

CONSEIL DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD  
NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

EXEMPLAIRE N°  
COPY

246

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH  
7th October, 1953

CORR = 16.10.53 (INCLUDED)

NATO CONFIDENTIAL  
SUMMARY RECORD  
IC/23-R/9

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL ORGANIZATION IN TIME OF WAR

Summary Record of a Meeting held at the Palais  
de Chaillot, Paris, on Tuesday, 29th September, 1953  
at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT

Chairman: Sir Christopher Steel (United Kingdom)

Mr. R. Thissen	(Belgium)	Mr. N. Hommel	(Luxembourg)
Mr. D. Kirkwood	(Canada)	Mr. P.W. Jalink	(Netherlands)
Mr. S. Sandager Jeppesen	(Denmark)	Mr. K. Hedemann	(Norway)
Mr. Lalouette	(France)	Mr. H. Queiroz	(Portugal)
Mr. P. Verykios	} (Greece)	Mr. M. Baydar	(Turkey)
Vice-Admiral C. Hadjiconstantis		Mr. P. Hayman	(United Kingdom)
Mr. C. Pétursson	(Iceland)	Mr. W.W. Walker	(United States)
Mr. C. Orlando-Contucci	(Italy)		

INTERNATIONAL STAFF

Mr. W.G.N. Miller (Secretary)  
Madame Servais

ALSO PRESENT

Mr. G. Polabon, Chairman, Civil Defence Committee  
and Committee on Refugees  
and Evacuees  
Col. R.T. Bennett, Standing Group Liaison Office  
G/C. E.G. Sewell }  
Lt.Col. J.M. Brasseur } SH.IPE  
G/C. A.V. Anderson }

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1. THE CHAIRMAN, opening the meeting, stressed the importance of preparing civil organization in each country in advance of the outbreak of war. On previous occasions lack of such preparation had severely hampered the military effort. By showing that civil organization was being seriously studied the members of NATO could build up the morale of their peoples and demonstrate the unity in which lay their greatest strength.

I. PROTECTION OF VITAL INSTALLATIONS AND KEY POINTS

Reference: AC/23-R/8, Item III, paragraphs 33/37

2. All Representatives, except those of Denmark, Italy, Portugal and Turkey, who were without instructions, said that their Governments were in agreement with the points set out in paragraphs 33(a), (b), (c) and (d). THE REPRESENTATIVES OF CANADA and FRANCE said that they would submit their detailed comments to the Secretariat in writing for distribution to the Committee.

3. THE SHAPE REPRESENTATIVE explained that SHAPE had now collected a great deal of information on key points in the NATO countries in Europe which were of direct operational concern to the Supreme Commander together with details of their anti-aircraft defence and related communications system.

4. THE CHAIRMAN said that despite the work already done by SHAPE in this field there remained a great number of key points which while not being of direct operational concern to the Supreme Commander were of the utmost importance from the point of view of the countries' ability to make war. Examples of this type of key points were petrol installations, oil pipelines, etc. etc. While the actual choice of key points and their protection necessarily remained the concern of national governments he thought that much useful work could be done in listing types of civilian key points which required protection in different countries and in exchanging information about methods of protection. SHAPE should, of course, be closely associated with this work because of the general military interest in the key point problem. He believed that the best way of initiating action in this field would be for a group of experts to survey the problem of civilian key points and submit recommendations to the Committee.

5. THE SECRETARY reported that the Working Group of PBEIST on Ports and Beaches had circulated a questionnaire in consultation with the chairman of the Civil Defence Committee on the subject of the protection of vital installations. Views would then be exchanged on such tactics as the vulnerability of ports and other installations which required special protection.

6. After further discussion,

THE COMMITTEE:

- (1) agreed to consider this problem further when the Chairman had circulated a paper outlining the terms of reference for a group of experts to survey the civilian key points field as suggested in paragraph 4 above; and

- (2) suggested that Representatives of the SGLO and of SHAPE should be closely associated with any examination of the problem of civilian key points and should be prepared to provide information as required on the steps already taken to survey the field of key points which were of direct operational concern to the Supreme Commander.

