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MEMORANDUM
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APRIL 1963

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SOME FUNDAMENTALS OF
NATO ORGANIZATION

Brigadier General E. Vandevanter, Jr., USAF (Ret.)

PREPARED FOR:
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE PROJECT RAND

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PREFACE

Since leaving NATO service several years ago, the author of this Memorandum has followed with interest the many suggestions that have been advanced for solving the ills of the NATO alliance by remodeling its organizational structure. The very profusion of these schemes reveals a lack of consensus about the alternatives open to the allies, let alone about the best course for them to select.

This study grew out of the author's conviction that we need to understand the fundamentals of alliance organization before we evaluate specific proposals for change. In identifying and discussing certain principles of alliance organization, he has referred liberally to the literature of international relations and organizational philosophy. Without pretending to be an expert in either science, he has satisfied himself that the views on which he has drawn are widely shared by acknowledged authorities in the two fields. The proponent of change, he believes, bears the obligation to prove that his system is practicable in the light of existing knowledge and theory -- a responsibility which revisionists do not always recognize.

The present paper was completed in draft before the Nassau Conference of December 1962 and before the rejection of Britain's application for membership in the Common Market. The author

has resisted the temptation to revise his text merely to make mention of these developments. But the events and their aftermath, while not specifically foreseen in his study, would seem to add weight to the author's conclusions.

SUMMARY

This Memorandum examines several fundamental problems which should be considered in evaluating suggestions for reorganization of the NATO structure.

Section I summarizes the weaknesses in the present arrangement that have prompted the desire for revision, and identifies the main issues to be examined here.

Section II assesses the desirability of creating more binding political and economic ties among the allies. Concerted political action, for example, seems, on the face of it, a highly desirable goal. Yet the commitment to a common course carries with it an obvious drawback: the course may not always be to the satisfaction and in the interest of all the allies. If, on the other hand, the right of any member to veto a proposed community action were built into the procedure, it would become difficult, time-consuming, and often impossible for fifteen nations to select a common course. An obligation (be it legal, moral, or organizational) to act only upon unanimous agreement could paralyze the alliance at critical junctures.

Section III examines the proposal for a consolidated military, political, and economic planning staff. The end product of allied planning must, of course, constitute an amalgamation of those three fields. However, international military planning

alone is so complex that, in the experience of NATO, it is often difficult for the military representatives to establish the necessary conceptual framework for a given plan. To inject diverse, and inevitably at times conflicting, nonmilitary considerations into the planning cycle at an early stage -- as a consolidated staff would do -- would be to impede the already difficult task of formulating basic concepts; integration of political and economic with military factors could be even less satisfactory at a lower echelon than it now is at the summit. While the economic and political elements might benefit by the existing harmony of the military, their dissidence would almost certainly disrupt military cohesiveness.

Section IV looks at the present military structure (see chart, p. 37) to determine why some elements have operated more energetically than others. It concludes that SACEUR has been able to exercise his strong leadership role because he occupies a semi-autonomous position which allows him to override objections and make definitive recommendations, whereas the Military Committee and the Standing Group are negotiating agencies made up of instructed delegates. Both types of institutions are required, however, and the negotiating unit must be the superior.

Section V considers three classes of proposals for revising the military structure. All of them aim at inserting some creative planning and directing agency just below the final

authority of the North Atlantic Council (which would continue to operate under the rule of unanimity). Beyond this common feature, the proposed systems have been categorized according to the manner in which their advocates would resolve differences.

a. Decision by vote:

This category would alleviate the stultifying effect of the unanimity requirement at three successive levels. It would prescribe a form of majority rule in the senior agency dealing with military affairs. The voting system in itself, however, would not foster the selflessly internationalist outlook necessary to progressive corporate plans and policy.

b. Decision by voluntary adjustment:

Under this system, co-operation would be achieved by the establishment of a powerful international staff as the top element in the military chain. Such a high-level staff, composed of officers whose national loyalties were subordinate to their internal task, would be conducive to planning in the common interest. But, when it comes to the vital decision-making function, such an agency would represent little or no improvement over the present -- unless it included a voting system (a. above) or an arbitrating authority (c. below).

c. Decision by arbitration:

This arrangement would eliminate the indecisiveness of any multinational group by superimposing on the international military establishment a single dominant authority -- usually pictured as a NATO Secretary of Defense. Such an individual, served by a competent international staff, could plan efficiently in the common interest; he could certainly resolve disagreements. However, the suggestion appears impractical, because it is unlikely that member nations would be willing to entrust such comprehensive responsibilities to the stewardship of one man.

In the light of this pessimistic analysis of the major alternatives, the existing structure looks more attractive. The admitted imperfections of the present arrangement do not justify revision so long as the system that would take its place has serious drawbacks of its own. An unexpected surge of community spirit might promote a new desire for integration leading to the establishment of supranational institutions. Until that time, however, the most prudent course would be to improve the present structure by minor alterations, and to make the fullest possible use of the existing institutions of the alliance. A variety of specific minor adjustments have already been proposed; they are not, however, examined in this Memorandum.

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I. THE BACKGROUND

Most proposals for NATO reorganization have been tabled by scholars well versed in sociology and logic. Yet these critics appear to have based their designs on theoretical deduction rather than on analysis of empirical data. They have tended to neglect three sources that should provide valuable guidance on how a different NATO organization might function (or why it might not function): (1) the history of past alliances and federations; (2) the body of organizational doctrine that relates to international administration; and (3) our own brief but revealing experience with NATO to date. After all, NATO is a pragmatic venture -- an exercise in the real world. Thus, in the search for a more perfect alliance, no more reliable evidence can be adduced than the record of past performances. This paper is primarily a consideration of fundamental organizational alternatives for NATO in the light of experience.

Several attitudes can be identified among those who would change the present pattern of NATO. Some critics maintain that the organization must be revitalized to preserve its very existence. Others look on reorganization as a means of improving efficiency. And the largest and most vocal group of critics feels that NATO must expand its scope in order to meet

the challenge of political-military-economic warfare in the nuclear age.

Invariably, the commentator draws attention to the drastically altered conditions since the inception of NATO. If changed conditions automatically call for changes in organization, then NATO is indeed overdue for revision. However, this relationship should not be taken for granted, for many governmental structures have served adequately through decades of evolution.

Why, then, do the evolutionists stress the need to transform the alliance structure? They point to a number of changes in environment and attitudes as threatening to shake the very foundations of the communal institutions, the most prominent of them being the waning European confidence in America's willingness to risk nuclear war in order to thwart minor Soviet aggression in Europe. They frequently allude also to dissension among NATO members over nuclear versus conventional strategy and over the need for separate national nuclear striking forces. Some critics express concern about the divergencies in attitude among allies toward the emergent nations of Africa and Asia -- or about the lack of consensus between Europeans and Americans on how to meet the global spread of communism into regions like Cuba.

It would exceed the scope and space of this paper to explore whether and to what extent the various structural changes that have been proposed would alleviate these present ailments. A skeptic, of course, might argue that many of the ills are too deep-rooted to be cured by organizational legerdemain. But the reorganizers' argument is essentially a simple one: we face defeat if we do not improve our efforts; one obvious weakness is a lack of unity among the allies; therefore, we must mend our co-ordinating machinery. And each reorganizational proposal thus far has had as its objective a design that would take account of the conditions mentioned above.

There is no denying the reorganizers' point that disunity among the Western powers severely handicaps the free world in its struggle against the monolithic Soviet bloc. But far too little thought is being given to the possible harmful side effects of a NATO reorganization. Certainly there are powerful arguments in favor of a more close-knit union, but there are disadvantages, too. Let us first consider whether the arguments in favor of remaking NATO into a more homogeneous political community are so strong as to override all potential disadvantages. Having answered that question we shall be better able to weigh these two major alternatives: (1) amalgamating the

military, political, and economic planning staffs; and (2) making major alterations in the international military structure.

II. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ALLIANCE

Many observers on both sides of the Atlantic, viewing with distaste the divergencies within the alliance and noting that they are more political than military, have offered solutions that would convert the present military alliance into a close-knit political union. Now experience has taught us that separate states can merge permanently into a viable political community only if they succeed in creating a central decision-making organ to combat the separatist tendencies that inevitably arise from diverse interests. Unfortunately, a political community of nations means supranational authority, and supranational authority can be gained only at the expense of diminution in national sovereignty.

There seems to be little dispute about the desirability of some more formal Atlantic federation as a long-range goal, and nothing said here should be construed as opposed or anti-thetic to this ultimate objective. At the same time, only the optimistic fringe would rate political amalgamation as an accomplishment feasible within, say, the next generation. For today's remedy, then, we should concentrate on measures that would be useful over the next twenty to thirty years without militating against the chances of ultimate federation.

The few evolutionists who see an Atlantic community as a possible development in the near future tiptoe lightly over the unavoidable conflict between national and community authority that would result from even the minimum supranational institutions.¹ However, the great bulk of reform proposals -- the kind we shall analyze here -- contemplate less drastic innovations. Their advocates would employ some innocuous organizational device to entice multinational agreement without actually superimposing a central authority. They would accentuate cohesiveness without infringing on national sovereignty by creating more intricate co-ordinating instrumentalities and by enhancing the stature of both the agencies and the officials involved in the collaborative machinery.²

The revisionist does not guarantee that his method will cure the ills of the alliance, but he is likely to believe that no harm could come of trying it. It is precisely that confidence, however, which may be misplaced. If voluntary

¹See, for example, Christian Herter, "Atlantica," Foreign Affairs, January 1963, Vol. 41, No. 2, p. 305.

²As indicative of prevalent attitudes regarding integration in NATO, I have assumed the following articles by eminent scholar-strategists to be generally representative: Alastair Buchan, "The Reform of NATO," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 40, No. 2, January 1962; Henry Kissinger, "For an Atlantic Confederacy," The Reporter, February 2, 1961; Robert E. Osgood, Nuclear Control in NATO, Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research, Washington, D.C., 1962.

collaboration does not work -- and there is ample reason to expect it will not -- then a formal co-ordinating agency could merely entangle its members in an international web of procedures that would inhibit individual member nations or groups of allies from taking essential action.³

True, the foreign policies of NATO partners are often frightfully disconcerted, as witness only Suez, Cyprus, Algeria, and a number of other, less dramatic cases. Those conflicting courses caused rifts that have never fully healed, and there are potential sore-spots elsewhere that might fester at any time. Undeniably, a need exists to draw the foreign policies of the member states into a closer harmony.

