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COMPTE-RENDU VERBATIM  
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ELABORATION DES PLANS DE DEFENSE - DISCUSSIONS MULTILATERALES

Compte-rendu verbatim des exposés faits au Palais de Chaillot,  
à l'occasion de l'élaboration des plans de défense,  
le lundi 20 février 1956 à 10 heures

OBJET : ORGANISATION, DISPERSION ET ETAT DE PREPARATION DES UNITES  
DES FORCES AERIENNES

PRESENTS

Président: The Lord Ismay

M. H. Blankenhorn	(Allemagne)	M. A. Alessandrini	(Italie)
M. A. de Staercke	(Belgique)	M. N. Hommel	(Luxembourg)
M. R.D. Wilgress	(Canada)	M. J.M. Boyesen	(Norvège)
M. S. Sandager Jeppesen	(Danemark)	Jonkheer A.W.L. Tjarda van Starckenborgh	(Pays-Bas)
M. G.W. Perkins	(Etats-Unis)	Stachouwer	
M. A. Parodi	(France)	Comte de Tovar	(Portugal)
M. G. Exintaris	(Grèce)	Sir Christopher Steel	(Royaume-Uni)
M. H.G. Andersen	(Islande)	M. M.A. Tiney	(Turquie)

Avec les hauts représentants nationaux civils et militaires

AUTORITES MILITAIRES DE L'OTAN

Général J. Lawton Collins (Président du Groupe Permanent)  
Général J. Valluy (Groupe Permanent)  
Général Sir J. Whiteley (Groupe Permanent)  
Général A. Gruenther (SACEUR)  
Général L. Norstad (SHAPE)  
Colonel Thomas (SHAPE)  
Général G.M. de Chassey (Officier de Liaison du Groupe Permanent)

SECRETARIAT INTERNATIONAL

M. H. van Vredenburg (Secrétaire Général Délégué)  
M. F.D. Gregh (Secrétaire Général Adjoint pour  
les Affaires Economiques et Financières)  
M. A. Moreau (Secrétaire Général Adjoint par intérim  
pour la Production et la Logistique)  
The Lord Coleridge (Secrétaire Exécutif)

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## LORD ISMAY

... to try to ensure that the Civil and Military Authorities of all the member countries are given the maximum amount of information on defence problems so that thereafter all member countries may be assisted in recasting their defence arrangements. Now if you look at the timetable, which is rather formidable, you will see of course that at this first Conference we are not attempting to cover the whole field of defence. We have deliberately confined ourselves to certain specific defence problems it being understood that this is the first of a series of discussions and that thereafter the whole defence field will be eliminated, but even so, gentlemen, the problems that we have got to discuss at this Conference are of immense variety and almost infinite complexity and so if we are going to get the best value out of these discussions I think we have got to avoid anything in the way of long set speeches and we have got to stick as closely as possible to the particular topic that is under consideration at any given moment. If we go straying over a whole jungle we will confuse all the issues.

Now there is one point on procedure I would like to mention. It seems likely that a number of questions will be raised at the end of the presentations. Now the NATO military authorities and the International Staff will do their best to give answers to those which are susceptible to be answered at once. There are, however, bound to be questions which require further consideration and a number of them will be swept up so to speak at the last meeting under item F and there will be still other questions which want even more consideration and they will have to be left for settlement after we disperse. Now, having suggested that all the speeches should be short I must not be the first offender and so I will ask the Chairman of the Standing Group if he has anything to say before we ask General Gruenther to come in.

## CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING GROUP

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen. I hope to be equally brief and simply state for the members of the Standing Group and the NATO military authorities that we welcome this series of conferences. We believe that they can be of great use in clarifying some of the rather complex problems that face us all. During the course of the next week or ten days we hope to join with you, following these presentations, in useful discussions to clarify any points which have been raised during the presentations themselves and to explore these questions more fully with you. We are very happy to be with you and hope that this Conference can be most profitable to us all.

## GENERAL GRUENTHER

Mr. Chairman, we at SHAPE are not going to be brief. We are going to try to equal the record that Mr. Khrushchev set last Tuesday - 7 hours, but we are not going to give it all to you today.

We feel that you are here because you're troubled, because you're worrying about the increased cost of defence expenditure, because you're concerned whether the strategy is the right kind of

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GENERAL GRUENTHER (Contd.)

strategy, whether the weapons which you're being called upon to support are really the right weapons or whether perhaps they will be obsolete within a few years. I think it is very well that you should have those troubles and we, on the part of SHAPE, welcome this chance to have discussions on a mutual basis because we feel that we are going to learn a great deal from it. I think it is significant that the meeting is taking place a few days after the very significant talks which have occurred in the Soviet Union and most of you will recall the headlines which came in last Wednesday's press stating that Khrouchtchev does not find war inevitable. Such a change in Lenin's philosophy was not taken lightly and I think it is probably due to the work that has taken place around this table and the follow-up action which has taken place in your countries which has caused that type of statement to be made. In other words, the strength we have been able to develop has impressed the Soviets with the great horrors of a future war and has caused them to come out on this line that war is not inevitable. Of course, in the same talk Mr. Khrouchtchev and the ministers who followed him have done everything possible to outline the co-existence theory so that our efforts will be reduced. I think it is therefore most appropriate that we consider just how much of those efforts that we are making, are going to be necessary and whether or not any changes can be made. We at SHAPE, and I am sure it follows for the other commanders, will be more than happy to continue these discussions after this particular conference is over because we realise there are some very complicated problems to be solved.

Now, for the next two days, today and tomorrow, we are going to be discussing the air element, the air phase, including the counter offensive, early warning, and air defence generally. But I think it is well that before we start these discussions we have in mind clearly what our basic strategy is going to be. I think it is well to consider first of all what the overall global strategy of the Soviets will be.

For years strategists, classic strategists, emphasized repeatedly and it is then repeated in every sense, that all forces operating on interior lines .....

[Owing to a temporary breakdown in the recording machinery, the major part of General Gruenther's presentation is not yet available. The full presentation will be circulated as an addendum to this verbatim record as soon as possible.]



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## GENERAL GRUENTHER (contd.)

The purpose of this paper is to establish in broad outline the priority of tasks in a live command, Europe, as envisaged in current planning and thereby to provide a sound basis for determining those forces which should be given priority in their development to the desired state of readiness, and that another part of that paper, paragraph 3, we stated "it must be appreciated that the priorities set out below are intended to give only the planning guidance to nations for the development of their defence programmes", and this we underlined: "in no circumstances should this paper be construed as a blanket endorsement for any nation to devote all of its resources to the higher priority item with which its forces are concerned." I think it is obvious to you that, at this stage in our development, early warning and air defence are our weakest element. I think it is obvious to you also that we must, and the subject of the December meeting and of the October meeting of the Defence Ministers we tried to stress that we had to give overwhelming priority to those two items. But the point that I want to make here now is that this concept and everything we say here today and tomorrow and later in the week will be in the framework of this overall strategy. It is not meant to indicate a diminishing importance of land or sea forces, it is meant to indicate that our counter-air offensive must be given tremendous importance because, without it, we have no chance of implementing our forward strategy. It is to be understood that air warning and air defence has got to be given increasing priority because the low state is well known to all of you. I would suggest that some of you who are worried about this matter will probably want to bring it up at one of the discussion periods. If I understand the philosophy of the Secretary General, he is going to stick to the subjects in hand during the early part of the discussion periods and with that line of reasoning, he may want to defer this until next Tuesday or next Wednesday which I would think would probably be the logical place to bring it up; but our point in raising it now is because we know that at least one delegation is troubled. The paper has only been out ten days now and others may be troubled also, so if that is the case, I hope we will have a chance for further discussion and further clarification at some time during the discussion periods when it is appropriate for the Secretary General to put it on the agenda.

