NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE
COMITE MILITAIRE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

MC 14/2(Revised)(Final Decision)
23 May 1957

FINAL DECISION ON MC 14/2(Revised)

A Report by the Military Committee

on

OVERALL STRATEGIC CONCEPT FOR THE

DEFENSE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION AREA

1. On 9 May 1957 the North Atlantic Council approved MC 14/2(Revised).

2. The Council agreed that such approval would be without prejudice to the right of any delegation at a later stage to ask for reconsideration of any part of the report. The Council drew the attention of the NATO military authorities to the full record of its discussion on this matter (C-R(57)30).

3. The attention of Major NATO Commanders is drawn to this report which now becomes operative.

4. MC 3/5(FINAL), MC 14/1(FINAL), MC 48(FINAL) and MC 48/1(FINAL) are hereby superseded by MC 14/2(Revised) together with MC 48/2.

FOR THE MILITARY COMMITTEE:

EUGENE A. SALET
Colonel, U.S. Army
Secretary

MC 14/2(Revised)
21 February 1957

Pages 1 - 14, incl.
(Appendix Pages 15 - 33, incl.)

A REPORT BY THE MILITARY COMMITTEE

to the

NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

on

OVERALL STRATEGIC CONCEPT FOR THE

DEFENSE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION AREA

Reference: C-M(56)138(Final)

INTRODUCTION

1. On the instruction of the North Atlantic Council, the Military Committee has undertaken a review of NATO defense planning.

2. The paper at Enclosure represents the first stage of this review. It develops the Overall Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Area. The second stage will be the submission of a paper on “Measures to Implement the Strategic Concept” (MC 48/2).

3. These two papers together supersede the existing strategic guidance contained in MC 3/5(FINAL), MC 14/1(FINAL), MC 48(FINAL) and MC 48/1(FINAL).

RECOMMENDATION

4. The Military Committee recommends that the North Atlantic Council approve this report.

DISTRIBUTION: A B C D E(10) F G K(1)

ENCLOSURE

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ENCLOSURE

OVERALL STRATEGIC CONCEPT FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION AREA

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

1. It is the purpose of this document to outline a broad strategic concept for the overall defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Area within the framework of the guidance set forth in C-M(56)138(Final).

2. This broad strategic concept is built on considerations of geographic position,(*) economic, material, scientific and technical resources, industrial capacity, population and the military capabilities of the Treaty nations, recognizing that each nations' contribution should take account of these considerations. The objective is to prevent war by maintaining adequate military strength in being, consistent with economy of effort, resources and manpower, which will demonstrate to a potential aggressor that fatal risks would be involved if he launched or supported an armed attack against NATO and should war be forced upon us, to have the capability to bring it to a successful conclusion. In order to participate in the common defense of the NATO area, each nation should develop its military strength to the maximum extent consistent with the NATO strategic concept; and, in harmony with the primary importance of protecting the NATO area, provide for its own defense and, where applicable, its defense commitments elsewhere.

(*) This aspect is dealt with in detail as Area Planning Guidance in Appendix

3. This strategic concept is the foundation for the production of realistic, vital and constructive defense planning aimed at lessening the possibility of aggression and thereby securing peace. It provides the basic strategic guidance for the NATO military authorities in order to assure coordinated planning in consonance with the principles set forth in paragraph 5 below. The measures required to implement this concept will require constant review.

4. In order to preserve peace and security in the NATO area, it is essential that, without disregarding the security of the NATO area, hostile Soviet influence in non-NATO regions is countered. Consequently, and insofar as practicable, it is desirable for certain NATO nations to retain sufficient military flexibility so that this policy may be implemented.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY DEFENSE PRINCIPLES

5. Certain general principles underlie the overall defense of the North Atlantic Treaty area. These principles are fundamental to the successful functioning of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the development of a common defense program. As such, those applicable to defense planning are set out in the following paragraphs as an integral part of the basic guidance for the NATO military authorities.

a. The main principle is common action through self-help and mutual aid in deterring war and in defense against armed attack should the deterrent fail. The immediate objective is the achievement of adequate, collective self-defense among the North Atlantic Treaty nations.

b. In accordance with the general objective of Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty, each nation will contribute in the most effective form, consistent with its situation, responsibilities and resources, such aid as can reasonably be expected of it.

c. In developing their military strength consistent with the overall strategic concept the participating nations should bear in mind that the maintenance of economic stability constitutes an important element of their security.

d. The armed forces so located* as to permit mutual support in the event of aggression should be developed on a coordinated basis in order that they can operate most economically and efficiently in accordance with a common strategic concept.

e. The defense planning of the North Atlantic Treaty nations must combine maximum efficiency of their armed forces with the maximum economy of manpower, money and materials necessary to provide adequately for the collective security.

f. A basic principle of North Atlantic Treaty planning should be that each nation should undertake the task, or tasks, for which it is best suited. Certain nations, because of the geographical location or because of their capabilities will be prepared to undertake appropriate specific missions. Such missions should be coordinated with the overall plan.

g. It is a responsibility of national authorities to develop plans and measures which will ensure the continuity of governmental control following a sudden outbreak of hostilities and will also ensure the maintenance of civilian morale coupled with the ability to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion.