But does a need for improved collaboration necessarily call for institutional reform? In a discussion of so complex a subject, it is well to begin by defining the terms. We must agree, for example, on the difference between an "alliance" and a "federation" or "community." An alliance is a formal

³Operation of this principle has already been demonstrated -- albeit in miniature -- by the NATO Maintenance Supply Service System (NM SSS). Established as a thirteen-nation agency to provide alliance-wide spare-part supply service, it has proved inefficient in part because of the necessity to carry a wide variety of small-demand items in order to satisfy all members. Its existence has tended to discourage allies with common needs from forming more practical ad hoc associations.

agreement to execute prearranged measures in the event that certain specified circumstances arise.⁴ The commitments of the partners may be fairly innocuous (such as consultation) or of great consequence (such as automatic military action). An alliance does not require a permanent international machinery (although it can tolerate one that remains subservient to the control of the individual allies). NATO has been an alliance in this restricted sense. A federation or community, by contrast, entails a more binding commitment, including the formal surrender of some measure of individual sovereignty to a supranational agency.

In the following, we shall consider only amendments to the present common structure that would not change NATO's status as an alliance. Within this framework, we will explore whether a centralized political planning and co-ordinating agency, without plenipotentiary authority, would offer the best means of improving allied collaboration. In particular must we determine all potential disadvantages of such an arrangement, such as the dangers of discouraging forceful individual action because of the need for prior corporate concurrence.

⁴For a more comprehensive discussion of this point, see Edgar Furniss, "France, NATO, and European Security," International Organization, Vol. 10, No. 4, November 1956, p. 551.

Universally, alliances entail obligations for each partner as well as benefits. While they require no surrender of sovereignty, each member nation is inevitably constrained in its independence by having to consider the effect of its actions on the alliance partners. In the words of Henry Wriston,

All significant international intercourse involves some surrender of freedom of action, and it is inevitably greater in case of an alliance....⁵

Wriston goes on to suggest, therefore, that the purpose and the composition of every alliance should be closely analyzed so that one can be sure that the advantages of the partnership outweigh any disadvantages of the restrictions imposed by the pact.

The observation is not novel. Americans learn by primer the parting admonition of their first president to avoid "entangling" alliances. We might also ponder this advice of the Chinese sage Sun Tzu, writing in the 5th century B.C.:

We cannot enter into alliance with neighboring princes unless we are acquainted with their designs.⁶

⁵Henry Wriston, "Thoughts for Tomorrow," Foreign Affairs, April 1962, Vol. 40, No. 3, p. 378.

⁶Sun Tzu Wu, The Art of War (trans. Lionel Giles), The Military Service Publishing Company, Harrisburg, Pa., 1949, p. 89.

This simple statement from antiquity suggests the two questions that must still precede any combined endeavor: "With whom to ally?" and "For what purpose?" Only the second question has direct application to our examination of NATO, for -- ideal or not -- the composition has already been decided and presumably is not under reconsideration. Our interest, therefore, centers on the question, which the revisionists have so forcefully brought to our attention, whether we should try to turn the NATO alliance into a political and economic association of a cohesiveness similar to that which now obtains in the military field.

To reiterate, we have little quarrel with the goal of securing a better harmony of foreign and economic policy; our skepticism derives rather from an uncertainty about the best method for its achievement. One should carefully weigh all the attendant risks before trying to convert a working alliance of one kind into another species.

Alliances are fragile institutions; they will not stand much tampering. Professor Hans Morgenthau, long a student of that subject, has emphasized the relationship between the strength and duration of an alliance and the degree of commitment it involves. Says Morgenthau:

...there exists a correlation between the permanency of an alliance and the limited

character of the interests it serves;
for only a specific, limited interest is
likely to last long enough to provide the
foundation for a durable alliance.⁷

Wriston appears to reaffirm this thesis as he warns explicitly

...against the feeling that the way to
strengthen an existing alliance is to
load it with new and different functions.⁸

I will not attempt to improve on these two succinct
observations. Alliances can be extremely valuable. They can
prosper and grow stronger when the objectives of the members
harmonize for the specific purposes of the alliance (provided
that their other interests do not bring the members into
serious conflict). But where an attempt is made to have the
alliance assume wide functions in areas in which basic accord
among the allies does not exist, the entire undertaking may be
jeopardized. The point is so vital that I risk repetition to
quote again from Morgenthau:

A typical alliance attempts to transform a
small fraction of the total interests of
the contracting parties into common policies
and measures. Some of these interests are
irrelevant to the purposes of the alliance,
others support them, others diverge from them,
and still others are incompatible with them.

⁷Hans Morgenthau, "Alliances in Theory and Practice,"
Alliance Policy in the Cold War (ed. Arnold Wolfers), The Johns
Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Md., 1959, p. 191.

⁸Wriston, op. cit., p. 388.

Thus a typical alliance is imbedded in a dynamic field of diverse interests and purposes. Whether and how long it will be operative depends upon the strength of the interests underlying it as over against the strength of the other interests of the nation concerned.⁹

With so impressive an array of arguments against expanding an alliance to fields where the requisite degree of common intent may not exist, it behooves us to ask how strong the centripetal attraction is among NATO allies in the realm of political and economic collaboration.

Politically, NATO is composed of fifteen independent and dissimilar nations. Their modes of government range from liberal democracy to benevolent oligarchy; their attitudes toward communism extend from complacent tolerance to belligerent antipathy. Their external interests, and hence some of their basic policies, differ with their size and location. Some members are world powers, whose global interests do not always coincide. Several small European states, on the other hand, with predominantly local outlooks, are primarily interested in preserving peace and their newly-found prosperity. Unless their own security is vitally and directly threatened, they would like to avoid involvement in any confrontation of

⁹Morgenthau, op. cit., p. 191.

the great powers. Here is one veteran internationalist summing up the viewpoint of the small nations:

There must be a hierarchy in international obligations. The nations of a continent cannot reasonably be asked to consider with the same realism and sincerity of judgment affairs which directly concern them and events which are taking place thousands of kilometers away in regions where they have neither interests nor influence.¹⁰

If the Continental nations have only a moderate interest in what goes on in the non-European world, they will naturally take the most placid attitude toward global events. Yet global events and NATO strategic policy are virtually inseparable. Almost certainly, therefore, foreign policy matters -- even those pertaining strictly to Europe -- would be approached by the major powers in a frame of reference different from that of the smaller Continental nations.

This point is particularly relevant to American foreign policy. In a very literal sense, given America's role as leader of the free-world coalition, what is good for the United States is good for the alliance; the fate of the smaller nations of Europe depends both on the continued strength of the

¹⁰The views are those of Paul-Henri Spaak, quoted by Kenneth W. Thompson in "Theories and Problems of Foreign Policy," Foreign Policy in World Politics (ed. Roy C. Macridis), Prentice-Hall, Inc., Edgewood Cliffs, N.J., 1958, p. 353.

United States and on the policy by which this country undertakes to guarantee their security. Western Europe would obviously be weakened very seriously if the United States were to abdicate its leadership role and withdraw into isolationism. But it might be served equally poorly by an American policy that required the concurrence of every ally for a proposed course of action.

The unanimity requirement under which NATO now operates is not an intensified form of majority rule. It creates, on the contrary, a situation in which the minority dominates, for a single member not only can refuse to co-operate in a given communal effort, but also can veto the concerted action of the other members. The United States, with its global commitments outside NATO, and with a military power superior to the aggregate strength of the other members, would be the last to forgo this right to veto corporate action. Yet when we consider the fact that all members have equal votes, regardless of their power or global responsibilities, the weaknesses become apparent of any system in which action depends on the concurrence of the smallest and least interested member.

The foreign policy objectives of the fifteen nations do not coincide. The member states lack the common institutions or widely-shared value systems that could make for a general

convergence of policy.¹¹ They are not equal in power or consequence. The United States has a responsibility which, for its own sake and that of its allies, it cannot shirk. It must exercise its leadership, though frequently at the risk of incurring criticism and rancor.

Advocates of integrated political planning and concerted action argue that a tighter organization would allow the coalition to react quickly and in unison to communist probes. It seems more likely that, on the contrary, the inevitable wrangles over policy would only serve to delay Western responses. The late Secretary Dulles was clearly aware of this danger when he explained that the agreement to consult did not, and why it could not, include the willingness to forgo necessary independent action (a point that he felt America had to impress on its allies):

¹¹Karl Deutsch and associates have conducted one of the most comprehensive historical surveys of factors which assist the formation of integrated or amalgamated international communities. Their conclusion in favor of developing the "economic and social potentialities" of NATO may appear, at first glance, to conflict with the advice of Morgenthau and Wriston. However, Deutsch et al. also recommend what they call the "functional" approach, meaning a separate, step-by-step procedure for each function so as not to force co-operation where common interests and outlooks do not prevail. In a sense, they corroborate what has been said here by warning against attempts to impose an across-the-board measure of internationalization. (Karl Deutsch et al., Political Community and the North Atlantic Area, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1957, pp. 188, 203.)

The NATO members believe in the principle of consultation between allies and at our council meetings we are increasingly practicing that consultation. But every NATO country has, of course, certain vital national interests that may sometimes require independent judgment....the process of consultation should never enmesh us in a procedural web so that we fall victim to the ability of despotisms to act suddenly and with all their might.¹²

Quite patently, then, both scholars and diplomats are fearful of hobbling freedom of action through excessive obligations to harness each NATO member's actions to those of its allies. Any organizational or policy change aimed at increased collaboration should be evaluated carefully in light of this potential inhibition. Admittedly, it would make a difference whether the means to a wider co-operation is merely a moral commitment, without structural change, or the creation of an elaborate political-military superstaff, but dangers are inherent in each. An essential characteristic of an improved instrumentality for harmonizing foreign policy would seem to be a built-in means of avoiding corporate immobility due to minority objection. The onus must be on the proponents of a given system to demonstrate that it would permit a progressive common course to be evolved. It would be a serious mistake to

¹²John Foster Dulles, Department of State Bulletin, April 20, 1956, as quoted in Furniss, op. cit., p. 553.

assume that organizational proposals for "concerting" action are ipso facto "good."

In the field of economics, efforts at improved collaboration might be less hazardous. However, the barriers to economic harmony may be more formidable. In many nations of the alliance, industry is institutionally linked to the government. In others, commercial pressures exert a powerful influence. Where every item of standardization or common procurement means millions of dollars out of the national budgets or the common NATO fund -- and substantial profit to the manufacturer -- one would have to be prepared for vicious commercial infighting. Even the amazing success of the Common Market, should it continue apace, would not suppress either the normal competitive instinct among manufacturers or the protective instinct of national officials who are properly considerate of local industry (as is the case in our own federated country).

The Western nations will undoubtedly progress toward more effective collaboration in the commercial field. Several projects are now being conducted by international consortiums with surprising success. But these ventures have, in the main, been concerned with developing unique equipment, without competition from existing prototypes, whose production could be

divided among the nations buying the product. Such consortiums have their origin in commercial, not political, interest.