With that introduction we will now move ahead by Colonel Thomas of the SHAPE staff to our first presentation which is going to be devoted to the counter air offensive, what its problems are, how we must organize and how we must be able to meet that offensive, and we are going to show you what that offensive will be, and then tomorrow we will show you the importance of air defence and where it fits into that overall objective.

Colonel Thomas will now proceed.

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## COLONEL THOMAS

Lord Ismay, Gentlemen. The assigned topic for this first presentation as your programme indicates is the organization, dispersal and readiness of air force units of Allied Command Europe.

Now the foundation for the approach being taken this-morning, as I am sure some of you will recognise, comes from the forward strategy as set forth and approved in Allied Command Europe 1957 Capabilities Plan, and from the stress on the forces in being concept which is contained in MC/48. This paper is entitled "The most effective pattern of NATO military strength for the next few years". It was approved by the North Atlantic Military Committee on November of 1954. This paper provides a standard against which we can assess our current position and the areas which most require improvement.

Now consideration of the NATO air situation logically should begin with a discussion of the threat, and particularly the air threat, which the Soviet bloc poses for NATO by reason of its combined atomic and non-atomic capabilities. The presentation will assess the current threat, and what it is forecast to become through 1959. This threat will be related briefly to the mission of the NATO air forces and the means available to carry out that mission; and this leads us into the discussion of the current SACEUR atomic strike plan. Your attention will be invited to the present posture of NATO air forces, with emphasis not on the areas in which we are strong, but on the deficiencies which appear most significant in the light of the growing enemy air atomic threat; and the presentation this morning will conclude with a summary of the specific actions required of NATO commands and national governments in order that these deficiencies can be progressively overcome.

Over all, it is intended that the discussion highlights three points. First, the enemy military threat is attaining a new and more dangerous level. Second, our capabilities for meeting this threat depend on continuing an intimate relationship between atomic and non-atomic air strength, and third, certain significant deficiencies in our present air posture require correction in the light of the growing enemy air atomic threat.

Now, it is of course recognised that the threat which the Soviet bloc poses and can be expected to continue to pose to the free world is not limited to Allied Command Europe, nor to NATO, but is world-wide. So our planning at SHAPE is based upon the concept that any war involving NATO will be global in character, which will mean that all western oriented forces will be operating almost simultaneously against the common enemy.

Should the Soviet resort to war, they could be expected to allocate from their resources such air atomic forces as they deemed were required to at least neutralise the strengths of the North American continent for some period of time. This means that only a portion of their total capability could reasonably be assessed as posing a threat to Allied Command Europe. What the size of this portion may be now or in the future is an

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COLONEL THOMAS (Contd)

extremely difficult assessment, and one which certainly does not lend itself to any precise estimate. What we can safely bank on, however, is that the Soviet bloc air atomic capability is growing, and as it grows so does the size of the portion of this capability which Allied Command Europe may expect to have used against it should war occur.

There is little point this morning in detailing how ever since World War 2 the Soviet bloc has posed a sizeable military threat against allied Europe. It is perhaps useful for perspective however, to recall that up to recent years this military threat arose primarily from ground forces and from conventional munition capabilities. These threats, and they are still very real threats, we recognise to be with us yet, even though what has been termed "amazing progress" has been made by the NATO organization in improving our posture for defence against such threats. The possession of atomic weapons by the USSR does not invalidate Allied Command Europe's posture in defence. It does, however, markedly effect the relative priorities in defence efforts.

For the past two years we have been convinced at SHAPE that this Soviet bloc air atomic capability represents the most significant threat to the defence of Allied Command Europe and to the security of all NATO nations. Not the only important threat, to be sure, but by far the most significant threat, the one on which we must concentrate our primary attention.

To sharpen our focus on the significance of Soviet bloc air atomic threats to Allied Command Europe I invite your attention now to a series of slides. On this map of Western Europe is depicted the flight time required by a Soviet jet light-bomber to fly from base complexes within the iron curtain to a bomb release line in arbitrarily selected potential target areas of Western Europe. In calculating this data we consider the IL 28 bomber cruising at an average speed of 400 knots at 30,000 ft. carrying an atomic weapon. You will note the time shown is in minutes.

Tallinn to Oslo	63
Berlin to London	77
Pilsen to Bordeaux	96
Budapest to Rome	52
Sofia to Athens	43
Bucharest to Ismir	52

I would like to emphasise two points of significance here. First is the extremely short time which is involved in flight from enemy bases to critical NATO areas by aircraft carrying weapons which are capable of large scale destruction. The times indicated on this chart begin with the take-off of the aircraft, not when it penetrates our air defence base and the second point is that such air operations as these could be executed almost simultaneously, throughout all of Allied Command Europe. In contrast to our earlier military threat which was measured by the days and the



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## COLONEL THOMAS (Contd)

weeks required for motorised columns to advance from enemy controlled territory to a limited number of objectives we are now confronted with a problem of entirely new dimensions. Now, you are undoubtedly familiar with certain aspects of Soviet air strength and particularly the estimates that Soviet air forces total about 20,000 aircraft and the Satellite air forces about 2,500 aircraft. Not all of this strength however poses a threat to Allied Command Europe but because of the inheritant mobility of air power the speed with which large numbers of aircraft can move from one area to another we have a difficult problem in assessing how much of this total actually would be used against us. An obvious threat of course comes from the stationing in Eastern Europe of about 5,000 aircraft, mostly jet fighters and almost equally divided between Soviet and Satellite forces. The expected geographic spread of this strength as of the end of this year is indicated on this chart; you will notice in East Germany 1,475, Poland 1,400, Czechoslovakia 820, Hungary 625, Roumania 570, Bulgaria 490, Albania 20. There is a threat to the allies, the most significant portion of this air strength is caused by some 700 light jet bombers. Most of the Soviet tactical air armies, however, and their naval air forces are stationed within the USSR on bases from which they could not today be used against NATO territory.

Depicted here is the total strength both Soviet and Satellite located in the entire area between the iron curtain and the Ural mountains as is forecast for the end of 1956 and the mid period of 1959. You will note that overall an increase of about 2,000 aircraft is expected from 13,700 to 15,500. Most of the increase will be in fighter units from 6,700 to 7,900 but a moderate rise also is expected in the size of the jet light bomber force from 2,700 to 3,150.

Most of the increase both in fighters and in light bombers will expect to take place within the Satellite air forces. Now, the fighters shown on this chart do not include those assigned to the Soviet fighter defence force, but in the event of war we consider it quite likely that many of the fighter aircraft listed here also would be required for air defence purposes. The current disposition of much of their short range air strength poses a real problem to the Soviets just as does their current ground force positions. If the units are deployed westward prior to hostilities there is a major risk of loss of surprise but if they are retained within the USSR until after hostilities begin they will be unable to participate in the initial operations but will be subject to allied longer range retaliatory attacks. In this situation then it is the growing Soviet air atomic threat that deserves our primary attention. I have already mentioned that at the close of this year it is expected 700 Soviet jet light bombers will be stationed in Eastern Europe and you will note that in addition to these 700 there are 2,000 more on the air strength expected by close of this year in western areas of the USSR. All these light bombers are IL28's which we term the Deagle. This is an aircraft currently believed capable of carrying an atomic weapon; it has an operational radius of 690 nautical miles sufficient to reach all of England and continental Europe except for South Western France and the Iberian Peninsula.

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COLONEL THOMAS (Contd)

It has a speed of just over 400 knots with outbreaks above 40,000 ft. with 2 or 3 tons of bombs. Because of this short radius of action we think that the use of this aircraft in wartime would be primarily limited to Allied Command Europe and would therefore represent the major current atomic threat to this Command.