6. Only through availability of timely, complete and accurate intelligence may our defensive posture be brought to its optimum efficiency, especially in view of increasing military

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* It should be assumed that British, Canadian and United States forces will continue to be stationed in Allied Command Europe.

advantages to be gained by the enemy through surprise. This entails the development of the means to identify Soviet or Satellite aggression (land, sea or air) and a system leading to the rapid dissemination of this information and the maximum practicable exchange of intelligence.

7. The strategic concept envisages the implementation of essential measures including the provision of forces, procedures and facilities to provide a deterrent to war and to ensure the defense and integrity of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Area should war occur. These measures are developed in current MC 48 documents.

8. As a prerequisite to a successful execution of common plans, cooperative measures must be undertaken in advance. These measures include effective coordination of plans, and as much standardization as possible in all military doctrines and practices, materiel, and equipment.

SECTION II

THE PROBABLE NATURE OF A FUTURE GENERAL WAR INVOLVING NATO

9. There is no doubt that the Soviet Leaders understand and fear the consequences of general nuclear war. It can be assumed, therefore, that they will not deliberately launch a general war so long as they know the West is prepared to retaliate with nuclear weapons(*) in sufficient strength to devastate the USSR. There is, however, a danger of general war arising as a result of miscalculation on the part of the Soviets, a misconstruction of Western intentions, or as a result of military operations of a limited nature which the Soviets did not originally expect would lead to a general war. Soviet reluctance to embark on general war will probably result in the choice of continuing the cold war or initiating military operations of a limited nature as a preferred Soviet tactic. Nevertheless, a general war, though not the most likely eventuality, remains the greatest threat to the survival of the NATO nations. Accordingly, first priority must be given to development of an effective defense system for the purpose of:

a. Averting general war.

b. Should war be forced upon the Alliance, assuring its ability to attain NATO objectives.

10. The advent of nuclear weapons systems has drastically changed the conditions of modern war. The primary consideration is that an increasing number and variety of nuclear weapons, along

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* The term “nuclear weapons”, wherever appearing is understood to mean atomic and thermonuclear weapons, regardless of the means of delivery.

with the capability to deliver them by various means, will be available both to NATO and to the Soviets. The destructive power of these weapons, particularly the thermonuclear ones, and the difficulties of defense against them pose entirely new problems from those experienced in past wars, not only of a military nature but political, economic and psychological as well.

11. As the nuclear capability of both sides expands, a large-scale exchange of nuclear weapons would be even more intense and destructive. Thus, instead of the gradually increasing rate of destruction prevalent in recent wars of prolonged mobilization and attrition, maximum destruction would occur within the first few days as both sides strove to exploit their nuclear stockpiles to gain nuclear superiority. The first few days, which would be characterized by the greatest intensity of nuclear exchange, would be critical.

12. The destruction resulting from large-scale use of nuclear weapons by both sides would seriously impede subsequent mobilization, troop movement, communications and logistical support. It follows that military planning must take into account the strong possibility that only a drastically reduced mobilization base will be available to either side for several months following an all-out nuclear exchange.

13. a. If general war is deliberately undertaken by the USSR, it will probably be initiated by a massive nuclear offensive. This attack will be quickly mounted and designed to neutralize the Allied nuclear delivery systems and other key military targets.

b. If general war comes about through miscalculation, misconstruction of Western intentions by the Soviets, or as a result of military operations of a limited nature which the Soviets did not expect to result in general war, they might not resort to the use of nuclear weapons initially.

c. In either case there will almost certainly be Soviet land, sea and air campaigns with the purpose of isolating and seizing NATO Europe. Since NATO would be unable to prevent the rapid overrunning of Europe unless NATO immediately employed nuclear weapons both strategically and tactically, we must be prepared to take the initiative in their use.

14. In case of general war, therefore, NATO defense depends upon an immediate exploitation of our nuclear capability, whether or not the Soviets employ nuclear weapons. The Allies, in the initial and critical phase, would need to conduct a series of mutually dependent land, sea and air campaigns of maximum intensity. The objectives of these campaigns which include the nuclear strategic campaign would be to defend the populations, territories, vital sea areas and offensive striking power of NATO, and to destroy the ability and the will of the enemy to pursue general war.

15. Following the advantage gained by NATO in this initial onslaught, there would be a period of reorganization, rehabilitation and the assembly of residual resources to accomplish the remaining necessary military tasks leading to a termination of hostilities. The character and duration of these operations cannot be predicted with any assurance of accuracy. Nevertheless, as far as is practicable, plans must be made for a subsequent period of operations, of indeterminate duration, designed to take immediate advantage of the

superiority gained in the initial phase. It is probable that there will be, amongst others, a continuing threat to our sea lines of supply until the Soviet naval forces, principally their submarines and/or their support, have been neutralized.