Some economic experts believe that NATO is not the ideal combination of states from which to forge a viable economic community.¹³ With the necessary mechanism for voluntary collaboration available today, it remains for us to assess carefully whether agencies for compelling more comprehensive collaboration might not do more harm than good.

Is it really desirable that NATO act as the architect of common political and economic policy? Some observers believe, to the contrary, that the alliance already exerts an unhealthy degree of influence over the policies of its individual members.¹⁴ Furthermore, alliances have traditionally involved only the narrow objective of improving the combat effectiveness of the partners. Whatever the specific motive -- attack on a neighbor or merely self-preservation -- the basic purpose of alliances in modern history has been military.¹⁵

¹³Lincoln Gordon, "Economic Aspects of Coalition Diplomacy -- The NATO Experience," International Organization, Vol. 10, No. 4, November 1956.

¹⁴For example, Paul Peeters asserts that "there would be a superb new quality of strength for the West in an alliance whose members followed their own courses of action in a number of areas." (Paul L. Peeters, "NATO Must Be Born Again," Air Force, December 1961, p. 73.)

¹⁵Eugene S. Haugse, "Alliances in International Relations Since 1920," doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1954, p. 2.

NATO constitutes no exception to the rule. The one time that the treaty framers used the phrase "unite their efforts" they did so in reference to collective defense. Concerted political policy is not explicitly mentioned, and economic collaboration is treated only as a generality.¹⁶ Not only was the alliance born of a need for common defense, but successes in the area of military co-operation have far outstripped those in other functions, as even the critics freely acknowledge. Military collaboration has, in the words of several evaluators, been the "cement" which has held the alliance together through political storms. Through it, moreover, the alliance appears to have accomplished its original mission of preventing further communist conquests in Europe by armed might.

Once we recognize fully this past contribution of the NATO military effort, the conclusion becomes inescapable that, no matter how desirable greater political and economic collaboration may be, we must give some thought to the possible damage to military co-operation that it might cause. We know that the member nations' political and economic objectives frequently clash, and that only random factors unify their

¹⁶Preamble and Articles of the North Atlantic Treaty. Reproduced in Lord Ismay, NATO, the First Five Years, Bosch-Utrecht, The Netherlands, 1955, p. 17.

foreign policies. An attempt to contrive an unnatural harmony could well cause cleavages in the alliance that have heretofore been successfully avoided.

We have in NATO today a going concern that is a valuable military asset in the East-West conflict. We would lose much if unsuccessful attempts to forge new bonds in the political-economic field were to lead to a disharmony that could weaken the military effort, the prime purpose of the alliance.

Therefore, any organizational changes in the interest of political or economic collaboration within NATO, in order to be acceptable, must be demonstrably proof against the dangers of corporate immobility, serious internal rift, and a lessening of military effectiveness.

III. SEPARATE OR INTEGRATED
MILITARY-POLITICAL-ECONOMIC PLANNING?

Leaving aside for the moment the question of whether to consign more responsibility for the interweaving of allied foreign policy to central NATO institutions, there remains always the more modest objective of improving the relationship between NATO's military requirements and the political and economic elements of the system. Little research is needed to discover instances of unresolved political and military divergency on strategy -- or of worthy military projects that have been blocked by political self-interest or commercial pressure groups. Any system that minimized these conflicts would represent an improvement.

Most proposals for NATO reorganization emanate from the articulate group of observers who have brought the intellectual disciplines of the social sciences to bear on the problems of military strategy. These critics have promoted a wider understanding of the fact that military strategy encompasses far more than the art of winning battles and that military considerations alone are only one important segment of the vast mélange that makes up grand strategy. Since part of their central thesis is the inseparable relationship between military and nonmilitary factors, these same writers are disposed to carry the

desire for integration into the field of alliance organization.¹⁷ Hence we find that, with few exceptions, the treatment they prescribe for an ailing NATO is the physical amalgamation of military, political, and economic planning agencies. The assumption that such a consolidation would be beneficial has become so prevalent that one hesitates to suggest debating its validity.

If the NATO allies were to agree on some form of centralized collaboration for foreign and economic policies, this would, of course, require a larger and more effective staff than the present one.¹⁸ However, we have postulated in the previous section that the NATO allies presumably will continue to conduct their political and economic endeavor on a purely consultative basis. It is on this assumption that we should judge whether a combined military, political, and

¹⁷The proposals of military analysts, which seldom reach the public, seem to aim more at improvement in the military hierarchy. One such example is the inchoate idea for a solution that the former Deputy SACEUR advanced in a speech two months after his retirement. (See Field Marshall Montgomery, "The Present State of the Game in the Contest Between East and West, and the Future Outlook," The Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, November 1958, Vol. 103, No. 612, p. 481.)

¹⁸A sizable civil working group now exists in the form of the International Staff/Secretariat and Committees of the Council. (See chart, p. 26.)

economic agency would perform better than the present separate planning compartments.

Does the need for an integrated planning product dictate that military, political, and economic staff members be combined into one agency? Several reasons have been advanced in favor of an amalgamated staff: it would aid in resolving matters that concern more than one function; diplomats and financiers would come to understand the soldiers' needs better; some of the successful collaboration of the military might carry over into other fields.

All these are plausible reasons for combining the now separate functions, but they betray an unwarranted confidence in the powers of organization per se. Machinery for "integrating," "co-ordinating," or "concerting" activities does not provide a cure-all for policymaking headaches. A pertinent remark on this subject was cited in testimony before the Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery:

My ears pick up [sic] on hearing some new plan for coordination among, say, the political, military, and economic aspects of policy. What shall one call the preeminent function, the engrossing principle -- as to which the elements of policy are to be coordinated and to which they are to be subordinated -- if not some political function or principle?

* * *

The political is the coordinating function,
not a function to be coordinated.¹⁹

The absence of a formal body for integrating policy, far from indicating a deficiency in organization, may, on the contrary, mean that the machinery is working as it should, with the supreme political authority carrying out its appropriate "coordinating" role.

The problem of control of nuclear weapons is often cited as one that could be more easily solved if only we had a group to deal with issues which concern both the political and the military fields. Yet the creation of a joint political-military body alone would not get at the hard core of the problems and dilemmas that make up this complex issue. Even within our own relatively isomorphic officialdom there is no genuine consensus with regard to nuclear weapons. A permanent multinational civil-military control group might be useful as a focal point for arguing differences of opinion -- for example, whenever European views come in conflict with American reluctance to relinquish physical custody of these vital instruments of war -- but it would merely paper over some basic policy divergencies.

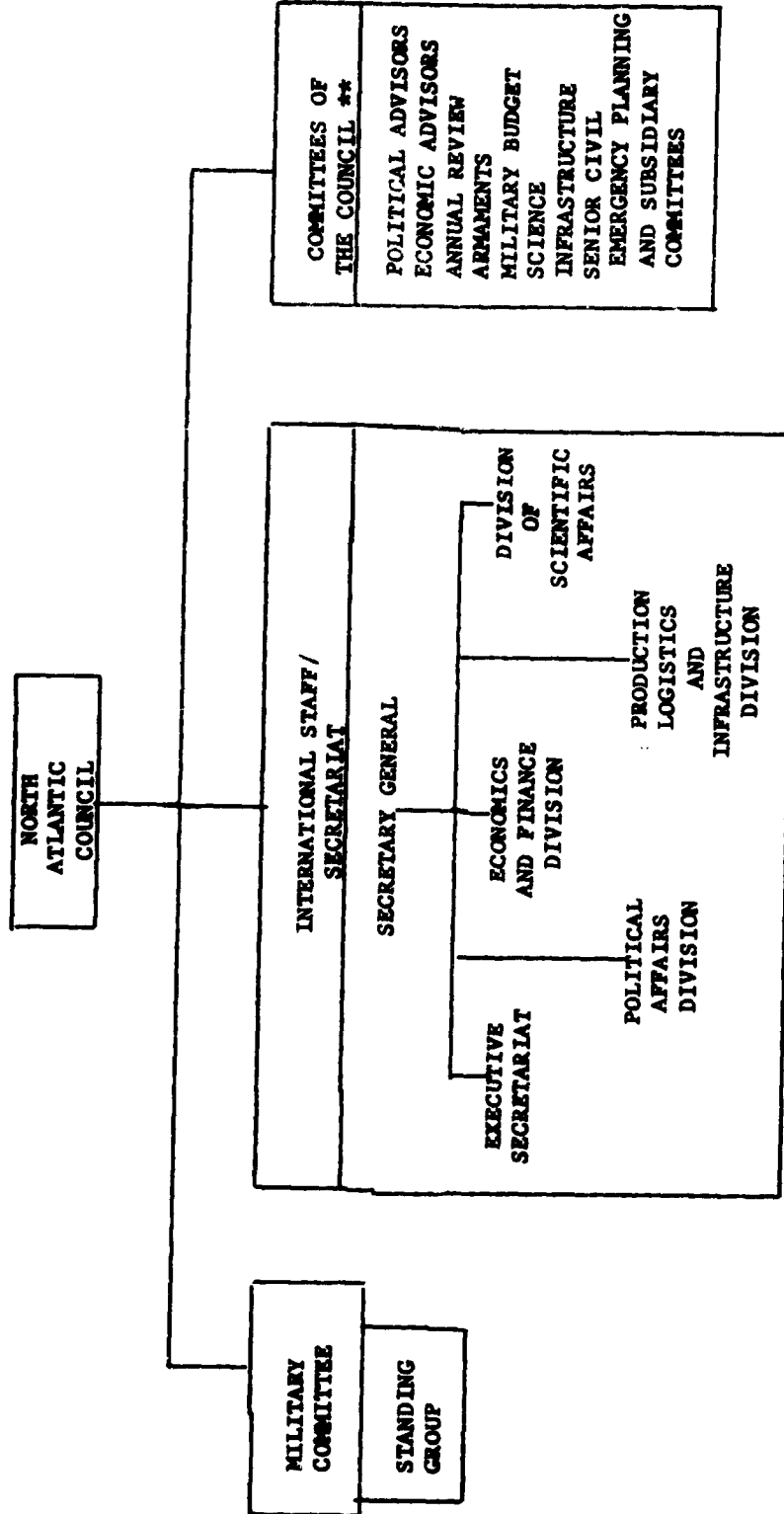
¹⁹Charles B. Marshall, as quoted by Paul H. Nitze in Organizing for National Security, Hearings before the Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, June 17, 1960, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., Document 527/10, p. 858.