II. MEASURES TO BE TAKEN IN RESPECT OF ENEMY SHIPPING AND AIRCRAFT BEFORE THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

Reference: AC/23-R/8, Item IV  
Documents: AC/23-D/32 and AC/23-D/44

7. THE CHAIRMAN explained that there were two aspects to the problem. First, the prevention of sabotage by enemy shipping in harbour on the outbreak of war and, second, the application of methods of seizing enemy shipping in ports when war started. There was a certain difference in the approach to the two problems as the solution to the first might well involve discouraging potential enemy shipping from entering harbours on the eve of war, while the solution to the second might make it desirable to have as much enemy shipping in harbour as possible. The first question might be an appropriate one for consideration by the Special Committee. The second question, however, involved amongst other things a study of possible legal steps which might be taken to restrict enemy shipping from sailing. It would be useful to have a report drawn up which would advise governments on the measures which they could take in dealing with this whole problem. Such a report could only be prepared by a group of experts who were familiar with the subject.

8. After further discussion,

THE COMMITTEE:

agreed to consider the problem further on the basis of a short paper circulated by the Chairman setting out suggested terms of reference for a group of experts to report to the Committee on this subject.

III. RESTRICTIONS ON CIVILIAN TRAVEL IN WARTIME

Reference: AC/23-R/8, Item V  
Document: AC/23-D/35

9. THE CHAIRMAN stated that his Delegation had submitted a factual statement of what had happened in the United Kingdom during the last war, for the information of other governments. While he recognised that this was a matter which was the concern of national governments there might be some value in the various governments exchanging information about the measures which they intended to take in this field. It was the experience of the United Kingdom that unless plans and administrative and legal powers were made ready to control civilian travel on the outbreak of war an unnecessary burden was placed on the civilian economy and military effort of the country concerned.

10. After an exchange of views,

THE COMMITTEE:

- (1) agreed to draw the attention of governments to this whole problem; and
- (2) agreed to consider whether any further exchange of information on the measures which each government contemplated taking in this field was necessary.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES AND EVACUEES

- (a) Evacuation from the combat zone and its vicinity of certain categories of people whose capture by the enemy would be highly undesirable

Documents: AC/23-D/42 and AC/23-D/46

11. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES AND EVACUEES explained that this topic represented only one small part of the whole problem of refugees and evacuees. All countries were agreed that it was desirable to evacuate both persons liable to military service and potential enemy nationals from zones which might become the scene of operations. It was agreed that the evacuation of any other categories was a matter for national decision.

12. THE COMMITTEE:

- (1) took note of the report;
  - (2) accepted the SHAPE observations as set out in Document AC/23-D/46.
- (b) The establishment and organization of hospital or safety zones (Geneva zones), Geneva Convention

Document: AC/23-D/44

13. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES AND EVACUEES explained the principle of the Geneva zones, saying that while many countries were sceptical of the efficacy of such zones in the event of war, all were convinced that it was essential to set them up. He wished to point out, however, that many countries had still not ratified the Geneva Convention. He asked the Committee to note that countries with territories sufficiently large to make the establishment of Geneva zones possible had agreed to accept, on equal terms with their own nationals, nationals from countries whose territories were too small for the establishment of such zones.

14. THE COMMITTEE:

- (3) took note of the report.

(c) Peacetime Refugees

Document: AC/23-D/40

15. THE CHAIRMAN said that the United Kingdom Government were strongly of the opinion that this was not a problem for consideration by the Committee on Civil Organization in Time of War. THE UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE fully supported this view.

16. During the course of the discussion it was pointed out that the problem of peacetime refugees as affecting the Turkish and Italian Governments was quite different. The problem posed by the Turkish Government related to a Turkish minority in Bulgaria whose future would be of great concern in the event of an outbreak of war. THE TURKISH REPRESENTATIVE explained that his Government would much appreciate any advice which NATO might be able to give.

17. The problem posed in the Italian paper related mainly to the future of political refugees at present in Italy. THE ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE, while accepting the ruling that the problem was considered to be outside the terms of reference of the Committee on Civil Organization in Time of War, maintained that the existence of the problem and of its implications for the NATO forces had already been acknowledged and that, therefore, Italy might wish to raise the question in the North Atlantic Council at some future date.

18. After further discussion,

THE COMMITTEE:

- (4) decided that the problem raised by the Italian Government was not within the terms of reference of the Committee on Civil Organization in Time of War or of the Committee on Refugees and Evacuees;
- (5) noted that the Italian Delegation might wish to raise the problem in the North Atlantic Council;
- (6) requested the Committee on Refugees and Evacuees to examine further the problem raised by the Turkish Government.

(d) Total evacuation of certain areas for operational purposes

Document: AC/23-D/45

19. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES AND EVACUEES, in introducing this report, stated that the exchange of information on this matter was proving helpful to both civilian and military authorities.

