

xp3: Dkt says SACCUA will decide

EUR:FDKohler:mt

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: October 4, 1960  
8:00 - 9:15 a.m.

SUBJECT: NATO Atomic Force

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Paul Henri Spaak, Secretary General of NATO  
Mr. Dillon, Acting Secretary  
Mr. Merchant, Under Secretary for Political Affairs  
Mr. Kohler, Assistant Secretary

COPIES TO: Mr. Burgess, Ambassador, USRO  
Mr. Glenn, Interpreter

S/S	H - Mr. Macomber
S/P - Mr. Smith	Department of Defense - Secretary Gates
G - Mr. Hare	Mr. Irwin
EUR - Mr. Kohler	White House - Brig. Gen. A. J. Goodpaster
USRO - Ambassador Burgess	



After some general discussion during the breakfast, which touched upon NATO affairs and the current Communist harassment of West Berlin, Mr. Dillon raised the subject of the proposed NATO MRBM Force by reporting on the discussion of the subject which he had had with Mr. Spaak yesterday afternoon.

The President said he had been mulling this question over at length. It was clear that the establishment of such a NATO force on the basis of national contributions in ships, men, and materiel would not be satisfactory. In fact he thought the best way would be through the establishment of a kind of a "Foreign Legion" under exclusive NATO control and financed by contributions of the member states. This was the only manner to do away with nationalism and to prevent the possibility of the withdrawal by any nation of its own units. Only a force loyal exclusively to NATO would be safe from such a danger. Of course certain difficulties existed before a full integration could be obtained, due among other things to the lengthy training necessary.

Ambassador Burgess added that the question of languages would also present a difficulty but that this did not appear insurmountable.

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Mr. Spaak

Authority MR 79-107 #5

By bc NLS Date 12/3/79

Spaak Secy (Int T+M/S/NATO (6) [1959-1960])  
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Mr. Merchant reverted to the President's remark that France might withdraw from NATO. While he agreed that France might not accept the MRBM proposal, at least initially, he doubted that de Gaulle would actually withdraw from the Alliance. He cited, in this connection, the modest progress made recently as respects French cooperation in the fields of air defense and atomic stockpile arrangements in Germany and the awkwardness of the French position if they isolated themselves completely from their Western European neighbors.

Mr. Spaak then mentioned that another difficulty existed. If the United States turned nuclear weapons over to NATO, who would have the authority to decide on their use?

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The President said that such authority should be vested in NATO and in particular in the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. If we were to be attacked with nuclear weapons a counter attack would be automatic. The great advantage of a Polaris system over land-based means of delivery, he pointed out, is the fact that submarines are more or less invulnerable to surprise attack, and therefore there is no necessity of getting the counter attacking missiles up into the air immediately. A certain amount of time is thus gained for consultation and reflection.

Mr. Spaak said that there were two types of circumstances under which NATO might want to use its atomic strike forces.

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The first one is a nuclear attack against NATO; in this case a reply would be automatic and the question of authority to launch would hardly arise. The second one would be that of a non-nuclear attack against NATO by the conventional forces of the enemy. Who would decide whether or not nuclear weapons are to be used in such a case?

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The President said that at the present moment the two opponents are providing their forces with such a variety of atomic weapons that any conflict in Europe which would not involve their use is hardly conceivable, the more so in that European countries are rather small in size and therefore any penetration into their territories would be sufficiently serious to mean an all-out war. (The only exception would perhaps be some sort of an infiltration into Berlin.) Thus there seems to be no possibility whatsoever of any non-atomic conflict in Europe, though the possibility of a more limited type of conflict could be considered in Middle East countries, such as Greece, Turkey, or Iran.

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Ambassador Burgess noted that Iran is not within NATO even though connections between NATO and CENTO do exist. He thought also that the Soviet Union understands that an attack on Turkey would be as serious an undertaking as an attack in Europe.

The President noted that in any case a non-nuclear war in Europe is so improbable as to make the question of who is to decide the use of nuclear weapons somewhat academic. At the present moment the Supreme Commander in Europe is an American and a decision, therefore, could be made under the present law. Mr. Spaak indicated general agreement regarding the improbability of large scale non-nuclear war in Europe.

Ambassador Burgess commented that even now SACEUR is organized somewhat along the lines of a foreign legion because of the presence on the staff of officers of many nationalities. It is entirely possible that the need for decision might arise at a time when the Supreme Commander would be unable to act, in which event the responsibility would fall on his deputy, a non-American.

Discussing the possibility that Congress might seek to stipulate that the post of Supreme Allied Commander be reserved to an American as a condition for providing nuclear weapons, the President said such a condition could not be justified and should not be contemplated.

Mr. Spaak insisted on the enormous political and psychological importance of the proposal under discussion, which would signify closer and more binding ties between the United States and Europe than ever before.

The President spoke of his desire that a start be made promptly, commenting on the many problems which would have to be solved and the difficulties which would have to be surmounted. (He agreed with Mr. Spaak's suggestion as to the desirability of asking Prime Minister Macmillan and Chancellor Adenauer to use their influence on General de Gaulle.)

Mr. Spaak said that the chances of convincing the French appear to be enhanced by the fact that General de Gaulle's plan to create a French nuclear strike force is meeting considerable opposition in the French parliament. A proposal such as the one under discussion would undoubtedly receive strong support from the French public opinion and increase the opposition in France against an independent nuclear force and thus pressure on de Gaulle.

The President

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