Certainly, the ultimate decision on the use of nuclear weapons must lie with the politicians (with advice, of course, from military authorities). The dilemmas do not derive, as many suppose, from irreconcilable differences between military and political leaders; they stem, rather, from problems of policy which -- whether military or political, or a mixture of both -- are virtually impossible to solve in the abstract, that is, in advance of the specific, real-life situation. The central problem remains the need for a formula by which to avoid the uncertainties that come with having "fifteen fingers on the trigger." An ad hoc arrangement within the present framework would serve the purpose as well as an entirely new combined military-political-economic body.²⁰

Proponents of the creation of such a new agency are prone to underrate the opportunities for co-ordination that already exist -- to say nothing of the considerable amount of consultation that actually goes on today. A simplified chart of the upper echelons of the civil-military hierarchy below the North Atlantic Council appears on the next page. Note the several instrumentalities for harmonizing political and economic

²⁰For the purpose of making rapid decisions on nuclear weapon use, General Norstad has recently suggested a small executive group within the North Atlantic Council itself. (General Lauris Norstad, Speech to the Atlantic Council, Washington, D.C., January 14, 1963.)

THE NATO CIVIL AND MILITARY ORGANIZATION*



*A compilation and condensation of charts, pages 84-86, The NATO Handbook, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Information Service, Paris, 1962.

**List abbreviated; committees all composed of representatives from each nation; committees all report directly to Council.

endeavors of the separate nations. Three major sections of the International Staff/Secretariat are devoted specifically to Political Affairs; Production, Logistics, and Infrastructure; and Economics and Finance. And the responsibilities of the Committees of the Council cut straight across military, political, and economic lines.

We cannot here examine in detail the functioning of the International Staff and Committees of the Council. Observers are quick to criticize the lethargic performance of these bodies; some feel that the existing units could be more useful than they have been if only the nations would exploit their potential. But it is an oversimplification to ascribe the anemic record to lack of co-ordination between the military, political, and economic authorities in the international structure. Although it is true that military planning proceeds up a separate channel, to merge formally with the political and economic systems only at the pinnacle of the North Atlantic Council, there is continual lateral communication -- both official and informal -- between the separate chains. For example, military officers meet frequently with the Infrastructure Committee and its staff to explain and defend requests for funds.

Moreover, each nation is furnishing continuous political and economic guidance to its military representatives through channels that do not appear on any charts. Even the officers assigned to international staffs are kept abreast of their countries' positions on the issues at hand. (At SHAPE it is generally understood that furnishing such informal advice is one of the tasks of the extramural National Military Representative from each country.) Military matters with political or economic ramifications are monitored by home authorities from their inception, and one can trace a consistent national attitude up the military ladder and into the discussions where political and economic considerations are ostensibly introduced for the first time. There is nothing nefarious about this arrangement; it is government in operation. The system would surely founder if one had to fear reversals of national position as new considerations were introduced at different levels. As things stand now, if a nation is politically or economically opposed to, say, further integration of air defense, one may expect the country's military officers in NATO to reflect a negative attitude toward that idea at all levels. Thus, while political and economic considerations do not predominate in early military planning, they are very much in evidence, even under the present "compartmented" system.

Some will argue that efforts to achieve either political or military accord would meet with more success in a combined military-political agency than they could in separate bodies. It has been the author's observation, however, that two spokesmen for a single national viewpoint usually more than double the resistance that a single delegate can offer to pressure from a committee majority. I see no basis, therefore, for assuming that a combined international group, on which military and political advocates of a country position would lend each other mutual support, would serve more effectively to overcome the objections of a single nation.

Military and nonmilitary planning respond to vastly different stimuli and constraints. The tactical military problem generally is straightforward: what is the optimum means of defense against the common enemy? Given the numerous unknowns and the divergent preferences and backgrounds, strategic and tactical problems often spawn real controversy. But military planning usually takes place within a common framework of fact and objective, which seldom obtains in the political and economic fields. Politically and economically, an ally in the grand scheme is at the same time a rival in the interior maneuvering -- and he is an opponent today, not at some unknown point in the future. To cite a simple example from the

financial field, since the NATO common fund is made up of contributions from the members, each country competes against the other members to keep its own contributions to a minimum, and to further those programs most beneficial and lucrative to itself.

The military are less confined than the diplomats in the range of matters on which they may act. They can make certain suppositions and explore areas where the statesman would fear to tread. Indeed, NATO military commanders would be derelict in their duty if they did not plan for every reasonable contingency -- for conventional and for nuclear war, for partial and for complete NATO participation, for forced retreat in vulnerable regions. They must contemplate some eventualities that the statesman cannot afford to acknowledge.

To take a specific example, General Norstad recently stated that, as early as 1951, a NATO main line of defense as far back as the west bank of the Rhine was "politically unacceptable."²¹ Yet, he proceeded to reveal, not until 1956 did the military planners begin to speak in terms of the ultimate objective of defending West Germany at the Iron Curtain. (The actual plan to defend Europe at the Iron Curtain was adopted only in 1962.) Imagine then, in theory, the discomfort of the West German political representative who at some time before 1962 might

²¹General Lauris Norstad, transcript of television broadcast, Columbia Broadcasting System, New York City, November 11, 1962, p. 5.

have participated in a combined planning group (had there been such a body) that directed the deliberate military abandonment of the region east of the Rhine. It is possible, of course, that, given such an integrated staff, political considerations would have prevailed and the plans as finally formulated would have been for an unfeasible military campaign (in which case the discomfort would have been on the part of the military members).

History furnishes many actual examples of the incongruity of the political-military relationship. Prior to both World Wars, military commanders were handicapped by political constraints in dealing with their allied counterparts. For the political authorities feared that combined military plans or preparations would imply commitments that they wished to avoid, or would convey too belligerent an impression to the enemy.

Finally, the soldier thinks in terms different from those of diplomats and financiers. For the general, there is one optimum solution to a given strategic problem, and he regards any modification of that plan as increasing the risks of failure in a mission for which he alone must shoulder the responsibility. The diplomat and the economist think in more flexible terms. To them, the ideal is seldom attainable, and they are willing to bargain. The quid pro quo -- a term which

the soldier finds distasteful -- is a useful tool in their trade.

A great deal of thought has been devoted to whether or not political factors should be ground into the military planning operation from the beginning. There is much to be said on both sides. In the present context, where the plans of the combined staff would be subject to review in the politically-oriented North Atlantic Council, the following remark of Sir Richard Gale (the successor of Field Marshall Montgomery as Deputy Supreme Commander, Allied Command Europe) seems particularly appropriate:

I think also that it [the type of estimate] depends very much on whether the final decision lies with the commander himself or with some superior authority; if it lies with a superior authority, and if this is a political authority, there is the very real danger that if a nicely balanced military and political appreciation is submitted, the political arguments will again be stressed by the minister responsible and may therefore receive additional and undue weight. So the best course surely is to make a sound military appreciation.²²

Almost everyone agrees that political considerations must predominate in the end. But in the nebulous realm of planning, a firm point of departure must be established before the potentially disturbing elements are introduced. With problems

²²Sir Richard Gale, "The Impact of Political Factors on Military Judgement," Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, Vol. 99, No. 593, February 1954, p. 39.

of the magnitude of those we are considering, the over-all task must be broken down before it becomes manageable. Dahl and Lindblom cite the experience of Ely Devons, World War II co-ordinator of British aircraft production, in this regard. "Every attempt at planning reveals these two problems," Devon is quoted as saying, "first the need to split up the field to be covered so that each administrative unit can deal with its own sector; and second, the need to secure that the actions of these separate units all fit into the general plan."²³

Just as reasoning of this kind supports the division of planning for national organizations (e.g., Defense, State, and Treasury), so do cogent reasons argue for the separation of planning functions in the international structure. And, to take the analogy a step further, just as we sometimes grumble at the seeming lack of co-ordination among our own independent national departments, so also are there occasions when it looks as if a combined section would be more efficient in the alliance structure.

In fact, the case for segregation of functions is much stronger in the international than the national structure -- a point unrecognized by proponents of integrated planning who

²³Robert A. Dahl and Charles F. Lindblom, Politics, Economics and Welfare, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1953, p. 379.

overlook some basic dissimilarities between the two. In the United States, the military forces could not long remain efficient protectors of the national interest if the Treasury Department could not agree on how to make available the funds for their support or if the State Department were divided on matters of foreign policy. In other words, a nation's military strength depends greatly on the effectiveness of its political and fiscal agencies. NATO's military forces, in odd contrast, have not been incapacitated in a period of international political-economic discord that in national terms would be anarchy. No one can deny that to increase political and economic collaboration in the alliance would be highly desirable; but, inasmuch as military forces are functioning under present conditions, it might be unwise to pay the penalties that this would entail. One probable penalty, from the military point of view, would be a slowing of the present pace of military planning. For the rate of progress of a combined military-political-economic planning agency would automatically be determined by the least tractable of its three elements, to the detriment of military planning and the implementation of agreed plans.

Those who argue, understandably enough, that the need for political collaboration is paramount and may justify sacrificing

a measure of military harmony should realize that the risks involved in so major an innovation as a consolidated staff are almost impossible to assess. It would seem more prudent, therefore, first to explore some ways of improving and making better use of the separate military, political, and economic machinery that now exists in the International Staff/Secretariat and the Committees of the North Atlantic Council.

