

January 1, 1964

Atlantic Nuclear Force Her Majesty's Government Proposal

Citation:

"Atlantic Nuclear Force Her Majesty's Government Proposal", January 1, 1964, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Istituto Luigi Sturzo, Archivio Giulio Andreotti, Box 1009, Subseries -N/A, Folder 3.

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Summary:

British proposal for a reorganisation of the nuclear arrangements of the Atlantic Alliance that includes objectives, mixed-manned principle, British contribution, command question, relations with NATO.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

TOP SECRET

ATLANTIC NUCLEAR FORCE
OUTLINE OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT'S
PROPOSAL

OBJECTIVES

In proposing a reorganisation of the nuclear arrangements of the Atlantic Alliance Her Majesty's Government have the following objectives:

- a) We want a solution which will foster the strength and the unity of the Alliance as a whole by taking account of the position of those non-nuclear members who want to exercise greater influence on nuclear planning, policy and strategy. In particular we want as far as possible to take account of the political and military requirements of Germany.
- b) As far as possible the nuclear forces committed to NATO should be united under a single unified control system, forming an integral part of the defence structure of the alliance as a whole. As far as possible this should cover both strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. The control systems should be closely linked with NATO, though not in such a way as to enable members of NATO not taking part in the force to exercise a veto on it. It should also be open-ended and allow for new participants to join, particularly France if she does not join from the start.
- c) In addition we want to promote increasing consultation within the alliance on the policy of the western powers with regard to nuclear weapons in any part of the world. Although the present nuclear powers are committed to consult the North Atlantic Council if time permits before they use nuclear weapons anywhere, there is no continuous consultation about deployment of nuclear weapons or situations which might require their use. The European countries however have almost as great an interest in the use of the United States strategic nuclear forces as in nuclear forces committed to NATO.

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PROPOSAL

2. Her Majesty's Government would like to propose that to meet these objectives an Atlantic Nuclear Force should be established with the following components:

- a) The British V-Bomber force, except for those aircraft which are needed for existing commitments (primarily conventional, but, in certain circumstances, nuclear) outside the NATO area; and a British fleet of Polaris submarines when available.
- b) At least an equal number of U.S. Polaris submarines; and possibly some Minuteman missiles in the United States.
- c) Some kind of mixed-manned and jointly owned element or elements in which the existing non-nuclear powers could take part.
- d) Any forces which France may decide to subscribe.

3. This would leave open the possibility that some weapon systems, e.g. bombers or Minuteman missiles provided from national sources, could be mixed-manned and possibly included in the mixed-manned element itself.

4. The national elements in the Atlantic Nuclear Force would be committed to it for as long as NATO continued to exist.

5. The whole force would be under a single authority on which all countries taking part in the force would be entitled to be represented. The United States, the United Kingdom and, if she took part, France, would have a veto over the use of all elements in the force and over any changes which might at any time be proposed in the control system. Any country participating in the mixed-manned element would also have a veto if it wanted. This does not exclude the possibility that provision could be made for the control arrangements to be reviewed later in such a way as to enable the "European" vote to be cast as one.

6. The Authority would consist of the Permanent Representatives to NATO of the countries concerned and would be located at NATO Headquarters. Since the President of the United States would be retaining control of the bulk of the nuclear weapons capable of being used in the defence of NATO, it is for consideration whether

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the Ambassadors at Washington of the countries concerned should also be formed into a special consultative committee through which the President could obtain advice in an emergency.

7. The functions of the Authority, who would act on instructions from governments, would be:

- a) To provide the Force Commander with political guidance.
- b) To approve the Force Commander's targeting and operational plans for the use of all weapons of the Force, which should be drawn up in close consultation with the Strategic Air Command at Omaha.
- c) To take the decision to release nuclear weapons to the Force Commander and to authorise him to execute agreed plans for their use.
- d) To develop doctrine on the role of all types of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons.
- e) To consult and discuss possible contingencies anywhere in the world which might give rise to the possibility of nuclear weapons being used, while ensuring that the views of all interested allies are taken into account in drawing up whatever unified plans may be necessary to meet these contingencies.

8. The targeting of the Atlantic Nuclear Force would be co-ordinated with the targeting of all U.S. forces in the Atlantic area, i.e. there should be close co-ordination between the targeting of weapons primarily intended for the defence of Europe and strategic weapons in the United States, whether or not their primary purpose is Atlantic defence.

NON-DISSEMINATION

9. In order to ensure that the new arrangements could not result in, or be accused of leading to, dissemination of nuclear weapons, it would be desirable to incorporate in the Charter of the Force clauses whereby the nuclear members would undertake not to disseminate nuclear weapons and the non-nuclear members would undertake not to acquire them or control over them. Moreover in order to comply with the principles of non-dissemination, there should be a prohibition on nuclear weapons passing into ownership or control not only of individual non-nuclear countries but also of a group

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of such countries. A suggested text of a passage on these lines for inclusion in the Charter of the Force is at Annex A to this paper.