16. Thus, under the conditions outlined above, the war divides itself logically into two main phases:

a. Phase I : A period of violent large-scale organized fighting of a comparatively short duration, not likely to exceed thirty days, the first few days of which would be characterized by the greatest intensity of nuclear exchange.

b. Phase II : A longer period of indeterminate duration for reorganization, resupply and the accomplishment of necessary military tasks leading to a conclusion of the war.

There is however, likely to be no such clear division between phases in the pattern of war at sea, where anti-submarine operations are likely to continue for an indeterminate period.

17. The Military Committee, taking account of the strong possibility of a drastically reduced mobilization base on both sides following an all-out nuclear exchange, which in itself would preclude large-scale sustained combat operations, and considering the critical nature of the operations in the initial phase, concludes that, in developing the pattern of NATO military strength which would be most effective in the type of war envisaged and which would be within the available resources, priority must be given to the provision of forces-in-being capable of effectively contributing to success in the initial phase.

SECTION III

ALTERNATIVE THREATS TO NATO SECURITY

18. The Soviets are aware of the great and growing power of NATO in the field of nuclear capabilities. They (the Soviets) must realize that, in the course of an all-out and nearly simultaneous nuclear exchange, notwithstanding the widespread damage inflicted upon NATO, they themselves would suffer damages to such an extent that they could not count on achieving a profitable military or political victory.

19. The Soviets might therefore conclude that the only way in which they could profitably further their aim would be to initiate operations with limited objectives, such as infiltrations, incursions or hostile local actions in the NATO area, covertly or overtly supported by themselves, trusting that the Allies in their collective desire to prevent a general conflict would either limit their reactions accordingly or not react at all. Under these circumstances NATO must be prepared to deal immediately with such situations without necessarily having recourse to nuclear weapons. NATO must also be prepared to respond quickly with nuclear weapons should the situation require it. In this latter respect, the Military Committee considers that, if the Soviets were involved in a local hostile action and sought to broaden the scope of such an incident or to prolong it, the situation would call for the utilization of all weapons and forces at NATO's disposal, since in no case is there a NATO concept of limited war with the Soviets.

20. It is conceivable that the NATO territory of a member of NATO might be attacked under circumstances where Soviet sponsorship was not involved or could not be determined. Such an attack would not be limited in a political sense, for an attack against any member constitutes an attack upon all members of the Alliance. NATO would attempt to limit the geographic scope of the military action arising

therefrom but would resist this aggression with all appropriate military measures to bring it to a rapid and favourable conclusion.

21. Additionally, it is of increasing importance to stress the Soviet effort to gain influence directly or indirectly over certain non-NATO nations which it is vital to the Alliance to preserve outside the Soviet orbit. This manoeuvre is characterised by Soviet attempts to profit to the maximum from disagreements between nations outside the Soviet Bloc; by psychological, political and economic offensives; by arms deliveries; and perhaps even by the setting up of bases, hidden or not, in certain of these nations. This could lead to the outbreak of a local war with all its inherent dangers.

22. While NATO defense planning is limited to the defense of the Treaty area, it is necessary to take account of the dangers which may arise for NATO because of developments outside that area.(*) In this light, planning for the most efficient organization and the equipment of NATO forces must take account of the possible need for certain NATO countries to use some of their NATO forces to meet defense commitments elsewhere, such as may arise because of the various and changing forms of the Soviet-inspired Communist threat on a world front. This need, however, should, in conformity with their NATO commitments, be harmonized with the primary importance of protecting the NATO area.

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* NATO military authorities have no responsibilities or authority except with respect to incidents which are covered by Articles 5 and 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty

SECTION IV

THE STRATEGIC CONCEPT

23. The overall defensive concept of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is to promote the preservation of peace and to provide for the security of the North Atlantic Treaty area by confronting the potential aggressor with NATO forces which are so organized, disposed, trained and equipped that he will conclude that the chances of a favourable decision are too small to be acceptable, and that fatal risks would be involved if he launched or supported an armed attack.

24. Our chief objective is to prevent war by creating an effective deterrent to aggression. The principal elements of the deterrent are adequate nuclear and other ready forces and the manifest determination to retaliate against any aggressor with all the forces at our disposal, including nuclear weapons, which the defense of NATO would require.

25. In preparation for a general war, should one be forced upon us,

a. We must first ensure the ability to carry out an instant and devastating nuclear counter-offensive by all available means and develop the capability to absorb and survive the enemy's onslaught.

b. Concurrently and closely related to the attainment of this aim, we must develop our ability to use our land, sea and air forces for defense of the territories and sea areas of NATO as far forward as possible to maintain the integrity of the NATO area, counting on the use of nuclear weapons from the outset. We must have the ability to continue these operations in combination with the nuclear counter-offensive until the will and ability of the enemy to pursue general war has been destroyed.

c. Finally, we must be prepared for a period of reorganization, rehabilitation and the assembly of residual resources to accomplish the remaining necessary military tasks leading to a termination of hostilities.

d. Throughout, we must protect and maintain sea communications as required in support of the above tasks.

e. Nations must be prepared throughout to maintain order on the home front.