There are, however, two other larger Soviet jet aircraft now in operational use; they belong to the Soviet long range force rather than the tactical air armies but they deserve our consideration because they also are considered to be atomic bomb carriers and could strike at Allied Command Europe from bases within the USSR. The first of these is the jet medium bomber originally called the Type 39 which we now call the Badger, there is radius of action of 1,600 nautical miles, one re-fuelling will increase that to 2,000. It can carry 5 tons of bombs with a maximum speed of 475 knots and a final cruising altitude of 50,000 ft. Any point in continental Europe or the British Isles and targets as far away as Iceland or North Africa are within reach of this aircraft on a 2-way mission; it can be used against North America however only on a 1-way mission in which the aircraft is abandoned.

Its next is the new Soviet heavy jet bomber, type 37 now called the Bison, maximum speed 475 knots, final cruising altitude 54,000 ft. and a combat radius of 3,300 nautical miles without refuelling, with refuelling you get better than 3,800 nautical miles. This aircraft we believe has been designed for use primarily against North America. Now, on this slide we will put together the estimated numbers of jet bombers of the types just shown which are expected to become available to the Soviet air forces during the next 3 years. In effect, this slide summarises the most serious aspects of the air atomic delivery capability which it is estimated the Soviets will possess by close of this year and a forecast for the following years based on the assumption that all jet bombers could be capable of delivering atomic weapons. There are several items of significance to Allied Command Europe that can be restricted from this chart. First, heavy bombers are few in number now, but by 1959 it is expected that more than 600 will be in operational use. The jet medium force also is expected to expand from approximately 400 now to 700 by the close of 1959 and the number of heavy bombers by then available with their longer range operations could make it possible to release some portion of the medium bomber strength against Allied Command Europe. The light bomber force currently about 3,000 aircraft is expected to be nearly 4,000 aircraft by 1959. Now, I should emphasise that the jet bomber strength depicted on this chart is not intended to represent the total enemy atomic delivery capability during the next 7 years. In the first place, several new jet fighters may be adaptable for use in a fighter-bomber role with small atomic weapons.



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## COLONEL THOMAS (Contd)

The Soviets also should be credited with a capability of delivering atomic weapons by submarine or by various clandestine methods. More importantly, certain types of missiles might be used as atomic carriers. The evidence we have concerning the number of personalities and the activities believed to be involved in the current Soviet missile programme have led us to the conclusion that it is a large programme. It is probable that the USSR now has some guided missiles in operational status and that a growing Soviet guided missile capability will continue to develop. They may have developed nuclear warheads for these missiles. We don't know. But certainly successful counter action to the threat posed by missiles with atomic warheads constitutes one of our gravest problems in the years ahead. In fact, it is a likelihood that potential delivery capabilities far exceed the number of available atomic weapons that really complicates our defence problem, for it can provide the enemy with operational flexibility. A contrast for instance to the number of jet bombers depicted here is provided by this next chart which shows the current Standing Group planning estimate for the atomic weapon stockpile which it is assumed will be available to the Soviet bloc for the years through 1959. You will note that whereas the 1956 total is just over 400 weapons this was forecast to reach 600 in 1957, 800 in 1958 and approaches 1,000 in 1959. These forecasts are based on an estimated production of 150 to 200 weapons per year. Now the caution with which the data presented on this chart should be used cannot be over-estimated. There are serious limitations on the intelligence which is available to support the estimate and many variables have to be considered. The Standing Group has pointed out that it is impractical to attempt to break this stockpile down into weapons by various sizes or yields. The total number of weapons is going to be affected not only by the amount of fissionable material which is processed but also by the manner in which the available material is fabricated into smaller or higher yield weapons. Considering all the variables which are involved, we feel that the total numbers portrayed on this far chart could be much smaller or much greater than the actual size of the enemy stockpile of weapons for the 1956/59 period which has been indicated. Well, there should be no requirement for a detailed discussion of the kinds or the degree of damage which atomic weapons could inflict against military or civilian facilities. It has been traditional among military thinkers to conceive of really decisive operations in terms of the movement, the occupation, and the holding of cities or of strategic terrain; but for all practical purposes a facility which is destroyed or severely damaged by a single atomic weapon might well be considered as having been occupied and held by enemy forces so far as the degree to which it would continue to support the allied war effort is concerned.

The significance of the enemy air atomic threat therefore stems primarily from three facets. First, the speed with which destruction can be inflicted. Second, the possibility of comprehensive coverage of a nearly simultaneous basis and, third, the magnitude of the damage which even one bomb could inflict. Now the emphasis I have given on the air atomic threat is not meant to minimise the role or significance of

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COLONEL THOMAS (cont.)

non-atomic aircraft nor the capabilities of other elements of Soviet military strength. The threat posed by the enemy ground forces is still great, as General Gruenther pointed out, as also is that represented by Soviet naval capabilities. The presentation this morning, however, is intended to focus attention on what is considered the most critical threat over the next several years. Now the mission of our NATO forces derives from the requirement that we be prepared to meet all of the basic enemy capabilities as they develop and it is from the critical enemy air atomic threat that our NATO air forces derive their first priority mission. I should point out also that although emphasis has been placed thus far on the elements of strength possessed by the Soviet bloc, certain basic weaknesses also should be noted. At present, and for the foreseeable future, the Soviet bloc will be markedly inferior to the West in numbers of weapons and particularly in numbers of atomic weapons. The Soviets have had no experience in long-range bombing operations of a type on which success of an inter-continental surprise attack would depend. Pilot for pilot, and in some types of aircraft, there is evidence that the Communist forces are inferior to their Western counterparts. Shortcomings in training, in technical aids, continue to be apparent and the dependability of their satellite air forces in time of war may be subject to considerable question. It is not my place this morning to discuss the likelihood or the unlikelihood of war but it should not be forgotten in the course of today's discussion, and particularly when our deficiencies are being described, that Soviet bloc forces also have deficiencies which plague them. This is not to minimise their capabilities, and I trust the charts which you have just seen portray a measure of the threat they pose, but these are capabilities which allied forces should be able to counter - Which introduces the next topic this morning: the dual mission of NATO forces. SACEUR visualises two missions for his forces - a peacetime mission, today's mission, which is to provide a deterrent to war, and a wartime mission of retaliation, which for the air forces of NATO involves a combination of active air defence and attack against enemy targets with heavier and more effective blows than we are dealt. This dual mission requires closer examination. We define the deterrent mission as shown on this chart - peacetime possession of the ability to inflict decisive damage on the enemy while denying him the ability to inflict decisive damage on us, plus the determination to use this ability in our defence. The important thing here is that we must actually possess the capability to inflict decisive damage on the enemy. There must be demonstrable possession of this ability and a collective determination to use it. We cannot delude ourselves on this point, for we certainly will not delude the enemy. Connoted in this definition are all those expensive but essential ingredients of air power in the atomic age. Besides adequate numbers of the proper aircraft and weapons, there must be adequate dispersion of our air units, of our airfields, prestocking, maintenance of an alert status, primary and ultimate communications and all those related things. A large air force but one concentrated in large economic and comfortable but vulnerable groupings certainly will not provide a real deterrent to an atomic capable enemy.

Money which is spent to ensure a peacetime posture which the enemy can recognise as highly invulnerable to surprise

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COLONEL THOMAS (cont.)

attack constitutes the best insurance policy that we can buy. The steps necessary to attain this peacetime posture will be expanded later in the presentation but first we should look at the second, or wartime, mission of NATO forces which is that of retaliation to inflict decisive damage on the enemy while denying him ability to inflict decisive damage on us. Each of us in this room may have a different personal interpretation of the meaning of the phrase "decisive damage" but the important thing at this time is to note that this definition of the retaliation mission stems directly from the definition of the deterrent mission; by striking out the top line and the bottom two lines deterrent becomes retaliation. Retaliation occurs when the decision is taken to employ the deterrent.