20. THE COMMITTEE:

- (7) took note of the report and asked members to bring it to the special attention of their governments.

V. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY THE CIVIL DEFENCE COMMITTEE

(a) Air-raid warning systems

Document: AC/23-D/39.

21. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CIVIL DEFENCE COMMITTEE explained that this report was the result of long discussions. All Member Countries now had available the information regarding the best known techniques for warning the civilian population. Further progress in perfecting these techniques would be possible when the military authorities had provided the Committee with answers to the points listed at the end of the report.

22. While countries were agreed on a common method, there were differences between countries in the rate of establishment of warning systems. As he felt that an efficient warning system was the basis of the successful protection of the civilian population in time of war, he thought that the Committee should bring this information to the attention of Member Governments and urge them to speed up the development of their warning systems.

23. THE UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE made several drafting amendments to AC/23-D/39 which the Secretariat was instructed to note when issuing a revise of this document.

24. THE STANDING GROUP LIAISON OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE assured the meeting that the military replies to the points set out in Document AC/23-D/39 would be available shortly.

25. THE COMMITTEE:

(1) decided to invite the Member Governments to report by January 1954 on:

(i) the extent to which a warning system is operative in their country and the areas covered; and

(ii) the areas which would be covered in the future and the approximate dates on which they would be covered.

(b) Protection against the effects of blasts. (shelters)

Document: AC/23-D/38

26. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CIVIL DEFENCE COMMITTEE stated that it was impossible to recommend any single type of shelter for adoption by all NATO countries. However, he suggested that governments should speed up the production of shelters constructed in accordance with the latest techniques, and designed to meet their special requirements.

27. THE CHAIRMAN doubted the value of making any recommendations to governments at this stage. Shelters were extremely costly and funds available in each country for defence needs were, at the moment, barely sufficient to cover purely military purposes.

28. After further discussion, THE COMMITTEE:

(2) agreed to discuss this matter again in six months' time.

(c) Blackout and Camouflage

Document: AC/23-D/37

29. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CIVIL DEFENCE COMMITTEE said that the state of development of blackout systems in each country was extremely varied. He thought that in due course sufficient information would be available to enable Member Governments to conclude 'conventions' covering blackout procedure amongst themselves.

30. THE CHAIRMAN, supported by the UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE, doubted the value of a convention to cover the general question of blackout and camouflage. There were, however, several technical matters, such as for example the extinguishing of street lighting, which presented great difficulties.

31. At the suggestion of the CHAIRMAN, THE COMMITTEE:

(3) noted the report; and

(4) decided to invite governments to report by January 1954:

(i) whether they had blackout regulations prepared which could be brought into force in the event of an emergency; and

(ii) what were their existing plans for blacking out street lighting.

(d) Measures of protection against the effects of incendiary bombs

32. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CIVIL DEFENCE COMMITTEE stated that although much valuable information had been collected on this matter, his Committee had no specific recommendations to make at present.

33. In the following discussion, THE CHAIRMAN drew particular attention to the problem of emergency water supplies. He said that much useful work could be done now by listing and inspecting periodically all possible available sources.

34. THE COMMITTEE:

(5) took note of the report

35. THE CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to Mr. Pelabon's departure from Paris and to the new post to which he had been appointed by his Ministry. As a consequence, Mr. Pelabon would have to relinquish the chairmanship of the Committees of Civil Defence and Refugees and Evacuees.



36. On behalf of the Committee, he wished to say to Mr. Pelabon how much his departure was regretted, and to congratulate him on the successful way in which he had directed the work of the two Committees.

37. He would like representatives on the Committee to ask their members on the Committee on Refugees and Evacuees, and on the Civil Defence Committee, to suggest within the next fortnight the name of a successor to Mr. Pelabon.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Appointment of an officer-expert in civil organization matters

38. THE CHAIRMAN asked representatives to bear in mind the possibility of appointing an expert assistant to the Secretary of the Committee (on a temporary basis), to be responsible for the co-ordination and sifting of the mass of technical information now being furnished by governments. It would be the function of the Committee to make as much information available to governments as possible in a digested form. This would require a great deal of editing and selection which could only be done by an expert. The ultimate aim of the Committee should be to send to Member Governments all useful material in the form of handbooks for their guidance.

39. THE COMMITTEE:

agreed to discuss this matter at its next meeting.

(b) Date of next meeting

40. The next meeting was provisionally fixed for the last fortnight in November. The actual date would be decided later.