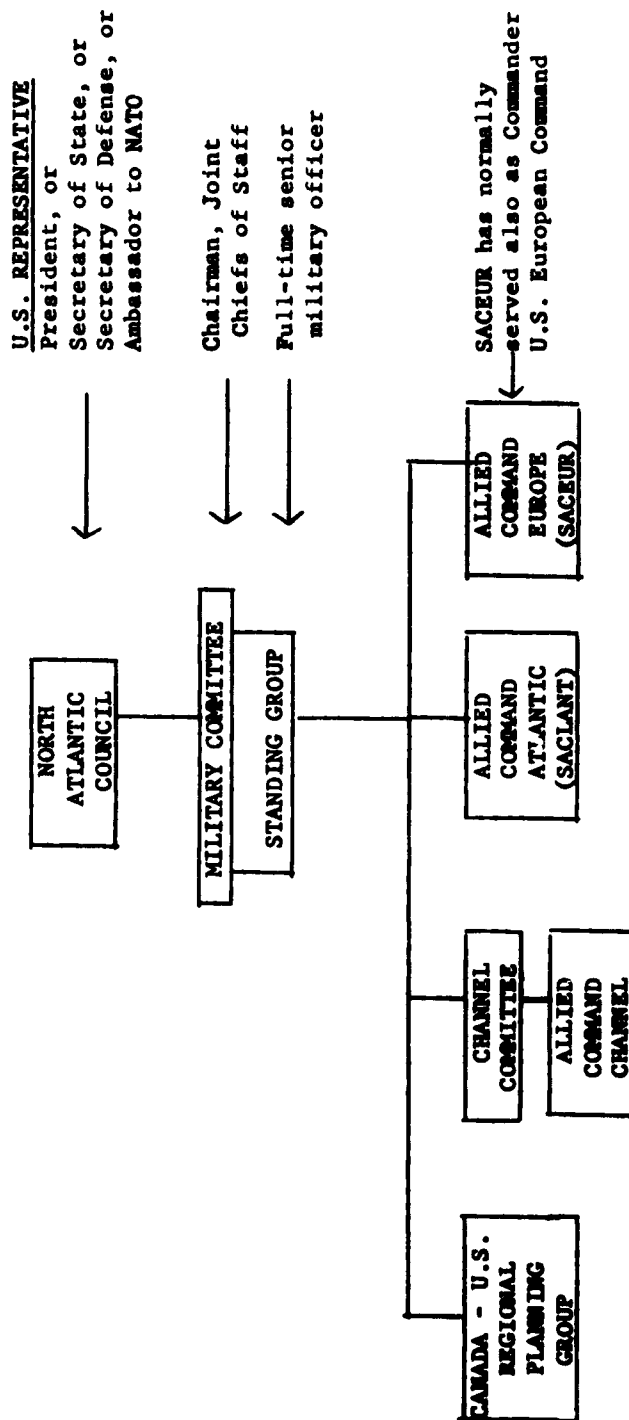
IV. AN ANALYSIS OF THE HIGHER MILITARY STRUCTURE

The NATO military structure defies simple description, because the essence of the relationship does not reside in the hierarchical design but flows rather from the mass of supplemental agreements which specify the responsibilities of the several agencies and allocate authority between the international network and national institutions. A schematic diagram of NATO's upper military echelons appears on the next page, with right-hand marginal annotations indicating United States representation. The deceptive simplicity of the chart belies the complexity of the arrangement, which the writer hopes to illustrate by examples in the course of the discussion.

The North Atlantic Council (hereafter called simply "the Council") is the highest authority in NATO. Its decisions are unanimous.²⁴ The Council can consist of the heads of government of the member nations, the foreign ministers, the defense ministers, or other designated officials of ministerial rank. Normally, however, ambassadors appointed for this specific purpose conduct the regular meetings of the Council. These

²⁴The information presented in the following four paragraphs consists of quotations and paraphrases from The NATO Handbook, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Information Service, Paris, 1962, pp. 37-50.

THE HIGHER NATO MILITARY ORGANIZATION*



*Condensation of Chart No. 4, p. 89, The NATO Handbook, published by North Atlantic Treaty Organization Information Service, Paris, 1959 - Information on U.S. representation added by author.

ambassadors, known as Permanent Representatives, meet at least once a week in Paris.

According to the official NATO Handbook,

The Military Committee is the senior military authority in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It is composed of a Chief-of-Staff of each member country....the Military Committee meets regularly -- at least twice a year....

* * *

In order to enable the Military Committee to function in permanent session with effective powers of decision, each Chief-of-Staff appoints a Permanent Military Representative [not shown on chart]. Between meetings of the Chiefs-of-Staff, their Permanent Military Representatives deal with and settle, in permanent session, questions which come within the province of the Military Committee, except those which, by their nature and scope, require approval of the Chiefs-of-Staff.

* * *

The Standing Group is composed of representatives of the Chiefs-of-Staff of France, the United Kingdom and the United States. It is the executive agent of the Military Committee. ...The Standing Group is the superior body responsible for the strategic guidance in areas in which Allied NATO forces operate. As such, it is the body to which NATO Commanders are responsible. On certain subjects it draws its authority from the Military Committee.

The reader will doubtless detect ambiguities and overlapping of authority in the above. Indeed, at times the matter of authority has been as difficult to settle as the substantive

issue. The four boxes at the bottom rung on the chart illustrate another anomaly of the hierarchy. One would naturally infer that the agencies shown on the bottom line constitute roughly equivalent NATO commands -- a misconception that stems from a typical NATO expedient of associating as peers persons or bodies of vastly disparate importance. The Canada-U.S. Regional Planning Group and the Channel Committee/Channel Command are placed at this level so that there will be an agency responsible to the Standing Group for each area designated as NATO territory. (International jurisdiction over the Western Hemisphere, the British Isles, and the English Channel is not provided at any other level of the organization.) However, the Canada-U.S. Regional Planning Group and the Channel Committee/Channel Command do not perform roles which need to be recognized here, and they will be disregarded in the discussion to follow.

The two major Supreme Commanders, SACLANT and SACEUR, also differ substantially in their participation in the NATO processes. Operations in the "blue water" Atlantic -- the domain of SACLANT -- are performed almost exclusively by British or American fleet units, which in peacetime remain under national control. SACLANT has no forces "assigned" to him in peacetime (although this arrangement might change if a

multinational Polaris force should come into being). With only a token international staff, SACLANT has not in the past affected the NATO power relationship to anywhere near the extent that SACEUR has. The discussion will therefore concentrate on the role of SACEUR.

Turning now to the functions and manner of performance of the international military agencies shown on the chart, we find most observers agreed that the Military Committee and the Standing Group have failed to exert the leadership expected of them. The Supreme Commanders (SACLANT and SACEUR), it is generally conceded, have performed remarkably well. In fact, critics frequently complain that SACEUR has usurped the responsibilities and duties intended for the superior bodies. If this development is unwholesome and in need of correction -- and most people seem to believe that strategic planning should be performed at a level higher than SACEUR -- we should first ask what has made the system operate as it does. Why have the most important planning tasks devolved upon or been appropriated by a subordinate headquarters -- a most atypical development in military relationships?

The Military Committee (MC) suffers from several debilitating weaknesses, the most formidable of which is the requirement of unanimity. Moreover, it meets for only a few days of

each session. And its members are distracted by problems at home, in view of the high positions of responsibility they occupy in their respective nations. All in all, it is no wonder that the Military Committee has exerted little creative influence on NATO planning. Even its full-time substitute, the Military Committee in Permanent Session, has not been able to surmount the handicap of the unanimity requirement, which makes its fifteen representatives operate at a halting pace.

The Standing Group (SGN) is intended to compensate for the unwieldiness of the Military Committee by serving as its more compact executive agent. As conceived, it directs the military activities of the alliance during that major part of the year when the Military Committee is not in session. But the Standing Group, too, suffers from multiple ailments. As can be seen from the passages quoted above, the separation of authority between the Military Committee, the Military Committee in Permanent Session, and the Standing Group is anything but clear. Since the Standing Group is composed only of representatives from the original three great powers of the alliance -- whose interests may deviate from those of the membership as a whole -- the desire to avoid misunderstandings with the Military Committee causes the Standing Group to treat some matters in too gingerly a fashion. Furthermore, representatives

of the other NATO nations understandably resent the composition of the Standing Group under present conditions. Britain and France, they point out, are no longer among the first three contributors of forces assigned to the Supreme Commanders. (Both countries do, of course, still maintain large air and naval contingents under national command, but this would be a weak argument for their preferential position in the corporate structure.)

Another inherent weakness is the fact that the Standing Group operates as a triumvirate (composed of the principal representatives from Britain, France, and the United States), in which the chairmanship is rotated quarterly. With the Chairman never more than a temporary "first among equals," no member of the group speaks with superior authority, a fact that places the individuals in the Standing Group in a position weaker than that of the Supreme Commanders. The Standing Group members have always been officers of considerable experience, ability, and prestige in their own nations, but none has acquired in NATO the stature of, say, General Norstad as SACEUR. In the constant jockeying for position typical of any organization, the Standing Group has been handicapped by the classic difficulties of a triumvirate.

But if the Standing Group has failed to excel as a source of plans and policy, this is due partly to still another characteristic, seldom mentioned, that might be called a built-in factionalism. A British officer's brief description of how the Standing Group operates makes this quite clear:

Each Standing Group member has a chief of staff and a small number of staff officers drawn from each of the three Services. The three chiefs of staff form a steering committee and the staff officers form international planning teams, each consisting of three officers, one for each Standing Group country. When a subject is under study in the Standing Group, the first step is for each member of the planning team to seek guidance from his own national Ministry of Defence as to the line to be taken.²⁵

Thus, as the author notes elsewhere in the same article, Standing Group actions "reflect the national views of its three members...." Each representative naturally advocates the course favored by his country, and, by the same token, will oppose any course which does not coincide with his national policy.

This process has two obvious limitations that militate against progressive thinking.

First, the position of the staff members as instructed delegates offers them little incentive to seek the elusive

²⁵Lieut.-Colonel C.T. Honeybourne, "The Standing Group North Atlantic Treaty Organization," The Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, Vol. 99, No. 596, November 1954, p. 552.

common solution.²⁶ Their flexibility is restricted by supervision from national ministries, where proposals are usually viewed quite frankly in light of what is good for the particular country. Moreover, delegates know they can hardly go wrong by holding to the country position, but they can damage their reputation by accepting a compromise solution -- even though it may be tentative -- that departs substantially from instructions. Compare this to the situation in SACEUR's planning staff at SHAPE, where officers are assigned to an international staff, divorced from formal responsibility to national authorities, and urged to think in the first instance of the corporate welfare. In the Standing Group, as we have noted, officers continue as members of national delegations,²⁷ and a staff member tends to judge his own effectiveness by whether he can sway the common course toward his country's preferred position.

²⁶Theoretical or factual material on the motives of international decision-makers is hard to find and, when found, often difficult to interpret. For a recondite discussion of the conflicting stresses on a national delegate to an international body, see Morton A. Kaplan, System and Process in International Politics, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1957, pp. 106-107.

²⁷It is true that a small international secretariat serves both the Military Committee and the Standing Group. However, the duties of these international servants are "secretarial" in the literal sense. Their task is to transcribe -- not to make -- policy.

Second, potential agreement is sometimes missed only for lack of compulsion to undertake the hard task of hammering it out. If one nation opposes a given project, the other two members will beware of pressing too eagerly for its acceptance, knowing that a compromise might well require a quid pro quo. Hence, delegates are inclined to reserve their most strenuous efforts for measures they oppose, rather than to strive for accord on proposals for the primary benefit of the alliance as a whole.

Admittedly, this screening function is vital and must be performed at one level or another in any voluntary co-operative venture. Except in an actual federation, each nation must have an opportunity to bargain for modification of (or eventually to veto) a measure it considers inimical to its interests. But the present system overemphasizes self-consideration by permitting the process to repeat itself three times -- in the Standing Group, the Military Committee, and the North Atlantic Council. At that, the redundancy as such is not the worst feature of the arrangement. (A really unpopular measure would never get beyond the first screening.) Much more important is the fact that, because of the negative nature of their functions, none of these bodies is inspired to provide energetic community leadership.