What has been defined as two missions, therefore, is essentially one mission. If we place ourselves in a posture which will insure our capability to carry out the wartime mission, then the enemy will know this and there would be every reason to expect he would be deterred from initiating aggressive military action. The unstated but understood purpose of the retaliation mission as here defined is to protect NATO Europe from destruction and conquest. This means a defence of NATO air space, the destruction of the Soviet bloc air atomic capabilities, in co-ordination with the other major commands involved in the same task, and the denial to the enemy of any capability to mass and move large-scale ground forces into NATO territory. It is not our mission to destroy the USSR or to try to win the war by ourselves. Other commands also have a major rôle to play. But by focusing upon our more limited mission we should have a reasonable expectation of being able to fulfil it now and of continuing to be able to fulfil it in the future, if we progressively improve our posture commensurate with the growing enemy threat. A major basis for the confidence expressed in this view stems from knowledge of the atomic delivery forces either assigned to or available to support Allied Command Europe, and on this chart we have depicted those commands or forces which currently possess such an atomic delivery capability. Three of these commands are external to Allied Command Europe. The US Strategic Air Force, with forces now stationed in the United Kingdom and North Africa has a mission to support SACEUR and has committed forces to attack targets selected in peacetime by SACEUR and to provide uncalled support after war begins. SACLANI also has a mission to support SACEUR and machinery for co-ordination has been established. The United Kingdom Bomber Command has two basic forces. The medium bomber "V" force and the Canberras in the light bomber force. The Canberras are committed to SACEUR and will be under his operational control in wartime. The extent of the British medium bomber force effort in support of SACEUR will be as determined by the United Kingdom Chief of Staff. The 49th Air Division of the United States Air Force, which has two fighter-bomber wings and one light bomber wing in England, is allocated to SACEUR. Located in the Central Region are atomic units of the 12th United States Air Force and the 7th United States Army. The 12th Air Force has one atomic capable light bomber wing of B.57s and four fighter-bomber wings, plus 2 tactical missile squadrons which are capable of delivering the Matador missile.

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## COLONEL THOMAS (cont.)

The 7th Army has 3 types of ground delivery vehicles, 6 battalions of the 280 mm artillery, 5 batteries of Honest John rockets, and 1 battalion of Corporal missiles. Now as the chart indicates, no atomic delivery units are stationed in the area of Allied Forces Northern Europe, but both the 49th Air Division and the 12th Air Forces are charged with maintaining the capability to deploy task forces of up to squadron size to the Northern and also to the Southern Regions as directed by SACEUR. Allied Forces Southern Europe currently has 3 types of atomic delivery forces. The 6th Fleet has 2 carriers on constant duty in the Mediterranean. The Southern Europe Task Force - commonly referred to as SETAF and consisting of US troops withdrawn from Austria - has a barrier of Honest John rocket launchers in Northern Italy, and the US Air Force's rotational concept has resulted in the stationing of an atomic capable fighter-bomber squadron in Northern Italy. You will recall that at the very beginning of this presentation, mention was made that one of the aspects of the air situation on which we wished to focus attention was the continuing and intimate relationship between atomic and non-atomic air strength, not only will the degree, to which the non-atomic forces are available and effective, determine to a large extent the effectiveness of our atomic operations, but there also are many aspects of the SACEUR Air Mission that can be handled only by non-atomic aircraft. It is appropriate at this time therefore to note the current size of available air forces. Depicted on this chart are the total numbers of aircraft available to SACEUR in his subordinate Regions. There are 343 in the North, 3583 in the centre and 1185 in the South for a total of more than 5,000 aircraft. Those aircraft which are capable of delivering atomic weapons are included in this total, but the bulk of these aircraft - like the enemy aircraft now stationed in Eastern Europe - are intended primarily for air defence and for use in non-atomic roles in the battle area. It is of interest to note, by the way, that the number of aircraft listed here as available to SACEUR is roughly comparable in total numbers to the Soviet and satellite air force strength now stationed in the European satellites. Well, it should be apparent from the listing of atomic forces available in the theatre, the US has made long strides towards giving all bombers and fighter-bomber units in Europe a capability to deliver atomic weapons. This development we can expect to continue. One major improvement which is expected to begin this year will be the replacement of the F.86 fighter in the fighter-bomber wings of the 12th Air Force with the F.100, first of the US Air Force "Century" series. The F.100 is a speedier, less vulnerable, more flexible atomic delivery aircraft than the F.86. Additional Matador squadrons, Corporal battalions and Honest John batteries are scheduled to augment the forces which are already in the theatre. Further development are the rotational wing concept, also expected to improve SACEUR's atomic posture. Now the fighter-bomber squadron which is already in place in Italy represents part of a programme to provide, in time, up to 6 fighter-bomber wings of the US Tactical Air Command with a capability to deploy rapidly into this theatre and to go into immediate operations. The parent wings will remain in the United States in peacetime, each deploying one squadron at a time to the European theatre for training, orientation and the like. The main point is that the theatre would be reinforced as the need arises by

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COLONEL THOMAS (cont.)

trained units which can deploy effectively an outbreak on very short notice. Now the airfield and the logistic problems involved in implementation of this programme are severe and it must be expected that some time will pass before we can count too heavily on this augmentation but the important thing is that the programme is already underway. As in the case of the atomic delivery forces, further augmentation and improvement of SACEUR's non-atomic air forces also is planned. As those of you who are familiar with the 1955 Annual Review know, a modest but a progressive build-up in our total air strength will occur during the next few years. From our present total of 264 squadrons, our air forces will grow to more than 300 squadrons and will include more than 6,000 aircraft by close of 1958. With development beginning this year, the German Air Force is expected to attain 39 squadrons totalling 815 aircraft, by close of 1958, with an ultimate goal of 60 squadrons equipped with 1,326 aircraft. The equipment of some of our units with better fighter-bombers, more all-weather fighters, and improved photographic and reconnaissance aircraft also will represent a significant increase in our capabilities. In addition, we are looking forward to the creation in France of a light-bomber force which, by 1958, is planned to consist of 5 squadrons utilising the Vautour aircraft.

Well, it would be useless to possess air strength or to talk of NATO air power capabilities unless plans were in existence to enable the proper use of this air power in the event deterrents should fail and war should eventuate. Our discretion of the aircraft and the forces available to SACEUR therefore leads logically into consideration of the current atomic strike plan, which took effect on 1st January of this year. In essence this plan is built around a concept which assumes that war would begin with a surprise attack, which calls for a maximum degree of planning at all levels of command in peacetime so that even if war should come without prior warning a maximum effort, atomic and non-atomic force, could be launched immediately. Planning preparations have already been made to initiate attacks against a considerable number of the most important targets as soon as SACEUR has been granted authority to release his atomic bombers without waiting for reconnaissance. Simultaneously, reconnaissance forces will sortie against a list of other potential targets to obtain the information which is necessary in order to lay on atomic attacks against concentrations and facilities which this surveillance indicates to be locative targets. At the same time, our regional commanders and their subordinate echelons are called upon to have at hand plans developed in peacetime which will enable them to call for atomic and non-atomic attacks against targets as they develop.

Ever since 1952 SACEUR has had a strike plan for the use of atomic weapons in the defence of Western Europe and the current plan, as you might expect, is essentially an outgrowth from earlier plans. Essentially, the current plan is based on our expectation that the available weapons will be required to accomplish three distinct tasks. The first of these is that of achieving air superiority. From the very beginning of our atomic planning in Europe, first priority has been given to winning the air battle and this will continue to be our priority task in view of the growing threat of the enemy air atomic threat against us.



COLONEL THOMAS (contd.)