BRITISH CONTRIBUTION

10. We are prepared to commit immediately to the Atlantic Nuclear Force 8 V-bomber squadrons (64 aircraft). Over the period 1968-70 these will be replaced by the British fleet of Polaris submarines. We are prepared to contemplated mixed-manning within those V-bomber squadrons which are fully committed to the ANF.

11. We are proposing that there should be at least an equal number of U.S. Polaris submarines in the Force, so that we are in practise thinking of a combined fleet of either six or eight boats, with a total armament of 96 or 128 missiles.

MIXED-MANNED COMPONENT

12. We accept that the mixed-manned element is the only way in which the existing non-nuclear countries can be enabled to take part in ownership and manning of nuclear weapons systems within the force, without transgressing the principles of non-dissemination. We recognise that the United States will have to take part in the mixed-manned element in order to make its composition consistent with the principles of non-dissemination. But for our part we should not wish to contribute to a surface ship component over and above our national contribution to the force; we could however consider contributing to a land-based component.

13. The creation of a new strategic force of missile ships armed with Polaris weapons is the least desirable way of applying the mixed-manned principle.

14. The strategic forces available to the Alliance are already adequate for the purpose of deterring Soviet aggression. The missile ship force could only be used in the context of the general strategic exchange when all the other strategic forces available in support of the alliance were also committed; it would thus be superfluous to the requirements of the Alliance. It would also unnecessarily increase the number of nuclear weapons to the possible detriment of East-West relations; it would add to the risks of incidents at sea; and it would increase the total financial and manpower burden of the Alliance.

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15. In our view therefore if part of the Atlantic Nuclear Force is required to be mixed-manned and jointly owned, this should consist of existing or already planned weapons systems. Our first choice would be existing LINCOLN missiles on U.S. soil. These are strategic missiles in the purest sense and therefore particularly appropriate to the kind of NAF being proposed. The joint ownership of a force of such weapons based in the USA would epitomise the American-European link; it would not (as with the seaborne force) mean creating a new force in a new environment and would thus have attractions vis-à-vis the manpower and financial aspects and in the context of arms control discussions, since it would not, in effect, be adding to the overall missile potential of the West. If such a concept would present insuperable difficulties to the U.S. Government then we should like consideration to be given to land-based aircraft and missiles in Europe on the lines of the British proposals put forward earlier this year. We realise, however, that the inclusion of tactical interdiction weapons of this kind would have implications for the character of the Force and the command arrangements appropriate to it.

COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS AND RELATIONS WITH NATO

16. There are two solutions to the Command problem - to place the ANF under its own Commander subordinate to SACEUR or to establish a new and separate Command.

17. SACEUR is a theatre Commander whose primary task is to conduct the tactical land-air battle for the defence of Europe. This, by itself, is a very substantial responsibility for one Commander to exercise and there are strong arguments against giving him the added responsibility for conducting a strategic offensive against the Soviet Union and targets far removed from the immediate battle area. On the other hand, ^{it is} ~~we~~ that SACEUR has a special position in the eyes of European countries as the Commander directly interested in the defence of the European theatre and that these countries would be reluctant to see his role weakened in any way and would prefer to see any new force placed at his disposal.

18. The appointment of a separate Commander, especially if he were a supreme commander, would emphasise the importance of the Atlantic Nuclear Force and the new departure which it represents. This might also serve to emphasise the desirability of co-ordinating the policies of the Atlantic Nuclear Force with those of the external strategic forces. Our preference is therefore for an

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independent commander for the whole Atlantic Nuclear Force. He would be responsible to the controlling Authority of the Force and would obey the Authority's orders. He should of course work in close cooperation with the NATO command structure.

19. The Force would be collectively owned by the participating countries and countries contributing forces to it would give up title over them to the Force collectively. The owners would then assign the Force to NATO for co-ordination with the other forces available to the Alliance, in accordance with the approved strategy and operating procedures of NATO. This would be essential because even if hostilities started with a conventional exchange, the possibility of direct escalation from conventional weapons through tactical nuclear weapons to strategic nuclear weapons must be presented to the enemy as an effective deterrent. At the same time, however, we must reckon with the possibility that the normal functioning of NATO might be inhibited by lack of co-operation on the part of one or more of its members, or indeed by an attempt to veto recourse to force. The existence of this possibility would detract from the credibility of the Force as a deterrent if it was irrevocably assigned to NATO. To guard against this, therefore, the owners of the Force must collectively retain the ability in the last resort to exercise control of the Force without the possibility of an effective veto by non-participants and so to instruct the Force Commander.