26. NATO must also be prepared to react instantly and in appropriate strength to - and therefore maintain the means to deal with - any other aggressions against NATO territory, such as infiltrations, incursions or hostile local actions without necessarily having recourse to nuclear weapons.

27. At the same time, we should recognize that the forces of certain NATO nations may need to retain the flexibility required to permit action to meet limited military situations short of general war outside the NATO area. This flexibility should be in accordance with the NATO commitments of the member nations and should be harmonized with the primary importance of protecting the NATO area.

APPENDIX

AREA PLANNING GUIDANCE

GENERAL

Strategy and Objectives by Geographical Areas

1. Within the Overall Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area, it is necessary to consider the strategic importance, the factors affecting security and defense and the strategic objectives for each geographical area.

2. From the strategic point of view, the territory covered by the North Atlantic Treaty must be considered in relationship to its geographical setting. This setting comprises Continental Europe (consisting of Western Europe, flanked by Scandinavia and Southern Europe), Algeria, * Asian Turkey, Iceland, the British Isles and North America. The security and defense of these involves also the Seas and NATO Islands in the NATO area. In particular this includes the North Atlantic, Davis Strait, Denmark Strait, Norwegian Sea, North Sea, English Channel, Western Baltic, and the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

3. A threat to the security of the Alliance as a whole will arise if operations of a limited nature such as infiltrations, incursions or hostile local actions are initiated in any NATO area. While it is impossible to forecast the nature and scope of any such incident within a particular geographic area, it is self-evident that every effort must be made to suppress it promptly with all appropriate military measures.

4. There is a possibility that such action and counteraction would lead to a general war; there is also a risk of general war through miscalculation by the Soviets of Allied reaction or their misconstruction of our intentions.

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* For NATO purposes, applicable only to the departments of Northern Algeria

5. The factors considered in this Appendix may therefore not apply or will vary in importance, depending on whether they are considered in relation to the deterrent to war, to hostile local actions, or to general war. Thus, it is essential that the factors presented be studied in the appropriate context of the main body of this document. The current intelligence estimate in the SG 161 Series should also be taken into consideration.

6. The defense and maintenance of order on the home front, including protection of lines of communication and military infrastructure must be given consideration in connection with the several geographical areas which are dealt with in this Appendix.

WESTERN EUROPE

Strategic Importance of Western Europe

7. Because of its geographical position, Western Europe represents a front line of defense against the spread of Communism. In their unremitting efforts to weaken and ultimately destroy the “capitalist world,” the Soviets might resort to subversion, infiltrations or even conceivably to general war.

8. The security of the entire NATO area depends upon defense of Western Europe which, in turn, rests upon the creation of effective military strength as a deterrent to war and a defense against armed attack should the deterrent fail, coupled with the development of Western Europe’s material resources and high industrial potential for the purpose of strengthening its economy which, in itself, creates conditions favourable to the countering of Communism.

9. Should the Soviets resort to general war, the successful defense of Western Europe by the North Atlantic Treaty powers is vital. Even though there is a strong possibility that a great number of its ports, communications, airfields and centers of population

would be devastated by nuclear attack, it is imperative to prevent its being overrun. The loss of Western Europe to the Soviets would isolate the North American Continent and represent for the Soviets a gain which might ultimately prove decisive.

Strategic Factors

10. The territorial integrity of Western Europe must be maintained. Subversions must be resisted by all appropriate means. Infiltrations, incursions and hostile local actions must be dealt with promptly. In general war the forces of the Soviets must be contained until the will and ability of the enemy to pursue general war has been destroyed by our nuclear counter-offensive in combination with operations of our land, sea and air forces. Such containment would contribute to the defense of NATO Scandinavia, the British Isles and Southern Europe, and deny to the enemy the facilities of the Western Baltic and North Sea.

11. In general war NATO forces will be largely dependent on trained personnel, bases, facilities, material and supplies in-being and accessible to them in the early stages. In the conditions likely to follow a nuclear exchange, Western Europe will be heavily dependent for its support on overseas resources, on the sea communications carrying them and on the unloading facilities. Such support may not be readily available from North America because of damage on that continent.

12. The Austrian State Treaty has resulted in Austria’s neutrality. This has created an advantage to NATO by effecting the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Austria. However, the disadvantage of exposing the flanks of Southern Germany and Northern Italy remains.

13. Disaffection among the Soviet Satellites may create for the Soviets problems of internal security and protection of lines of communication.

Strategic Objectives

14. The concept for the defense of Western Europe in general war is to carry out a nuclear strategic counter-offensive and to sustain operations to maintain the territorial integrity of Western

Europe until the ability and will of the enemy to pursue general war has been destroyed. Under conditions other than general war, the concept is to deal instantly and in appropriate strength with any form of incident such as infiltration, incursion or hostile local action.