The weapons available for use by SACEUR however are in sufficient numbers and delivery vehicles have reached a point in availability which makes it possible for us to prepare plans to undertake all three basic tactical air tasks simultaneously. The air superiority task, the interdiction task and the close support task. The second bomb pictured on this chart therefore indicates an availability of weapons for this second task, that of denying the enemy strategic mobility, by preventing him from moving troop reinforcements or supplies forward into the battle area, and the third bomb represents an availability of weapons to execute the close support task by destroying enemy troops wherever they are located in concentrations sufficient to represent a lucrative target. This may be in rear areas or in battle areas and the term "concentration" as here used is relative in nature since the destructive effects of atomic weapons extend over such an area that troops which hitherto would have been considered dispersed now may represent a sufficient concentration to warrant atomic attack. SACEUR has assumed the responsibility for planning in peacetime to meet the overall atomic air threat against Allied Command Europe. Because of the inherent flexibility of enemy air strength and the fact that aircraft from a single airfield could strike against any of the four regions of Allied Command Europe, it was considered that the counter air task was essentially a theatre responsibility. The location of the counter air targets of interest to SACEUR in his current planning are located generally as indicated by the spots on this map. A sizable number of these selected airfields are considered of such importance that assignments are already made in peacetime for their immediate attack upon the wartime release of the strike forces. Our goal, in fact, is to select a sufficient number of counter air targets for such immediate attack for, at the very start of hostilities, we will have a good probability of eliminating the enemy capability for delivery of atomic weapons and of being able to obtain air superiority in our own area of responsibility. Our minimum immediate requirement is to reduce the enemy air strength to manageable proportions. Now those counter air targets depicted here which are not scheduled for immediate attack have been assigned as a first priority reconnaissance task to regional commanders and arrangements have been made to allocate strike forces to attack these installations just as rapidly as reconnaissance indicates the existence of a profitable target. Certain of these airfield targets which could more easily be attacked by aircraft of forces external to Allied Command Europe have been assigned to such forces in the interest of furthering a co-ordinated effort against enemy air power wherever it is located. SACEUR also has planned a theatre-wide interdiction attack against communication facilities in an effort to deny the enemy strategic mobility. Targets in this plan have not been included so much for their importance as individual installations as for the extent to which they contribute to an interdiction system, a system which will provide a barrier to road and rail transportation into the battle areas. For the counter or air interdiction targets which you saw are fixed in space and much can be done in peacetime to prepare attack plans and operations orders which can be executed almost simultaneously with the onset of hostilities. It is a much more difficult task to plan attacks against troop targets, however, since they are not fixed in space

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COLONEL THOMAS (contd.)

but considerable emphasis is being put on this problem by the staffs of subordinate headquarters of Allied Command Europe in order to put the Allied ground forces in position to take maximum advantage of the use of atomic weapons against the enemy forces which might threaten them. Every effort is being made to fit our atomic plans and target selection with the demonstrated capabilities of our delivery forces, even assuming that an initial enemy surprise attack results in at least a moderate degree of damage. Overall, we consider there is a very reasonable expectation that the delivery forces will be fully capable of executing an atomic strike plan of the type which has been described this morning, although this expectation would be markedly higher if our air force posture were to be improved in the manner which is to be indicated in the next portion of this presentation.

Now, while the atomic delivery forces are engaged in attacks against counter air, interdiction and troop targets the non-atomic forces will be equally busy. Much of their activity will be focussed on the extremely difficult problem of active air defence; reconnaissance will be another first priority task; the support and follow-up role of the non-atomic forces is essential to the proper functioning and execution of the atomic strike plan. Detailed plans and operations orders have been worked out between SHAPE and the various subordinate headquarters in order to maximise the mutual support of all of our air activities, especially during the initial phase of operations. Non-atomic forces will be engaged in fighter sweeps, in what we term "radar bust ups" in escort, in diversion and in screening in the battle areas and, in addition, they will be providing close support for the ground forces.

On completion of the initial atomic attacks fighter bombers of the non-atomic units will be busy with strafing operations against counter air targets to destroy any surviving enemy aircraft and with maintenance of the effect of our interdiction attacks especially through suppression of road movements. Overall, the non-atomic forces have a co-ordinate and a major role to play side by side with our forces of mass destruction represented by the atomic capable delivery units.

Well, Gentlemen, admittedly a discussion of this type inevitably leaves much unsaid and each member of an audience such as this will be making an assessment in his own mind as to the basic approach represented by an atomic strike plan of the type which has been described: the feasibility of its execution and the results which could be expected from such execution.

What I have described is a strike plan intended to enable SACEUR to accomplish his assigned mission of defending NATO Europe. It is not intended for a fringe war or for localised combat. It is a plan to meet to the extent possible within our variable resources SACEUR'S total responsibilities in a war situation. A situation in which the national survival of member nations of NATO has been put at risk. In such a situation, SACEUR'S strike plan cannot be considered as something which stands alone on its own feet without regard to what other Commands are accomplishing. The proposed SACEUR operations are intimately related to the offensive to be conducted by the US strategic air command. Our concentration is primarily on forward areas, while the strategic air command and the UK bomber command focus their attention on deeper areas and, particularly, on the territories of the USSR itself.

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## COLONEL THOMAS (contd.)

The operations of SACLANT also must be considered in conjunction with those planned by SACEUR. We are trying in our Command to do three things: first, destroy the enemy air strength opposing us and, particularly, that portion of his air strength which poses an atomic threat against us; second, to prevent the movement of reinforcements and supplies in order to deny the enemy any strategic mobility and to aid in checking any attempt to move into NATO territory on the ground, and third, to destroy enemy troops whether in reserve or in battle areas in order to give the allied ground forces the best possible chance of maintaining their defensive positions and thus preventing any overrunning of NATO territory.

No one knows how long another war would last; individuals may have their convictions, but planning must take into account all possibilities. It is certainly possible and probably likely that the results of the first few days of a war would decide the crucial issues. In terms of our planning, therefore, the non-atomic air forces would play an extremely important role in this period. Heavily accented on defence and on support type functions initially and then assuming a greater and greater role in continuing the offensive pressure of air power against the remaining strength of the enemy. Our numbers of atomic delivery vehicles and our allocation of atomic weapons give us a fighter power that today is literally staggering to the imagination. Used to the limit of its capability, our air power gives SACEUR a tremendous retaliatory club if deterrents should fail.

This power can be used to anything like the limits of its capabilities, however, only if it is in the proper air posture at the time that hostilities begin. How to put it in that posture and how to keep it there will be the subject of the next portion of this presentation.

## LORD ISMAY

Thank you, Colonel Thomas. General Gruenther.

## GENERAL GRUENTHER

Mr. Chairman, I think it is obvious from the nature of this presentation that we must all recognise that it has an extremely high security value; everything that has been presented thus far this morning is either secret or top secret category.

To make it unnecessary to keep detailed notes, we are having at the discussion which will take place this afternoon those same charts that were shown as slides, so that if you in conducting the discussion, want to have those showing, it will remind the members of the group what was said, because we are a bit concerned about note-keeping or the security given to those I would suggest that you may care to have a 15 minute intermission before we go ahead with the second half of this presentation.

## LORD ISMAY

Thank you very much. Would the Conference like 15 minutes off? Then we assemble again at about twenty to twelve.

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## LORD ISMAY

The Conference will kindly come to order. Colonel Thomas, will you carry on.

## COLONEL THOMAS

Lord Ismay, gentlemen. During the past hour, you were given a description of the Soviet air threat, the missions of the NATO air forces, the air strength available and in prospect to carry out these missions, and the current operational plans for using both the atomic and the non-atomic forces.

During this session, we will examine the posture of our air forces and the NATO and national actions needed to adapt this posture to meet the increasing enemy air atomic threat.

Now the word 'posture' as we are using it can be defined formally as follows: "The overall condition of those components essential to enable an air force to fulfill its mission effectively."

Now more informally, when we ask what is the posture of the air force, we mean essentially, how do the air forces stand, how vulnerable are they and how well prepared are they to carry out their missions ?

But first, let us clearly understand what this includes. The major components of airforce posture in Allied Command Europe as we see them are as pictured here. First - airfields. This involves the infrastructure on which the air units are based, the adequacy and the preparation of these airfields to support allied combat operations and their relative vulnerability to attack.