Against the heterogeneous character of the committees of instructed national representatives, the simplicity and the advantage of SACEUR's position stand out in sharp relief. His decisions and plans can be phrased in unambiguous terms, even when there is disagreement within his staff. SACEUR can freely aim for "the most that should be done by the alliance," instead of being constrained by "the most that his own country would be willing to do." The reliability and discretion of his proposals may be measured by the support they usually receive. The normal pattern of dispute in the upper chambers is for the majority group to support SACEUR's position against a small, sometimes partisan, minority.

SACEUR's autonomous position enhances his effectiveness in another way. Not only can his recommendations be unambiguous, they can also be quick. In fast-moving cold-war situations, or when called on to furnish immediate advice to meetings of the Council (or such other high-level groups as the disarmament negotiators), SACEUR can reach a decision in the time that it takes him to survey the problem and make up his mind. By contrast, the Standing Group or Military Committee might need days of negotiation to formulate a common position, which might then still have to be cleared with home offices.

True, the proposals of SACEUR are only recommendations, not approved policy. We would not have it otherwise, lest the concentration of authority in one individual become an unacceptable risk. Perhaps, therefore, it is unfair to compare the ease with which SACEUR can formulate recommendations with the laborious process of the policymaking superior bodies. However, it is worth noting that SACEUR's suggestions, which have been so consistently accepted, customarily represent far more than the input of a single subsidiary unit. As the critics have noted, a basic proposal from SACEUR, modified and approved by the Standing Group and the Military Committee, has become the most common method of formulating plans and policy for the alliance.

Any analysis of the NATO structure would be incomplete, however, without some consideration of the workings of the "informal" system. Here again SACEUR holds the center of the stage. Although many observers are apt to credit the success of past SACEUR's to the personal force of the individual -- and indeed both the United States and the alliance have been fortunate in the caliber of these leaders -- a combination of circumstances has contributed to their towering influence.

The fact that they have all been Americans has been a greater asset than Europeans are wont to acknowledge. First

of all, it has exempted them from the instinctive animosities that many Old World nationals feel toward one another. Then, too, only an American could have possessed the familiarity with atomic weapons and the esoteric knowledge of plans so vital during the period when the fate of Europe depended largely on the U.S. Strategic Air Command. And as an American, SACEUR has had access to an immense pool of classified information on equipment, which has enabled him to deal authoritatively with the best technical minds in Europe.

His capacity as commander of the U.S. forces in Europe has been another source of influence, often overlooked. His dual position has given SACEUR the confidence (though not the assurance) that he will not be undercut by his own nationals -- a development which had embarrassed some political and military leaders in the past. More important still has been his ability, as United States commander in Europe, to control the distribution of vast quantities of military assistance equipment. This power may never have been used overtly; but it served as a strong psychological lever in discussions about the nations' individual contributions to the NATO military pool. The importance of this role diminishes, of course, as the U.S. military aid program tapers off; but the channel of contact remains useful. With respect to tactical nuclear weapons, it

has been possible only through the dual function of SACEUR-CINCEUR to contrive a system providing close support with such weapons directly to non-American units without running afoul of United States legal restrictions.

Even without these advantages of personality, nationality, and dual capacity, the position of SACEUR would be peculiarly well suited to filling a leadership vacuum. In terms of the collective activities of the alliance, SACEUR's prerogatives are rigidly circumscribed. Except within narrowly-defined limits of command or control, all his peacetime recommendations must be processed up the chain through the Standing Group to the appropriate approving authority. But for exploratory dealings with individual nations SACEUR has unrestricted freedom as the designated military adviser to each member nation.

This arrangement, of course, opens up unlimited possibilities for a wise and discreet confidant. Consultation of this kind can work two ways. A nation wishing to sponsor a plan or change in national or community policy will hardly want to introduce it through formal channels at the Military Committee level before first sounding out SACEUR, who, in turn, is ideally placed for seeking the opinion of other nations or bringing them into line behind the proposal. SACEUR, for his part, can use these informal contacts to keep a finger on the

pulse of NATO opinion and to line up support for any programs of his own. In this manner, he has served as the interlocutor between the United States and the European nations when American policies have diverged from those of the other NATO countries.

Thus, SACEUR serves as a focal point for military activities in both the formal and informal chains of organization. Although his authority may diminish (particularly if a non-American is appointed to the position), there is little doubt that an individual will continue to be better able than a multinational group to formulate provisional plans and policy for the alliance.

To sum up, several circumstances have combined to project SACEUR and his staff into their singularly powerful and successful planning and policymaking function. First, SACEUR, with the community interest foremost in his mind, will take a more forward-looking approach to alliance problems than can the country representatives, who are apt to evaluate each issue primarily in terms of its cost to their country. Second, in choosing a given course, he is much freer of national constraints than are the representatives of the Military Committee and Standing Group. Third, SACEUR, being alone, is able to make rapid and clearcut decisions, whereas the other agencies must negotiate agreement. Fourth, an individual is better able than

a multiple-membership body to perform the complex task of synthesis and compromise.

V. SOME PROPOSALS FOR THE REVISION OF NATO

Having examined the relationship between the Military Committee, the Standing Group, and SACEUR/SHAPE, we may now be better able to evaluate some of the numerous proposals for modification of the system. We shall assume that a revision, to be worthy of consideration, must remedy at least some of the deficiencies of the present scheme. Certainly, any proposal would be questionable that threatened to accentuate the existing weaknesses.

Plans for the reorganization of NATO are divisible into three major categories (about which more presently). But they have in common the fact that their originators by and large acknowledge the need for the rule of unanimity at the summit in any association not an actual federation. Most revisionists, therefore, think in terms of a provisional decision-making unit, less cumbersome than the present Military Committee, just below the North Atlantic Council, with the latter retaining its veto power to protect the members' sovereign rights. Beyond this common characteristic, however, proposals for revision fall into three major classes, depending on whether they favor decision by (1) vote, (2) voluntary adjustment of differences, of (3) arbitration. On the surface, some of the systems

recommended bear a deceptive similarity, and it may require considerable probing to establish precisely in which of these categories a given proposal belongs.

Any system based on the principle of the vote is bound to use some variant of majority rule. One such proposition has been advanced by Professor Henry Kissinger. He would have a "steering committee," composed of political representatives from seven allied nations, make decisions and/or recommendations in specified political-military fields for the alliance as a whole. It would require a vote by five out of the seven to constitute a majority, and this would be sufficient to authorize action (unless the decision were appealed to the top council).²⁸

The category of schemes that would resolve conflicting views through a voluntary adjustment of differences comprises all those that advocate a planning or co-ordination agency

²⁸Kissinger is obviously unhappy about the rule of unanimity at the top as well. In his book The Necessity for Choice he stated: "Each ally, whether or not a member of the steering committee, could appeal its decisions to the NATO Council, where a two-thirds vote would carry." (Henry A. Kissinger, The Necessity for Choice, Harper & Bros., New York, 1960, p. 167 [underlining added].) A few months later, writing in The Reporter, he omitted the underlined phrase from an otherwise identical description of his system. Apparently, Kissinger developed second thoughts about so vital an impingement on national sovereignty. (Henry A. Kissinger, "For an Atlantic Confederacy," The Reporter, February 2, 1961, p. 20.)

without a formal and binding system of adjudication.²⁹ This definition would include the present Military Committee and Standing Group arrangement, in which positive action depends on the full and free accord of the member nations.

We must not allow ourselves to be unduly impressed by certain organizational innovations. Almost all suggestions for revision foresee an "enhanced status" for international officials, which presumably would result in a more effective performance. (Often the proposals include prestigious new positions.) However, unless these officials or bodies are equipped with a mechanism for reaching decisions, the system will operate, as it does today, on the basis of negotiated compromise. These are not terms of opprobrium. "Negotiation," "compromise," and "voluntary adjustment of differences" are ancient and legitimate methods of doing business in a collective enterprise -- perhaps they are even the best ways. But we should understand clearly the nature of the critical process of reaching a verdict under a given system; if it depends on negotiation, we should know this. An elaborate superstructure may appear to provide a decision-making mechanism whereas, in fact, it only diffuses and complicates the existing process.

²⁹The outstanding suggestion of this type has been drafted by Alastair Buchan, op. cit.

The third category -- arbitration -- is distinguished from the first two by requiring the appointment of an authoritative individual to supervise planning and to make preliminary decisions. Advocates of this type of arrangement conceive of the presiding official as a powerful NATO Minister of Defense (or Deputy Secretary-General). But, although many have alluded to the need for such a central authority, no one, to the writer's knowledge, has spelled out the responsibilities of the office in detail.³⁰ The concept is an extension (at a much higher level) of the SACEUR/SHAPE relationship. The Minister of Defense would be served by a large international staff. He would have complete jurisdiction within the limits of his domain of planning and directing. He would be aided by deputies of nationalities other than his own, but would have the prerogative of overriding their advice. He could reject the recommendations of his staff (although the occasion would presumably arise infrequently), and he could reach down to any staff level to advise or instruct in a manner that might pre-ordain the solution.

³⁰See pp. 65ff. for further discussion of this system. The reader who is familiar with the literature of NATO reorganization will have remarked by now that Buchan, whose proposal was classified under the second category, also envisages a Deputy Secretary-General as head of his planning staff. So he does, but the operative word in this case is "powerful" (see p. 60f.).

Having made these basic distinctions, let us now analyze the three kinds of reorganization suggested to see what improvement each has to offer over the present system

Professor Kissinger's voting scheme would eliminate the worst flaw in today's structure -- the requirement for unanimity at three successive levels. It would provide, at no sacrifice of national sovereignty, a method for reaching a provisional decision within the agencies directly subordinate to the Council without having the proposition hopelessly watered down by negotiation. Most community projects attractive enough to be advanced through NATO channels command a high degree of common interest. Those that nevertheless fail of acceptance are usually killed by the opposition of a small dissident element. Kissinger's scheme would force the minority objectors to acquiesce or to take the issue to the court of last appeal, the Council, a step that in many instances they probably would be reluctant to take. Kissinger's formula -- applied to the present structure -- would also reduce the current tendency in the Military Committee to bow to the will of a determined minority for the sake of reaching unanimous agreement on vital issues. In a system where a majority would suffice to formulate and transmit to the Council meaningful policies, Military Committee members would be less subject to pressure to accept an unsatisfactory compromise as the only alternative to inaction.