15. Operations to fulfil this strategy should be based on the provision of a fully effective nuclear retaliatory force provided with all the necessary facilities, adequate land, sea and air shield forces, having an integrated nuclear capability, and the development of the maximum practicable air defense of the area.

16. The principal offensive means likely to be available at the outbreak of war for the implementation of this strategy are missiles and piloted aircraft whose capabilities should be fully exploited.

17. Operations should aim at destroying the enemy's nuclear capability, his forces and his resources and communications. Operations of the shield forces should be developed along defensive-offensive principles, generating appropriate targets for Allied nuclear weapons, exploiting terrain to create situations which will inflict maximum attrition on the enemy and halting his attack, while retaining the maximum combat effectiveness.

18. The task of the shield forces includes:

a. Effective protection of the nuclear retaliatory capability in Europe.

b. Maintenance of the territorial integrity of Western Europe.

c. Protection as far as practicable, of the industrial potential, unloading facilities, bases and communication and population centres of Western Europe.

d. Support of adjacent commands with particular reference to the denial of the sea passages between the Baltic and the North Sea, and the Kiel Canal to the enemy.

SCANDINAVIA

Strategic Importance of Scandinavia

19. The strategic importance of Scandinavia lies principally in its geographical position between the Norwegian Sea and the Baltic Sea. It thus dominates to the westward one of the sea areas from which the Allies will most likely operate their sea based nuclear striking power, and threatens the sea route by which alone the Soviet Northern Fleet can reach the Atlantic, and it dominates to the south-eastward the sea passages connecting the Baltic Sea with the open oceans. The value of NATO Scandinavia to the Allies lies in the strategic cover its possession affords, its bases for counter-offensive operations, and its favourable location for early warning facilities. Retention of this area by NATO greatly increases the Allied capacity to deny to the enemy sea areas highly important:

a. To his ability to attack Allied sea communications in the North Atlantic Region,

b. To the security of his sea lines of communication in the Baltic,

c. And to the defense of his homeland.
Furthermore, this will hamper the enemy's ability to attack Allied strategic bases, particularly those in the British Isles. Allied control of the Baltic exits is considered of great importance.

Strategic Factors

20. Norway commands the Soviet approach route around the North Cape to the Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic and, with the British Isles, she commands the Northern North Sea. She is also favourably located for air operations over the Baltic, White and Barents Seas and the retention of Norway would preserve for NATO a vital link in its early warning facilities. She is an important source for certain materials of strategic significance.

21. Denmark is a key to operations in the Western Baltic and dominates the sea passages between the Baltic and the Atlantic which give Soviet naval forces access to the high seas. If controlled

by the Soviets, these sea passages would enable the full resources of the Soviet Baltic force to be employed in support of operations in the Atlantic.

22. Sweden, by reason of her economic, industrial, and military strength, as well as her strategic location, could contribute materially to NATO defense. However, she is not a member of NATO. Sweden lies in the direct path of any attack against Scandinavia from the east. Soviet Russia cannot ignore the possibility of Sweden joining the Allies should another Scandinavian country be attacked. Except for the land approach through Finland in the extreme north, an attack against Sweden must be by sea or air. Soviet air cover can be provided most effectively in the south. In the interior communications are very limited, and operations through Sweden directed against Norway would initially be restricted largely to routes leading toward Oslo and Trondheim in the south and the vicinity of Narvik in the north.

23. The defense of Scandinavia is likely to be greatly affected by operations in the North Atlantic, Norwegian Sea, North Sea and Western Europe. The Scandinavian countries will be heavily dependent for their support on overseas resources, on the sea communications carrying them and on the unloading facilities. As contact with the Central European forces operating in Northern Germany may be interrupted, the defense in this area must be planned to meet this contingency. The timely support by naval striking forces in the North Atlantic and Norwegian Sea is considered to be of utmost importance for a successful defense of Scandinavia and particularly of North Norway.

24. The forces maintained by Denmark and Norway in peacetime are relatively small. Furthermore, the topography is such that it is difficult to transfer units and formations rapidly from one part of the country to another, particularly where sea crossings are involved. This difficulty would be accentuated in the event of nuclear attack.

It is therefore vital that these countries should receive maximum possible warning of impending attack, to enable them to improve their defense posture as much as possible.

Strategic Objectives

25. In the light of the above considerations, Scandinavia should be defended as a whole as far forward as possible, though operations in the north may well develop quite separately from the battle for the south. Plans for the defense of Norway and Denmark, and also of Sweden should this be possible, must be coordinated. These plans should be based on the need for the utmost flexibility, to permit concentration to deal with attacks before they can be reinforced. Maximum use must be made of all available forces, both local and supporting, in defensive-offensive operations.