Second, is the likelihood of obtaining warning of enemy attack which involves our intelligence collection system, the early warning radar system and the communications system to disseminate such warning.

Third, is the degree of alertness of the units, that is, their ability to react to the warning which is received; and fourth is the degree of resiliency which air units possess. This is a measurement of their ability to absorb enemy attack and continue to fight effectively.

Fifth, is the suitability of their organization, their equipment and the personnel manning of the units relative to the requirements of their wartime missions, and sixth and a very important component is the status of training which is included on this chart for completeness, but which is outside the scope of this morning's presentation.

Now SHAPE has given long and careful study to the problems of progressively adapting the posture of our air forces to counter the increasing enemy threat, and to incorporate new technological developments. Specific recommendations for both NATO and national action were submitted by SACEUR to a standing group and to all the Ministries of Defence in July of last year, in a major document entitled "Improvement of the posture of SACEUR's airforce units". These studies and recommendations form the background of today's presentation.

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COLONEL THOMAS (contd.)

The time period under consideration extends essentially through 1960, for this is the time during which the growing enemy threat and our own improving capabilities can be most accurately estimated. It is our belief, however, that the actions that we are recommending are those which are not only of the most value now but also those which will have essential continuing value beyond the next five years.

Now we recognise there are various ways and means of taking action to improve our posture. SHAPE and the subordinate NATO commands already are undertaking many major and minor actions. Much can be done by National Authorities and by Unit commanders with little or no expense, but some actions will require considerable effort and additional resources. Others are going to require long term planning and joint NATO and National action. Further development of our airfield complex, for instance, is a joint matter. So also is improvement of the possibilities of getting warning. But improving the alertness of our units and adapting unit organization to changing conditions are primarily national responsibilities. Improving the resiliency of our air forces is a joint matter which will require many actions and some of these I will discuss in more detail shortly. But first, however, let's examine the basic premises which we believe must serve as the basis for both NATO and national actions in improving our posture.

The first of these premises is that the enemy must be expected to strive for complete surprise. The enemy may very well conclude that the likelihood of his success depends upon an immediate destruction of as much as possible of Allied strategic and tactical air power arrayed against him. He must, therefore, attempt to catch the Allied air forces on their bases, and failing this, he must seek to destroy the bases themselves, so that further strong and effective attacks cannot be launched against him. Furthermore the enemy's growing atomic capabilities enhances the possibility of his achieving surprise. He will progressively be able to do delivery in a very short space of time, and with relatively few aircraft, destructive power which formerly would have required thousands of aeroplanes months to do.

Preparations for such an air attack, if not accompanied by preparations for an immediate ground attack might well be concealed. It is possible, for instance, that the enemy could be able to position his offensive air forces, pre-brief the crews, and keep selected units in a state of constant readiness over a prolonged period, so that their launching on an actual attack might be accomplished with little if any detectable preparations. Under such conditions, it is possible that warning of the initial attack might first be received from our early warning radarscopes after the attack was en route. If such were the case the time available for reaction to this kind of warning would vary from about ten minutes in the most forward areas to about an hour in rear areas.



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## COLONEL THOMAS (contd.)

Now I have stated an extreme case, an admittedly extreme case, and it certainly must be emphasised that we are going to do everything possible to prevent the enemy from achieving surprise, but we cannot be completely sure of succeeding. A major premise of our planning, therefore, must be that we should not count with certainty of any more advanced warning of the initiation of an enemy attack than that which is received from early warning radar. We must seek constantly to improve our likelihood of obtaining warning well in advance of hostilities, and we must plan further actions to be taken on such advance warning, since our posture can be markedly improved with every hour and every day of additional warning. But failing such warning we must be prepared to react to the surprise appearance of hostile aircraft on the forward radar screens.

The next basic premise -- the first few days, and especially the initial atomic exchange, will be the crucial period for SACEUR's air forces, and in turn for the success of his mission in defending Europe. The destructive power of atomic weapons has terrifically compressed, both in time and in effort, the decisive period of the air war to the intensive first few days, of which the initial exchange may be the most vital. Our air forces must be prepared to win the air battle in this initial period. The goal of our air forces must not be survival in itself. They could survive by deploying, to North Africa, or to North America, or by scattering in woods or around the countryside throughout Europe, but by doing so they would fail in their mission just as badly as if they were destroyed by the enemy. A survived aircraft, unable to take off or to land, and to be supported by fuel and ammunition, by personnel and communications, is as ineffective as an aircraft destroyed. To protect the nations and the land and sea forces which are dependent upon them, as well as to protect themselves, our air forces must first win the air battle, and this can be done not only by surviving but by being able to initiate and to sustain maximum effective operations through the initial period, when the enemy air forces must be defeated. It is essential therefore that our air forces be placed in as invulnerable a position as possible. They must have resiliency in the form of an ability to absorb the enemy blows which cannot be avoided, and then bounce back into operations. Furthermore, they must have sustaining capability, not just a one-shot retaliation but a capability to sustain continuous and effective operations.

It is a big order, but we must have superior effectiveness if we are going to accomplish our mission; and our third basic premise is that dispersion must be accepted as the primary passive means of protecting our air forces against atomic attack, particularly in the light of the destructive and contamination characteristics of atomic weapons. The most practicable and the surest means of protecting flyable aircraft against atomic attack is to get them in the air before the attack arrives. Physical protection by underground hangers, or by very strong covered revetments, is possible, but it is very expensive. Furthermore, if the enemy should attack airfields with ground burst atomic weapons, as he might do, lingering lethal contamination could neutralise throughout

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## COLONEL THOMAS (contd.)

the critical period of the air battle that equipment and those personnel who might have survived the effects of the atomic explosion in expensive protected shelters. We feel, therefore, that except for special circumstances or for top priority units, the widescale construction of physical protection on airfields cannot be considered as feasible or a worthwhile measure. Considering all the factors we have had to conclude that dispersion must be the major goal to be sought. Dispersion first by increasing the number of available airfields and by deploying squadrons to separate airfields to the extent possible. Second, by such alertness to react to warning of enemy attack that all flyable aircraft get in the air, and third, by local dispersion of all the facilities, the personnel and the equipment that can be moved off the airfield to a distance of at least 7 kilometres.

Well, having noted those basic components of our air posture and the premises on which we should base corrective action you might well be wondering what contribution our new technological developments are going to make. The ideal developments would clearly be those which will enable our air forces to free themselves from runways. When we can get away from the need for runways we can truly disperse and conceal our forces; missiles, both surface-to-surface and surface-to-air types, and the vertical take-off and landing aircraft which are under development in several countries are promising developments in this direction.

SACEUR has already urged that the highest priority practicable be accorded to these developments. To date, however, thorough consideration of the information available to SHAPE on the development of missiles, of vertical take-off aircraft and of other devices to assist in reducing or eliminating the need for long concrete runways has led to the conclusion that they offer little promise of markedly altering the overall posture of our air forces for at least the next five years. Such developments will undoubtedly make important contributions to improving our air posture at some future time and we are certainly eager to incorporate such improvements, but the extent of their effect cannot now be accurately assessed. On the basis of present evidence we have had to conclude that the present types of aircraft will constitute the bulk of our inventory for at least the next few years and that concrete runways of adequate length will be a continuing basic requirement.

To be of maximum value a presentation such as this does well to focus on matters which require improvement, and corrective action rather than on what might be considered our strong points. I mention this now because during the balance of this period primary attention is going to be directed towards specific actions which are either underway or should be taken just as soon as possible to improve our posture in the light of the growing enemy air atomic threat.

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COLONEL THOMAS (Contd.)

First review the basis premises under which this action should be taken. We are assuming that the enemy will seek surprise, that the first few days will be the crucial period and that dispersal is our primary passive defence. Now we are going to consider the NATO and national actions which are under way or required in relation to the air posture components which have already been presented to you, and the first of these components was airfields. Our immediate goal with respect to airfields is to reduce vulnerability, and considerable action is under way and in prospect towards this end.

