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NATO NUCLEAR FORCE AND EUROPEAN POLICY

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

At Nassau the Prime Minister and the President agreed to use their best endeavours to develop a NATO Nuclear Force in the closest consultation with their NATO allies. Initially this Force will consist of existing nuclear forces, strategic and tactical. As time goes on, new weapons will replace old (*e.g.*, United Kingdom Polaris submarines will replace the United Kingdom V-bombers) and a new component may be introduced in the shape of internationally-owned and internationally-manned surface ships or submarines armed with Polaris missiles. This component is often described as the mixed-manned force or, in United States terminology, the multilateral force.

2. For the initial Force, the arrangements we favour are as follows:

- (a) *Composition*.—In addition to the United Kingdom V-bombers and the United States contribution of three Polaris submarines, we would like to include a wide range of tactical nuclear weapons: both aircraft and missiles. In this way the Europeans who have, or will shortly have, nuclear delivery vehicles (though not, of course, the warheads) would participate from the outset.
- (b) *Command*.—SACEUR would be in command of the Force, having for this purpose a special Chief of Staff or Deputy with an international staff provided by the nations contributing to the Force.
- (c) *Targeting*.—The targeting of the Force must be co-ordinated with the SAC plans, the detailed targets being worked out between SACEUR's international staff and the SAC staff at Omaha.
- (d) *Political Control*.—A Nuclear Trusteeship Group, comprising the Permanent Representatives of the countries contributing to the Force, would exercise peace-time supervision over the Force and give political guidance to the military authorities.

3. United States interest centres on the mixed-manned component. A United States Mission under Mr. Livingston Merchant is now visiting Brussels, Bonn and Rome and will be in London for discussions with the Minister of Defence and myself on the 12th and 13th March. At these meetings we hope to elucidate the United States ideas on the mixed-manned component. We also hope to hear the results of Mr. Merchant's soundings in other European capitals and to consider with his mission what contribution we ourselves could properly make to the mixed-manned force. I shall give my colleagues an oral account of the meetings. We have already said that as we are contributing the Polaris submarines our contribution would have to be strictly limited; perhaps the provision of some contingents for the mixed crews.

4. In the meantime, the United Kingdom Permanent Representative has given the Council our ideas in so far as these were agreed with the United States during recent discussions in Washington: that is to say, on the military aspects (see paragraphs 2 (a), (b) and (c) above), but leaving on one side for the moment the question of political control.

SECRET

5. The Council is therefore aware of the way in which we see the immediate steps to be taken on the military side to give effect to the Nassau Agreement on the NATO Nuclear Force. Our efforts to ensure that an early start can be made towards giving the Europeans a greater voice in the nuclear policy of the Alliance and our own contribution of the V-bomber force seem to have been generally welcomed by our European allies. These moves fall into place as part of our general policy, after the end of the Brussels negotiations, of strengthening our European connexions within the framework of the Atlantic Alliance. Thus the action we are taking to follow up the Prime Minister's initiative at Nassau enables us to give practical effect to the need both for strengthening NATO itself and for strengthening Europe's position within NATO.

6. I propose myself to attend the North Atlantic Council on 20th March to explain our policy along these lines. By that time we shall have seen Mr. Merchant and the members of his mission and I hope that it will then be possible, against the general background of our Atlantic and European policy, to say something about the way in which we shall hope to see the political control of the NATO Nuclear Force developing. If Mr. Merchant has in fact succeeded in securing commitments from European countries to take part in the mixed-manned force, I see no reason why this need conflict with our own ideas on political control. We see this as a continuing process.

7. I told the Secretary-General and the United States Government of my intention to attend the Council on 20th March. Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh is also telling the Council and I am hoping that it will be possible for several of our friends among the European Foreign Ministers also to attend, so that this occasion can be used to demonstrate our view of the proper position of Europe as an integral part of the Atlantic Alliance.

H.

*Foreign Office, S.W. 1,
11th March, 1963.*

