviet economic potential falls well below the collective potentialities of the NATO countries, the proportion of these resources that has been devoted since 1945 to the military production and to capital investment is much greater in the Soviet Bloc than in the NATO countries: this not only strengthens the general Soviet economy but also war supporting industries. The pattern of Soviet investment has given special emphasis to basic industries such as aluminium, petroleum, electronics steel and electric power; to plants which are readily convertible to arms production and to canals and railways of high significance in time of war.

In the Political Field

The maintenance and the strengthening of the Soviet Régime and the expansion of International Communism are the basic objectives of Soviet foreign policy: it relies for its internal acceptance upon traditionally strong Russian nationalistic sentiments supported by the ideology of the "liberation of the masses" through communism and by the thesis that the Soviet people are threatened by hostile capitalist countries. Although the Soviet leaders have so far shown their aversion to take serious risks of jeopardising Russian national security by direct use of Armed Forces to further their objectives, the possibility cannot be excluded that the Soviet government may decide to precipitate a general war before their present predominance in military power is threatened by rearmament in the West. Prudence and firmness will therefore be necessary if the West is to succeed in building such strength as to deter the Soviet Union from further encroachments whilst avoiding war.

3. NATO STRENGTH AND CAPABILITIESIn the Military Field(a) The Concept

Keeping in active status forces equal to those of the possible enemy would have social and economic implications which democracies cannot accept in peace time. The concept is therefore that of having a covering force ready to hold the initial offensive, thus giving time to mobilise reserves that can be brought up to support the covering forces towards meeting the initial shock, and to launch a counter-offensive at the earliest possible moment.

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It is obvious that with such a concept the reserves should be brought up in the shortest possible time to the battle area. In Central Europe, the use of German forces is therefore necessary in order to implement this forward strategy.

(b) The Requirements

The NATO requirements are derived from the analysis of enemy forces and from the concept of a forward strategy in resisting them. The land forces required to resist a Soviet attack on the day of the opening of hostilities would be approximately half the size of the attacking forces. In the air, the Western allies must have the supremacy in order to bring the reserves to the front line and to support the covering forces: this requires more and better aircraft for the Allies than those available to the Soviet Bloc forces.

(c) The Actual Situation

At the end of 1951, the Western Allies have earmarked under General Eisenhower's Command approximately half the land force requirements for D-Day and about one sixth of the aircraft requirements. At the end of 1952, the increase in available land forces and aircraft will be respectively 50% and 100% above the present level: an important gap remains therefore to be filled, if the military requirements are to be met by 1954.

In the Economic Field

The analysis carried on by the Temporary Council Committee is not completed yet but it seems inconceivable that the people of the North Atlantic Community, who have perhaps four-fold the production capacity of the people of the Soviet Bloc, and who have far superior resources of inventive genius could not find the economic resources sufficient to build the minimum forces required for their defence.

In the Political Field

The main problem now confronting the Western Allies is to build up a real unity. There can be no security on an individual nationalistic basis. Such a collective security policy has been adopted in principle by all NATO countries but in fact such a policy has not so far been implemented fully.

One of the first steps towards reaching such a collective security is the unification of Western Europe and the building up of a European Army.

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Free men when they are united tend to cling more closely together when the situation gets tougher. All the efforts of the political leaders of Western democracies must therefore tend to realise this unity of free men during peace time in order to be ready in case of emergency.

4. CONCLUSION

The military situation of NATO as compared with that of the Soviet Bloc is serious. The military requirements are the minimum necessary to reach a fair degree of security. They appear to be within the capabilities of NATO countries taken as a whole. Each NATO country must immediately take steps to implement its already allocated task without waiting for new programmes to be set up. In order to obtain the most efficient use of the resources of the Western democracies, a real integration of the defence efforts of the resources of the Western democracies, a real integration of the defence efforts of the West must be realised in the near future.