I invite your attention, first, to this sketch of a former NATO wing airfield design. It is apparent this design offered local dispersion against attack with high explosives. The aircraft were scattered about within the pattern, but atomic weapons now make this design much too vulnerable to attack, and we must adopt measures to improve the situation. We can no longer afford to concentrate as many aircraft on one airfield as this design calls for.

Now let us look at our new squadron airfield design in comparison with the old wing airfield. The dark portion of the chart represents the new design. First we are exposing only one squadron of about 25 aircraft on each airfield, as compared with a concentration of three squadrons representing 48 to 75 aircraft on the wing airfield. As you can see we have eliminated that concentration of facilities and aircraft parking areas around the centre of the airfield. We have eliminated the parallel taxiway which we do not consider to be operationally essential for the average squadron's operation, and we have split into two areas, at opposite ends of the runway, the aircraft parking areas and the facilities and equipment which must be maintained on the airfield. What we have done is divide the squadron essentially into two halves. Any lack of accuracy in an atomic attack could result in survival of at least a part of those squadron facilities located at the end of the runway away the explosion. Now, in addition, we now call for a dispersal area about seven kilometres from the runway. The squadron runway and the other facilities at the lower left are the same as were pictured on the previous side. At the dispersal area in the upper right we have put all other facilities and the personnel who do not have to be located continuously at the runway itself. Now this distance does not ensure absolute protection against all sizes of bombs, but it is a reasonable compromise between protection and operational control requirements.

We have called for the provision of mobile vans for those facilities such as squadron operations, communications, flying control and technical shops which should accompany a move of the ground echelon of the squadron if it is bombed out and must move to another airfield. We have called for a reasonable degree of camouflaging at this dispersal site, nothing very expensive or very elaborate, but, we think, sensible and practical. This dispersal area is one of the main features of our new design and it is the one which is the boldest step towards the future. As missiles, vertical take-off aircraft, aircraft launching devices become available we will be able progressively to free ourselves from dependence on the runways; and these dispersal areas and the mobile facilities provided thereat are the first major steps then, towards the period of the 1960s and beyond, when full dispersal and concealment should be our goal.

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As some of you already know, SHAPE already had done a good deal about this major step in changing our posture. Over a year ago SHAPE recommended first, the suspension of construction, and later the cancellation of those items of the former wing-type airfields which we were certain we could modify in the new design. In this way we saved NATO money from being spent on items which we considered out-moded. During the past year, the SHAPE staff, the International Staff infrastructure experts, and national representatives, involved in the airfield infrastructure programme have been working hard and effectively to adapt the old design to the new with maximum saving of money and a minimum loss of operational usefulness of the programmed airfields. The Seventh Slice programme of airfields which SHAPE has recommended consists entirely of existing national airfield sites which the nations had made available to us to be modified to the new design shown on this chart. During the process of changeover last year we lost most of one year's construction season. Regrettable though that was, we felt it could not be avoided if we were to study carefully the matter of our new posture requirements and the details of this new airfield design. However, we need early approval of our recommendations on all these matters and the full support of national authorities if we are not going to lose a part of the 1956 construction season.

Now let us turn to another major point about our airfields .... that is their preparation for fully supporting combat operations through adequate pre-stocking. By this term we mean that each airfield should be fully provided with fuel, with ammunition, with spare parts for the aircraft to be supported and with servicing equipment. We have, to date, programmed this pattern of 199 airfields for construction throughout NATO. Now these airfields indicated include all categories: tactical, maritime, training, programmed through the Seventh Slice infrastructure. Now, it must be emphasised that of these 199, 178, or all but 21, are already financed and most are at least partially constructed. In fact about 134 of the airfields pictured on the chart are presently usable for landings and take-off of aircraft. These 134 airfields can be considered potentially usable for operations if we had a long period of warning as to the imminence of hostilities during which further preparation could be made to add all the facilities and the stocks needed to fully support combat; but only about 80 of these airfields currently are adequately stocked with ammunition, fuel, servicing equipment, and have the logistic support and the communication links needed to render them fully capable of supporting combat operations in the initial stages of an atomic war. This situation is obviously one which must be rapidly improved.

We are now in the process of assigning all NATO airfields to specific nations for primary use when we have received the concurrence of both the host and user nation. National authorities should fully pre-stock all such NATO airfields assigned to them including the unoccupied ones. We feel this can be done primarily through re-distribution of our present reserve stocks. Our goal must be to have all airfields in a NATO complex designed, equipped and pre-stocked to support maximum effective combat operations from D-day onward. Those squadron airfields which are not occupied

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COLONEL THOMAS (Contd.)

continuously in peacetime must still be capable of fully supporting operations from the moment the assigned squadron arrives, whether on manoeuvres, on alert dispersal or after warning of attack. In view of the expectation that the air war would have to be fought at maximum intensity and maximum effectiveness during the short critical initial phase, airfields which are not fully prepared to support maximum combat operations during this phase will prove of extremely limited usefulness. No airfield in the NATO complex should be left in such a state.

The second of our components is that of warning. Since we expect that the enemy would seek to launch his initial attack with complete surprise, if such can possibly be achieved, all NATO forces and agencies are desirous that every practical measure be taken to improve intelligence. Involved here are all possible measures of obtaining warning of enemy attack through intelligence channels by detection of military or political indications, however equivocal. Considerable effort in this direction already is under way in all major NATO and national intelligence agencies, and the results which are achieved will be of benefit to the civil governments and all military services, and not merely to our air posture alone.

Next, we must expand radar. That is, we must expand and improve our early warning radar system and man this system as an effective early warning chain on a continuous 24-hour basis. SHAPE is sponsoring action through NATO channels to improve the early warning network and to obtain equipment, but continuous manning of this system will be entirely a national responsibility. 24-hour operation of the radar chain has a distinct bearing on our air force posture and you will hear more about that subject in the air defence presentation tomorrow.

We also must be able to speed transmission of any warning received to every echelon of command just as rapidly as is technically possible, remembering that, even with the most rapid means, we may give operational units in the forward areas only about 10 minutes and in rear areas only up to one hour to take action. Now early warning, an expanded radar system, and speedy transmission of the data, are of full value only if there is an effective system of direction and control. This also will be discussed in more detail as part of the air defence presentation tomorrow, but the creation of a closely linked system of direction and control should be emphasised as one of the truly essential requirements of a fully workable air defence system.

Now, for the third of our air posture components: alertness. We have discussed airfields and warning, and by alertness, we refer to the ability of our forces to react to warning of enemy attack. The first proposed action is maintenance of a partial alert with as high a proportion of each unit as possible at full standby combat alertness. Such a condition will serve both as an effective deterrent against attack and as insurance that even if the initial attack is not detected until the enemy penetrates the radar screen, at least the alert portion of our force will get into the air to oppose it.

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COLONEL THOMAS (Contd)

Next, we must be able to achieve a quick full alert; we must possess the capability to use any additional defence warning from political or military indications to bring all of our squadrons to a complete standby alertness, thereby getting them fully ready to react immediately to warning of the initial attack. We must continue to stress the requirement that our units possess this capability, and practice alerts are to be called frequently for this purpose. Quick fall-outs are closely linked to our next action: a military alert system. Our present formal alert system which is primarily geared to a period of rising political tension must be supplemented with what we are now calling 'a counter surprise' military alert system, consisting of purely military measures having no political implications and which can be implemented by military authorities on equivocal warning, or put immediately into effect at the first warning the initial enemy attack is under way. Such a system is to be designed to put all of our units in as high a state of alertness to react to the enemy attack as available time will allow. SHAPE is developing an outline for such a supplementary alert system, geared to the possibilities of an enemy attempt at surprise atomic attack. We will keep the Standing Group and the Council advised as to our progress with this proposal.