26. Particular emphasis must be placed on the defense of Jutland, Zealand and North Norway and on the retention of those areas in Norway and Denmark, and in Sweden (should she join the Allies), from which the Allies can:

a. Maintain a vital link in the NATO early warning system.

b. Control the sea passages between the Baltic and the Atlantic with primary emphasis on effective denial to enemy submarines exit to the Atlantic and denying him the support of his Baltic ports for Atlantic operations.

c. Strike Soviet forces possessing nuclear capabilities, sever Soviet lines of communication in and over the Baltic, and destroy other Soviet targets contributing to his ability and will to pursue general war.

d. Deny to the enemy forward positions in North Norway.

SOUTHERN EUROPE

Strategic Importance of Southern Europe

27. In that it forms a geographical barrier between the USSR and the Mediterranean, Southern Europe is the southern bastion against the spread of Communism into the Middle East and North Africa. In general war Southern Europe controls the Black Sea exit and bars or flanks any direct Soviet advance to the Middle East. It provides valuable areas and facilities for counter-operations against the Soviet. Moreover, the Balkan Area and Turkey constitute an excellent base from which to threaten the southern flank of the enemy.

Strategic Factors

28. The Southern European area is divided into three major land compartments: Italy, the NATO area of the Balkans and Asian Turkey. Throughout almost the whole area the terrain is mountainous. It is suitable for the deployment of mechanized formations principally in the Northern Italian Plain, in Northern Greece and east of the Vermion-Olympus Range and through the Monastir Gap to the South, in Thrace and on the Anatolian Plateau. The area lends itself to the channelization of advancing enemy ground forces, making them prime targets for tactical nuclear weapons. The area also includes Yugoslavia, whose strategic location and rugged terrain could be of great importance to the defense of the area as a whole. Finally, Albania, the only isolated member of the Soviet Bloc, represents a forward penetration of the area. Her access to the Mediterranean is a factor of military significance despite her overall relatively weak war-making potential and her relative vulnerability.

29. The Italian Peninsula is an area of great strategic value since, because of its geographical position, it is part of both Western Europe and the Mediterranean area. The retention of the peninsula is of decisive importance to the conduct of Allied

operations in the Mediterranean. Italy has no frontier with the enemy territory, and a land attack against her is likely only through Austria or Yugoslavia into the Northern Italian Plain. In the North this plain is covered by the wide and easily defended Italian Alps, but to the East the defense of Italy is prejudiced by the fact that the Julian alps, with their strategic gaps, lie in Yugoslavia beyond the Italian borders. Therefore, the line of the frontier is unfavourable to Italy. The course of events in Northern Yugoslavia and Austria will greatly affect the defense of Northern Italy.

30. The coastal zone of the Northern Aegean Sea provides access to the Mediterranean. It also offers the physical possibility of linking the defenses of Greece with those of Yugoslavia and Turkey for their mutual support. This zone is elongated in form, and though lacking in depth, it contains stronghold positions which, if well organized, could provide a positive defense and possible facilities for counter-operations against the Soviets. Moreover, the aggressive defense of Northern Greece from forward positions will create a diversionary action for an enemy operating against the Straits and will contribute to their defense. The retention of Greece would preserve for NATO a vital link in its early warning facilities and would contribute to the defense of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles and Western Turkey. It would also provide cover for the Greek islands which lie athwart the exit of enemy naval forces from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean. The course of events in Southern Yugoslavia will greatly affect the defense of Greece.

31. The retention of Turkey would assure the Allies of their dominating positions on the Black Sea, athwart the direct approaches to the Middle East, and of the military facilities which Turkey provides. It would contribute to the defense of Greece and the oil producing areas so important to the Allies, and would deny to the enemy access to the Mediterranean Sea through the Turkish Straits.

The course of events in adjacent Middle Eastern countries will affect the defense of Turkey.

32. In planning for the defense of the area, full account must be taken of:

a. The availability of naval and air nuclear striking forces in the Mediterranean and North Africa.

b. The availability of an integrated ground nuclear delivery capability in Southern Europe.

c. The stand which Yugoslavia may take in general war.

d. The dependence the USSR may be forced to place on Satellite troops in the South.

e. The relative vulnerability of Albania.

Strategic Objectives

33. The defense of Southern Europe involves:

a. Effective protection of the nuclear retaliatory capability.

b. The defense of Italy, buttressed on the northwest against the Swiss Alps, and holding the Italian Alps in the north and defending the borders on the east.

c. The preservation of as much as possible of the industrial potential of the Po Valley.

d. The defense of Greece as far to the north and east as possible, in coordination with Turkey and, if appropriate, in coordination with Yugoslavia.

e. The defense of Turkish Thrace as far to the north and west as possible without jeopardizing the defense of Asian Turkey. The denial to the enemy of the use of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus is considered of over-riding importance.

f. The establishment of an adequate defense for Asian Turkey in cooperation with existing Middle East defense organizations as appropriate and as authorized by the North Atlantic Council.

THE BRITISH ISLES

Strategic Importance of the British Isles

34. The British Isles, by virtue of their geographical location, their industrial capability, and their ports and airfields, provide a valuable base for the stationing of strategic counter-offensive forces and support of NATO forces in Europe in the indefinite period of ideological conflict with the Soviets.