Unfortunately, Kissinger has given us only a skeleton of his plan, and we do not know what innovations he had in mind in addition to the one just discussed. From what he has explained, however, his system would not seem to remedy the second cardinal weakness noted in the present Military Committee and Standing Group: their failure to encourage progressive collective planning.

In this aspect may indeed lie the major shortcoming of Kissinger's concept and, as we shall see presently, the principal difference between his proposal and that of Alastair Buchan. In Kissinger's seven-nation committee, we could expect much horse-trading and practical compromise in the process of arriving at programs acceptable to a majority of at least five members. There may be serious doubt whether such a system of negotiation is likely to stimulate the committee members to make the kind of contribution and bring the sacrifices that some of the more advanced and useful ventures would require. Far more likely, it would result in the watering down of plans and projects in the attempt to obtain speedy majority approval by committing the members to a minimal effort by their national governments. But if Kissinger's committee cannot be expected to be motivated entirely by community interest, what institution would be better suited to progressive collective thinking?

In the ideal system, plans would be conceived and formulated by a zealous agency with a broad concept of the common weal. This would seem to call for a truly international group, not a committee of national representatives.

An indirect (but relevant) indictment of the NATO system is contained in a testimonial to the advantages of the Common Market.³¹ In a stimulating article, the British financial expert Lord Franks explains the duties and relationship of the three senior bodies of the European Economic Community: the Council, the Commission, and the European Parliament. The Council of the EEC resembles the North Atlantic Council, that is to say, it is composed of national representatives, voting in accordance with their country position, who must approve every matter of major policy for the Community. In effect, then, each country has a voice in the approval or disapproval of each major issue. (The fact that their votes are weighted and that an increasing number of decisions will be determined by a plurality system does not affect the fundamental prerogative of the EEC Council.) But it is the Commission of the EEC -- a group of international officials acting independently of national affiliation -- which arouses Lord Franks' enthusiasm. He says of it:

³¹Lord Franks, "Cooperation Is Not Enough," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 41, No. 1, October 1962.

The Commission has the sole power of initiative to make proposals; it also executes policy when it has been approved. Its major purpose is to represent the whole against its parts.

* * *

The novelty of this political procedure is evident. When the Commission, exercising its power of initiative, makes a proposal, it is thinking for the Community as a whole -- as a unit. The Community, therefore, through its institutions gives itself the opportunity of working out a common solution to a common problem, something that cannot be attained by the normal processes of international bargaining between states which so often produces only a least common denominator of agreed action.³²

Admittedly, the above description refers to an economic coalition. However, the principles of combined planning could as easily be applied to other kinds of common undertaking. Who speaks for NATO in the military structure? Whose job is it to represent the whole against its parts? Not surprisingly, we find that the agency which has been most effective, SACEUR/SHAPE, is the highest echelon at which staff members are, by terms of reference, enjoined specifically to place the common interest ahead of national considerations.

Alastair Buchan has submitted, in considerable detail, a plan by which he would remove this potential for subjectivity

³²Ibid., p. 32.

and national self-interest in the upper echelons of the present military structure. He proposes the creation of a high-level international staff as the real fountainhead of the planning process. This is by no means the full extent of his scheme; but the effect of most of his other suggestions would be vitiated if the planning mechanism -- the core of his proposal -- should fail to function as intended.

Buchan would establish as an adjunct to the North Atlantic Council a "strong secretariat in which civil and military planners work under central authority." We have, in Section III of this study, pointed out that an amalgamated staff of military, political, and economic policymakers would operate under severe handicaps. Buchan would designate military planning and arms-control policy as the province of one element of his combined staff, which might be called the "military secretariat," to be headed by a civilian Deputy Secretary-General. Under the latter would be established a military Chief of Staff, three Deputy Chiefs of Staff, and the head officials of the working divisions. All nations would be represented in this military secretariat. Key posts would be equitably distributed among the major powers; officials of the smaller nations would participate in planning teams, according to their special interests. Buchan expects that the Deputy

Secretary-General of the military part of the secretariat, with his staff and associated committees, working alongside the political and economic elements, would be able to correlate military planning with nonmilitary factors better than can the present "compartmented" agencies. Also, he feels, the staff would function more efficiently than do the Military Committee and Standing Group (which he would abolish) and SACEUR (most of whose planning functions would be transferred to the super-staff).

Buchan contemplates an adroit division of key positions among the nationalities of the alliance so as to minimize friction within the staff. Paradoxically, however, he fails to lay stress on the one requirement which Kissinger seems to regard as paramount, namely, some means of ensuring that decisions will be forthcoming. Rather, Buchan imputes a decision-making quality to his machinery that the suggested changes alone might not achieve.

Many disputes can, of course, be ironed out by close association and friendly discussion. Ingenious organization will eliminate others. But anyone who has served on an international staff (such as SHAPE) knows that disagreement is the rule rather than the exception. This is not to deny that assignment to an international staff position induces a

significant psychological change in the individual. Released from rigid loyalty to service doctrine and national aspiration, the normal official, if he is genuinely imbued with a spirit of internationalism, will readily reorient his viewpoint to the larger allegiance of the alliance. However, a change of assignment and even of orientation does not eradicate the attitudes of a lifetime. A Turk's view of a given matter, it is fair to predict, will differ from that of a Greek or a Dane. Then, too, conflicts in the concepts of the military services are frequently more difficult to overcome than the political divergencies of nations. Therefore, if some power of arbitration is not built in, the system risks being hobbled by dissension.

Certainly, as Kissinger and other have noted, the performance of any alliance hinges on its ability to make decisions. What, then, has Buchan done to avoid the discords that have so far hamstrung the Military Committee and the Standing Group?

He has replaced two committees of instructed delegates with an international staff-committee complex -- an obvious improvement. But he is imprecise about the techniques by which decisions would be reached in this planning forum. From the few clues he provides, he would appear to advocate free-ranging debate rather than definitive recommendations. His Secretary-General (the "central authority" referred to above) would have

more prestige than authority, as he would be "responsible, not for making policy, but for drawing together the threads of official planning and debate...."³³ Though Buchan does not specify the limits of authority at the lower echelons, it is hardly likely that he intends any subordinate to have greater absolute authority than his central figure.

Buchan recognizes the need for weighted influence in the military element of his staff. Specifically, he suggests that

...the Secretariat could effectively serve the Council only if the division of functions was related to the contribution which different countries make to the collective military and economic resources of the alliance.³⁴

An allotment of senior posts in rough proportion to national contributions would indeed seem to be the most equitable way to man the staff.³⁵ Presumably, this is the policy governing assignments today. If national contributions are not the primary determinants under present procedures, then the policy (but not necessarily the organization) should be changed.

³³Buchan, op. cit., p. 177 (underlining added).

³⁴Ibid. (underlining added).

³⁵Mr. Buchan has explained in a personal letter to the author that "allotment of senior posts" is a more appropriate description of his intent than "division of functions." (Letter from the Honorable Alastair Buchan to Brigadier General E. Vandevanter, Jr., dated May 3, 1962.)

But even the most judicious allocation of key positions will not abolish dispute. On the contrary, having a large variety of nationalities manning the critical points in the NATO hierarchy is bound to generate rather than eliminate disagreement. Though internal debate is healthy in the main, it also means, as those familiar with the idiosyncrasies of international staffs know so well, that a very large body of important decisions (and many trivial ones, too) can only be made in the front office.

International staffs, while similar in format, do not operate like replicas of national staffs. In the delicate atmosphere of international military co-operation, style is as important as substance. The chief must be personally associated with the decisions of his staff, and he must be ready to answer for them in person to his many important masters. He can delegate far less to his subordinates than do commanders of homogeneous national staffs. He must at the same time take great pains not to appear to overrule a senior subordinate (who will usually be a high-ranking officer of another nation). To spare the commander direct confrontations of this kind, international staffs should assign functional responsibilities with some degree of deliberate diffusion and overlap so that, on important issues, conflicting views will have to be presented

to the chief for final decision. An international staff thus becomes peculiarly the creature of its commander. The staff which Buchan envisages, with the headman explicitly debarred from making decisions, might work as a national institution but seems unsuited to the NATO problem.

The third category of possible solutions -- arbitration -- would entrust an individual with supreme authority to make decisions in the defense field, subject only to the supervision of the North Atlantic Council. Robert E. Osgood has furnished the broad outline for one such arrangement. Like Buchan, he would have the present Military Committee absorbed by the North Atlantic Council, and fill the void with a capable international planning staff. Osgood's staff would apparently devote itself more specifically to the military task than would Buchan's, but it is also intended to surmount such political-military problems as control of nuclear weapons. Unlike Buchan, who would abolish the Standing Group, Osgood would enlarge and invigorate it.

In his words,

There are a number of ways in which the Standing Group might be revitalized as a general military planning body.

* * *

In addition, the Standing Group ought to be headed by a single civilian -- say, a Deputy Secretary-General -- who, as a militarily knowledgeable individual, could, somewhat

like a strong American Secretary of Defense, help concert plans and transmit the results to the highest civilian authorities in the North Atlantic Council, thereby enhancing the role of the Standing Group through some of the methods of personal leadership that General Norstad has so ably employed in representing SHAPE.³⁶

It is this conception of a powerful Deputy Secretary-General which significantly distinguishes Osgood's proposal from others. As Osgood has explained elsewhere, this individual would have to have the authority to overrule the Standing Group, else he could not function in a capacity similar to that of an American Secretary of Defense.³⁷

It is difficult to understand how the Standing Group -- whose proposals can now be vetoed by the Military Committee but cannot easily be overruled by it (since Standing Group nations have an opportunity to oppose reversals in the Military Committee) -- would be "revitalized" by the creation of a single authority with the legal right to countermand any Standing Group proposal. But this is a semantic point; we are more interested in the concept of a powerful NATO Secretary of Defense. His international staff could sponsor planning in the corporate interest because the individual members would be relatively free of

³⁶Osgood, op. cit., p. 29.

³⁷Personal letter from Robert E. Osgood to Brigadier General E. Vandevanter, Jr. (Ret.) dated December 15, 1962.

national supervision, and he himself would provide a positive means of resolving impasses. His intimate staff supervision could result in the same continuity and objectivity that are now apparently achieved by SACEUR in SHAPE.

It would be pedantic to expound the virtues of a single director and homogeneous general staff for the alliance. The advantages are obvious -- and so are the dangers! Let us begin, then, by asking whether it is a practical possibility. If an international defense minister were truly analagous to his national counterpart, we could drop consideration of the scheme, for the several nations certainly would not relinquish such comprehensive powers to one individual. But, as we have noted previously, international and national organizations differ substantially, as Osgood recognizes when he adds:

...no matter what his legal authority might be, the Deputy Secretary-General, I assume, would have to pay far more attention to divergent advice than the Secretary of Defense, if only because each nation would still have ultimate control over its own defense policies and would retain its veto in the Council.³⁸

But even with this thoughtful qualification, is a NATO Secretary of Defense within the realm of practical consideration? The concept introduces two significant changes to the present

³⁸Ibid.

arrangement: a vast concentration of purely military affairs in the hands of one man, and an expansion of the scope of activities now undertaken by the military component of the international structure.