Now, the fourth component of our air posture is that of resilience, the ability to absorb enemy attack and to keep fighting effectively, and we consider there are seven principal actions to be taken to improve this component and I will cover them only briefly.

The first is what we call the transfer capability. NATO and national authorities both should provide the squadrons with enough mobility to transfer quickly to other airfields when their own airfields are contaminated or damaged beyond the possibility of early repair. Such an ability would also enable a rapid initial redeployment of units which remain in wing concentrations during peacetime.

Second, we would expand our airfield complex. A relatively attainable goal would be one airfield for every squadron of approximately 25 aircraft or for every two squadrons of 18 aircraft or less. This is organizationally and operationally sound, since the squadrons of 10 to 25 aircraft now exist as administrative and tactical units in all of the NATO air forces. These squadrons are either now capable of independent or semi-independent operations, or could readily acquire such capability. In the northern and in the southern regions of Allied Command, Europe, we already have programmed or in prospect an adequate number of squadron airfields. To achieve this minimum goal in the central region, however, we will need to add about 23 airfields to the NATO complex, exclusive of those which are needed to support the build-up of the German air force.

We intend that this general expansion be attained, if at all possible, by incorporating into the NATO complex those existing or former national airfield sites which can be made available for this purpose by national authorities and which are in operationally suitable locations. We do not want to build more airfields at wholly new sites if we can possibly avoid it.

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## COLONEL THOMAS (contd)

Now the third action is to deploy squadrons insofar as possible to their separate wartime airfields on a permanent basis just as rapidly as the airfields become available. Where this is not possible, squadrons should have a specially adequate mobile equipment and be manoeuvred as often as possible through their redeployment airfields. Attaining this is a national responsibility.

Fourth, we should develop auxiliary take-off and landing facilities and this will involve joint NATO national action. One of the most critical dangers in the first few days of a war is the risk that successful enemy attacks could drastically reduce the number of take-off and landing facilities available to SACEUR's aircraft. This would force the units to over-concentrate and thus increase their vulnerability and reduce their operational effectiveness. The maximum practicable number of auxiliary take-off and landing facilities should be developed. Autobahns and other highways and suitable fields in the vicinity of NATO airfields should be improved where possible at minimum cost and effort. Aircraft launching and landing arresting devices when and as they become available should be obtained and installed in the vicinity of NATO airfields as emergency auxiliary runways.

A corollary to this is the development of a repair capability. We should improve our capability to repair airfields after attack. This is a national responsibility. Insofar as possible, we should provide our forces with the ability to return airfields to operation after either atomic or conventional attack, unless the level of contamination or the level of destruction makes such impracticable for an extended period of time. This could be achieved by national actions to provide each squadron with certain organic equipment including machines to sweep pavements free of debris and some earth-moving equipment which is capable of effecting minor damage repairs to runways or taxiways or parking areas.

In addition, squadrons in every area of say three to five airfields should have on call military construction battalions or civilian road-building repair units capable of making major airfield repairs, especially in the first critical days of a war.

As a sixth action in this field, it is proposed to accelerate standardisation and cross-servicing. We should accelerate standardisation of our operational and our logistic procedures throughout all of SACEUR's air forces. We also should develop more widely and on a completely adequate basis the capability for cross-servicing of fuel, ammunition, spare parts and minor repairs. This would enable squadrons of different types and different nationalities to continue combat operations if they have to be superimposed on one another's airfields. Achieving this goal will require joint NATO-national action on a continuing basis.

Now the last proposed action to improve our resilience involves the development of local dispersal. We need to be able to move most of the personnel and the equipment and, where possible, non-flyable aircraft off the airfield in response to warning of attack. To be capable of rapid local dispersal, each squadron will require fully-adequate vehicles and providing such is a national responsibility.

You will recall that the fifth major component of our air posture in addition to airfields, warning, alertness and resilience, was organization. Now in many countries the wing is the basic organization and it is essential that the wing and the squadron

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COLONEL THOMAS (contd)

organizations be modified and augmented as necessary to enable the squadrons to function on an airfield separate from their parent wing. Now the actions to be taken in this field are national in nature and involve examining the squadron and the wing organizations in the light of new requirements and of undertaking whatever modifications and augmentation may prove necessary in order to enable the units to function at full operational effectiveness in a dispersed posture and at a higher level of standby combat alertness than they can do at present.

Well that series of actions completes the list of the major actions contemplated and some of the specific implications which are involved. Mention should be made however of certain other and more general implications of these actions.

With respect to logistics first. Adequate modification and a logistic supply system is going to be essential due to the critical nature of the first few days of an atomic war. The logistical supply system will need to be readjusted as necessary to support the proposed deployment posture and the expected increase in the tempo of operations. Taking such action as is necessary in this field is primarily a national responsibility.

Now with respect to communications, telephone and radio networks, navigation aids and the like. These must be sufficiently developed and augmented to cope fully with a dispersed and mobile posture and the operational objectives which this posture supports.

And now the economic implications. We appreciate that these will be of greatest concern to all the nations represented here to-day. And a big factor of course is the airfields themselves. All of the presently programmed airfields, we feel, should be adapted to the new dispersal design which was illustrated. The programme which has been designed would require addition, as I mentioned earlier, of only about 23 more airfields than have already been programmed other than those for the German Air Force. We want to emphasise that we intend that the necessary expansion of a NATO airfield complex for further dispersion flexibility and resiliency of our air forces, be accomplished at minimum cost consistent with our operational needs. This will include the maximum use of further suitable national airfields which the national authorities make available to us for this purpose. You will recognise it is not possible to examine the requirements on a detailed costing basis at this time, but I should emphasise that some of the actions which have been described can be accomplished at little cost and little effort by both national authorities and by unit Commanders. Overall however, the cost of the actions recommended herein must be ultimately considered in terms of their worth - their worth in relationship to the requirement that our tactical units must survive enemy atomic air attacks and be able to operate effectively thereafter. During the cold war, the cost, whether it is considered in terms of money, material, land or personnel, must be measured in terms of the increased air capability which will confront the enemy as a positive deterrent to war. In case deterrents should fail, the wartime worth of the effort called for by these recommended actions must be measured in terms of the value of survival of our vital air strength and the capability of our air units to effectively execute their vital portion of SACEUR's mission of defending Europe.



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## COLONEL THOMAS (contd)

In summary, there is no single, simple or easy solution to the problem of improving our air posture to meet the enemy threat. We have had of necessity to concentrate on what we consider to be the best, most feasible actions which, when properly implemented, will reduce our vulnerability and progressively improve our overall posture of the air forces to what we consider to be an acceptable level. We believe that the actions which have been outlined in this period, the actions which we recommend, are the best for the immediate future through 1960 and the ones which will have a continuing value thereafter. Even more than in the past, Gentlemen, general military readiness, and the capability to fight is the greatest deterrent to aggression. By taking the necessary steps to ensure the capability of our air forces, both to survive and to fight effectively in an atomic war, we will concurrently be improving this deterrent factor just as much as we possibly can.

Thank you gentlemen.

## LORD ISMAY:

Gentlemen, I am sure I am speaking for the whole Conference when I say how deeply indebted we are to Colonel Thomas for a most lucid, comprehensive and absorbently interesting presentation. I would like to repeat if I may, what General Gruenther -- the warning that General Gruenther sounded, that we have heard some very very secret matter this morning and it must be treated with the utmost caution.

Now gentlemen, I propose that we break off now for two hours if that would be agreeable to the Conference, that we meet again at 3 p.m. in Conference Room III for questions and discussion on the presentation we have had this morning. Three p.m. in Conference Room III, and I would suggest that that will end our day when that discussion is over. That the next presentation will take place in Item B tomorrow.

At 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Palais de Chaillot,  
Paris, XVIe.

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