Strategic Factors

35. The British Isles are separated from the mainland of Europe and are unlikely therefore to be the victim of incidents such as infiltrations, incursions or hostile local actions by the Soviets or their Satellites.

36. In general war they will probably be one of the principal targets for attack with nuclear weapons. The British Isles are within range of medium and long-range weapon systems launchable from existing Soviet bases; they may also suffer attack from the sea, including mining of estuaries and approaches.

37. It must be accepted that in general war there is a strong possibility that air defense measures would be unable to prevent widespread destruction in, and a drastic impairment of, the production and mobilization capability of the British Isles during the first few days.

Strategic Objectives

38. The strategic objectives for the British Isles are:

a. To provide an effective base for, and effective protection of, the strategic nuclear counter-offensive capability.

b. Maintenance of all other forces at a degree of readiness which will enable them to participate effectively in hostilities from the outset in spite of nuclear bombardment.

c. Preservation, to the extent practicable, of the war-making capacity of the British Isles.

NORTH AMERICA

Strategic Importance of North America

39. The importance of North America lies in the fact that it possesses the principal bases for the strategic air counter-offensive, which is the main deterrent to general war. North America is also the principal source of Allied production and support. It is geographically well placed to provide some of the bases required in general war to control the vital lines of communication with Europe.

Strategic Factors

40. North America is widely separated from NATO Europe by large sea areas. In a general war North America will probably be a principal target for attack with nuclear weapons by way of sea and air. Following a nuclear exchange there is a strong possibility that only a considerably reduced mobilization base would be available in North America.

41. The shortest and most direct route between North America and Soviet bases is by way of the Arctic region.

42. Since the chief objective of NATO is to prevent war by creating an effective deterrent and since a vital element of the deterrent force is located in North America, the knowledge throughout the world that the Strategic Air Command base complex cannot be successfully attacked is of prime importance.

Strategic Objectives

43. The objectives for this area are:

a. To provide an effective base for, and effective protection of, the strategic nuclear counter-offensive capability.
b. Maintenance of an effective early warning and air defense system.

c. Protection of as much of the industrial, mobilization and military potential, and population as practicable.

d. Provision of the maximum practicable support of the overall war effort, consistent with a, b and c above.

THE NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

Strategic Importance of the North Atlantic Ocean

44. The North Atlantic Ocean is the medium whereby much of the trade of Europe with the rest of the world is effected, and the great supporting potential of the Americas is transported to Europe. In the event of hostilities the North Atlantic Ocean affords opportunity for exploiting the flexibility of the naval arm in support of other operations.

45. In general war by the operation of Allied Task Forces in these and connected waters, powerful blows can be struck at the enemy military bases and war-making potential. Control of the North Atlantic and its connected waters would permit sea movement of required forces, their rapid deployment in amphibious or other operations and the movement of residual resources across its surface.

46. Control of the North Atlantic Ocean is essential for the retention and subsequent survival of Western Europe and would greatly reduce the ability of the enemy to mount missile attacks by submarines against all the countries bordering on the North Atlantic, except to the extent that he was able to deploy undetected prior to D-Day.

Strategic Factors

47. At the outbreak of war the USSR will have no naval bases with free access to the North Atlantic except on the White and Barents Seas. All the islands in the North Atlantic and the Norwegian and Greenland Sea areas of the Arctic Ocean belong to NATO nations, or to those likely to be allied in time of war. Except for Svalbard which is governed by the terms of the Treaty of 1920, they can all be fortified or developed in peacetime.

48. The NATO Island bases are essential to the control of the North Atlantic and support of forces operating in and over these and contiguous waters. They provide support for the nuclear counter-offensive forces, airfields for reconnaissance and anti-submarine operations, essential support for ferrying short-range aircraft across the Atlantic, and support of naval forces operating in these and contiguous waters. They are valuable as early warning stations.

Strategic Objectives

49. The strategic objectives in the North Atlantic Ocean are to establish and maintain control of the area and its sea and air communications, to defend the NATO home territories and essential base areas in and bordering it, and to employ available forces both offensively and defensively in support of the overall strategy. In furtherance of these objectives it will be essential to have a timely projection of Allied sea-borne nuclear offensive power against enemy naval and other agreed targets; and also to engage the enemy as soon as and as far forward as possible; so as to reduce to the minimum the number of his units which can penetrate to the broader reaches of the Atlantic and threaten the vital Allied sea lines of communication.

ICELAND

Strategic Importance of Iceland

50. Iceland is of vital importance as a base for NATO because it dominates the bottleneck by which Soviet naval forces will pass from their existing bases to their operating areas. Iceland provides NATO with a base for the following purposes:

a. It is an important link in the early warning system.

b. It is an important base for the operation of anti-submarine forces.

c. It furnishes forward logistic support for the ferrying fleet operations.

d. It is an essential stepping stone for the ferrying of small jet aircraft from North America to Europe.

51. Enemy control of Iceland would result in a gap in the early warning system, and would provide the enemy with advanced air and naval bases for operations against Greenland, North America, the North Atlantic and Northern and Western Europe.