Centralization of military power in the hands of one man represents a far greater gamble in war than in peace. The authority delegated by nations to the international network in peacetime is so restricted that international commanders are actually little more than advisers. Nor need we fear the "man on horseback," the bogeyman of nations; the ingrained loyalty to superior officers, which might conceivably furnish support for a military coup in the individual country, simply does not exist in multinational forces.

But the command authority now pre-delegated to the international network in time of war would mean, in effect, that a single chief official of the military structure would at such time become a suzerain with sweeping prerogatives. Regardless of the military benefits that such an arrangement might bring, it is most unlikely that fifteen nations would be willing to sanction this concentration of power in one individual. It may be argued that, under the present arrangement, nations have acceded to an unprecedented transfer of wartime control of their troops to the jurisdiction of only two NATO Supreme

Commanders, SACEUR and SACLANT.³⁹ However, these commanders would be operating under the close supervision of two superior multinational agencies, the Standing Group and the Military Committee. A NATO Secretary of Defense, by contrast, would be responsible only to one political body, the North Atlantic Council (possibly, in Osgood's scheme, through a Secretary-General, whose duties and authority, however, are not spelled out).

To describe a NATO Deputy Secretary-General as comparable to a national Secretary of Defense is to imply that his duties would include defense responsibilities far broader than those of a strictly military chief. The United States Secretary of Defense makes decisions and recommendations in many areas outside strategy and tactics. His jurisdiction extends to matters of pay, conditions of service, length of conscription, selection and standardization of equipment, procurement, and civil defense. Osgood does not specifically address himself to this point, and

³⁹The relatively unqualified authority preallocated to international commanders in the event of war contrasts sharply, for example, with the World War I instructions of Lord Kitchener to his field commander, Sir John French, that "your command is an entirely independent one and that you will in no case come in any sense under the orders of any Allied general." (Cited by Barbara W. Tuchman in The Guns of August, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1962, p. 195.)

he may indeed intend to restrict the Deputy Secretary-General's authority to the purely military field. Others, however, have expressly recommended the institution of a NATO Secretary of Defense for the primary purpose of creating in him a central authority for these extramilitary functions.

Having one individual's jurisdiction range over the broad field of defense would immediately raise controversial issues. To limit his authority in most cases to advisory recommendations would be to remove only part of the sting of a significant change. His intrusion, even as an adviser, into what have heretofore been national domains would cause irritation. For example, setting the terms for conscription has been a problem of delicate intragovernmental negotiation in some nations -- notably Germany, Canada, Scandinavia, and the Low Countries. The pattern of obligatory military service differs widely from one allied country to another. An attempt to impose an alliance-wide standard without the concurrence of national authorities could have drastic repercussions, particularly in nations where the party in power holds sway by a narrow margin. Yet failure of a NATO Secretary of Defense to try to achieve standardization in an area of such wide divergences might discredit the whole system.

Other defense subjects involve similar risks. The equipping of forces, in particular, must be handled most discreetly. As long as the member nations continue to equip their own forces, the problem is primarily economic: Who buys how much of what from whom at what price? And what is his incentive for doing so, the quid pro quo? A hierarchic decision-making machinery does not offer a satisfactory substitute for the market system. In fact, research would probably show that attempts to use the present NATO military structure to establish preclusive specifications (or to select equipment) have interfered with the bargaining system and impeded the formation of co-operative commercial ventures. Often, a large manufacturer, instead of trying to arrange for combined production with his competitors, will strive to have NATO issue a statement of military specifications that will eliminate competing products and thus deliver to him the entire NATO market. The task of developing and specifying NATO requirements, therefore, is a long and delicate one. Unless they can reach agreement, nations will naturally procure their equipment whenever possible from domestic sources, which adds to the cost and differentiation of materiel.

Most budgetary issues, such as establishment of total defense appropriations and allocation of expenditures by service and function, involve delicate political maneuvering in each country

-- including our own. While the intercession of an international defense czar would simplify these processes, the question is, would it improve them? How would we draw the line between the responsibilities of the international Secretary of Defense and those of his national counterparts? Should it be up to the former to set force levels and designate types of equipment, as the advocates of a central NATO authority would have it? He would then, in essence, be determining the basic complexion of each national defense budget. And even if a workable distinction could be drawn, would the creation of an international overlord result in a more practical arrangement than the present? SACEUR has been insisting quite forcefully that nations meet their assessments for the 30-division conventional troop shield in the Central Region. His urgings, though only partially successful, have not been resented, because the contributions at issue are country goals, voluntarily accepted in the Military Committee by the individual nations themselves. Is it likely that a NATO Secretary of Defense would have more success in persuading nations to meet his goals? The present difficulties derive, not from internationally imposed objectives, but from the fact that the nations themselves must appropriate the wherewithal.

In short, the functions which would presumably be consolidated under a NATO Secretary of Defense deal with those subjects where national sensitivities are most acute. Until the NATO allies forge a new order of federation, a high-level arbiter may prove an illusory substitute for voluntary co-operation. The present laborious system of negotiation in the military chain and in the various committees of the North Atlantic Council provide a means for harmonizing efforts with less risk of conflict between central and national agencies. These conclusions are not incompatible with the earlier observation (p. 46) that SACEUR's present strength lies partly in his ability to provide recommendations quickly, without need for prior consultation and negotiation. The crucial point of difference is that SACEUR remains subordinate to the multinational military supervisory echelons, whereas the proposed NATO Secretary of Defense would be superior to all international bodies except the Council. To answer our initial question, the time is not yet ripe for a NATO Secretary of Defense with such broad powers.

VI. THE SUMMING UP

We have analyzed three basic types of proposals for the reorganization of the military structure. Each, we find, leaves something to be desired. The voting formula neglects the corporate interest; the voluntary compromise system leaves us prey to indecision; and the arbitration scheme would require an unacceptable cession of national prerogatives. We thus find ourselves in a cul de sac, with no alternative but to go back to where we came from. Not only does each remodeling suggestion seem to have some disqualifying weakness, but the over-all survey of alternatives has uncovered no novel solution preferable to the arrangement we would discard. If these negative deductions have served a positive purpose, it has been to broaden our concept of the theoretical ideal, to enhance our understanding of what a reorganization might and might not accomplish, and to help us appreciate the impediments that bar the way to perfection.

Advocates of reorganization start from the unexpressed premise that we should be willing to assume the risks inherent in changing to a new organization. This premise might be correct if the balance between the potential strengths and weaknesses of the proposed system could be shown to be more favorable than that between the advantages and disadvantages of the existing

one. A change might even be warranted regardless of this balance, if the present system represented a dangerous or intolerable condition.⁴⁰ But the revisionists have not justified their schemes on either ground.

Defense of the status quo tends to inspire little enthusiasm. In the long run, we all know, progress is stimulated by men of vision who set their sights on lofty goals and forge ahead undeterred by doubts of the hesitant. This essay will probably be criticized for subordinating the grand concept of political collaboration to the technicalities of organizational design.

Yet the matter of an organization's decision-making capacity is more than a technicality. It forms the crucial issue in any combined venture, be it a business corporation, a national political apparatus, or an international coalition. A federation, of course, would solve this problem by creating central agencies endowed with authority to make decisions for the community as a whole; but an Atlantic federation is too remote a prospect to be included among present practical alternatives.

⁴⁰Dahl and Lindblom discuss this point in their analysis of changes in the social structure when the proposed innovation cannot scientifically be shown to be preferable to the existing arrangement. (Dahl and Lindblom, op. cit., pp. 82-88.)

There may be still other ways of improving the political and economic collaboration within the alliance than those here discussed. But we must face the reality that any system which does not progress toward federalization depends ultimately on the willingness of the participating nations to adopt common courses -- in other words, on persuasion rather than organization and legislation. One obiter dictum -- having to do more with framing a common course than with the process of deciding on it -- would seem to emerge from our survey of the military system: the political and economic processes might be improved by an authoritative staff director and international planning group under the Committees of the Council, whose task it would be to formulate concrete proposals for the Committees' consideration, just as SACEUR/SHAPE now does for the Standing Group and Military Committee.

In light of the fundamental propositions advanced in this study, the present military structure begins to make a good deal of sense. An ideal system would be built around an energetic planning and policymaking incubator; the existing system provides a source of proven capacity (at least for the major portion of NATO) in the person of SACEUR and the institution of SHAPE. But, in a voluntary association, the ideal system would also have to include guarantees that this dynamic planning agency

would not wield uncontrolled influence or authority; hence the Military Committee, which supervises all military activity and allows any nation a veto. However, any fifteen-nation body (such as the Military Committee) will be unwieldy, particularly if it operates under the unanimity requirement. The Standing Group was created as the expedient by which to sharpen the process and to provide a partial solution to the age-old problem of giving the more powerful members of an association the greater voice in its decisions.

In short, the present military system contains the essential elements, in proper sequence, that would have to be incorporated in any workable scheme for a voluntary alliance. If the system often falters in its operation, this is more likely attributable to a temporary inability to establish harmony than to a deficient organization. Instead of seeking a new design, we might well concentrate on improving the existing framework.

Analysts have suggested a variety of minor adjustments, each of which should be studied and judged on its own merits. One outstanding example is the proposal that the Standing Group be transferred from Washington to Paris. This would not only symbolize a greater European influence in NATO affairs, but would also permit better rapport among SACEUR, the Standing Group, and the Council.

Permanent unions are not achieved through treaties or parliamentary decrees alone; they cannot be consummated without the participants' conscious awareness of their community of purpose. Even the much looser military alliance depends for successful functioning on the general recognition that the interest of every member is best served by the common course, at the expense of occasional self-sacrifice if need be. A much broader sense of identity would be needed for federalization.⁴¹

No one can say with certainty whether the NATO allies would do well at this time to seek consolidation by way of structural reform of the alliance or whether, for the moment, they should content themselves with the somewhat slow growth of their union through their de facto cohesion. Offhand, the present period of rather intense allied discord would appear unpropitious for attempts at institutional remodeling. But, even if the time were right, any decision to change the organization of NATO should be based on a careful weighing of the pros and cons of the proposed structure in terms of the fundamental alternatives identified in this study.

⁴¹For a thorough analysis of the prerequisites for the formation of "amalgamated security-communities" see Deutsch et al., op. cit., passim.