Strategic Factors

52. Iceland can be attacked only by sea or air routes. Naval and air bases thereon would be centrally located for operations to control the Denmark Straits, North Atlantic and Norwegian Sea.

Strategic Objectives

53. The strategic objective for Iceland is, therefore, to defend it against Soviet invasion or attack and to retain its use for NATO.

THE ENGLISH CHANNEL AND NORTH SEA

Strategic Importance of the English Channel and North Sea

54. In a general war, in spite of the strong possibility of destruction of most of the major ports and harbors of Western Europe and the British Isles, together with their inland transport systems, the English Channel and North Sea will probably remain a principal terminal for such overseas resources as can be assembled and transported. The security of sea and air routes within this area must be maintained.

Strategic Factors

55. All the territories bordering the English Channel and North Sea are within the NATO area, and are within range of medium and long range weapon systems from existing Soviet bases.

56. The outbreak of a general war without strategic warning would find a large quantity of valuable merchant shipping in the area and its ports. The protection of this shipping would then involve its immediate dispersal from major ports, the degree of success in this manoeuvre depending in large part on the amount of tactical warning received.

Strategic Objectives

57. The objectives for this area, therefore are:

a. To defend the Allied bases and lines of communication.

b. To support Allied land and air operations in Western Europe and Scandinavia.

c. To protect the merchant shipping in the area by timely evacuation, dispersal, and thereafter by all means practicable.

d. Subsequently to make every effort to speed the establishment of resupply of Western Europe and the British Isles.

THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Strategic Importance of the Mediterranean

58. The Mediterranean Sea skirts the Allied areas of western and southern Europe, and on its control depends the only means by which three major land components (Italy, Greece and Turkey) in the Southern European Command can be mutually supporting. On its control also depends the security of Allied sea and air lines of communication to North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, where NATO has important bases.

59. The Mediterranean Sea also affords great opportunity for exploiting the flexibility of the naval arm in support of other operations.

Strategic Factors

60. Of the territories bordering the Mediterranean, Albania is the only recognized member of the Soviet Bloc. Except possibly from Albania, therefore, any enemy naval vessels entering the Mediterranean would have to penetrate the narrow entrances from the Atlantic, Red Sea or Black Sea.

61. The Islands and southern shores of the Mediterranean provide a number of suitable sites in Allied or friendly hands which are geographically well placed to provide bases both for

offensive operations and for the protection of Allied air and sea lines of communication.

Strategic Objectives

62. The strategic objectives in the Mediterranean Sea are, therefore, to control its air space, waters and entrances; to defend NATO territories in it; to assist in a defense of NATO territories bordering it; and to employ available forces, both offensively and defensively, in support of the overall strategy.

63. Plans for operations in the Mediterranean should include provision for the following specific requirements:

a. Control of the Strait of Gibraltar, the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles and the Aegean Sea.

b. Defense of bases supporting the strategic air offensive or serving vital Allied lines of communications.

c. Support of Allied operations against the enemy in territories bordering, or maintained through, the Mediterranean. This may include the employment of striking forces to carry out air or amphibious counteroffensives.

d. Conduct of offensive operations in the Black Sea.

PORTUGAL

Strategic Importance of Portugal

64. Though situated on the continent of Europe, Portugal's relatively protected location in the west of the Iberian Peninsula, covered by Western Europe and behind the barrier of the Pyrenees, confers on it the role of a support area for Western Europe. In general war, in the event of widespread destruction in other parts of Europe, the Iberian Peninsula might initially become the major support are for the remainder of Western Europe. In addition,

Portugal provides valuable bases for the defense of the Atlantic lines of communication both on the mainland and on its Atlantic Islands. Furthermore, Portugal is strategically located to provide a valuable contribution to the naval and air defenses of the Mediterranean approaches.

Strategic Factors

65. Portugal is buttressed from land attack by Spain and a considerable portion of NATO Western Europe. The course of events in Spain will affect the defense of Portugal.

Strategic Objective

66. The objective for Continental Portugal is, therefore, to provide an adequate degree of defense for its area, assist in defense of lines of communication in its vicinity and support to the maximum the overall war effort.

ALGERIA

Strategic Importance of Algeria

67. Although Algeria is separated from Continental Europe, it is strategically important to NATO because:

a. It is an integral part of the economy of France.

b. It provides, with the other territories of Northwest Africa.

(1) An important NATO support area.

(2) A base area for the Allied strategic air offensive, and for naval operations in the Mediterranean.

c. Its location is on the NATO lines of communication in the Mediterranean area.

Strategic Factors

68. In view of its geographical location, Algeria can be directly attacked by Soviet forces only by sea or air, unless adjacent non-NATO territories are invaded.

Strategic Objectives

69. The objectives for Algeria are, therefore, to provide an adequate degree of protection for base facilities and communications centers, assist in the defense of lines of communications and support NATO military operations.

70. The course of events in Morocco and Tunisia will affect the defense of Algeria.