

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED POWERS EUROPE
OFFICE OF THE SUPREME COMMANDER

27 Mar 59

GENERAL NORSTAD:

General Gale gave a copy of
the attached to Gen Schuyler and asked
that it not be distributed to the staff
divisions without editing.

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F.T.U.

GENERAL SIR RICHARD N. GALE, GCB, KBE, DSO, MC

REPORT ON VISIT TO BONN, 23-24 MARCH 1959

The Bundeskanzler

I was received by General Heusinger and a Guard of Honour at the Ministry of Defence. There I had a discussion with the Minister of Defence, Herr Strauss. Present at this interview were:-

Dr. Rust, State Secretary

General Heusinger

General Röttiger

Vice Admiral Wagner

Admiral Ruge was away, as also was Lt-Gen Kammhuber. I thought the absence of Gen. Kammhuber was perhaps a little significant. In all my previous dealings with the Germans on defence matters, I have found that air matters generally tended to come in as an afterthought. In fact, in all my discussions with the MOD, air matters were never raised once.

This meeting was really a courtesy one, and little more than politeness occurred there. I had to go on very shortly after this to a meeting with the German Chancellor, Dr. Adenauer.

Dr. Adenauer was most cordial, and showed by everything he said that he was an all-out supporter of NATO and what it stands for. He expressed grave misgivings at the rumours he had read in the Press as a result of the meeting of the Prime Minister of Britain and the President of the US. He was perturbed at any idea of thinning out or halting of armaments, and particularly stressed the fact that he felt that if a halt was made either before Germany received atomic weapons or whilst she was in process of receiving them, she might be left in the bad position of having insufficient or even none. This was a position which he would

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- 2 -

do everything in his power to prevent occurring. As these statements were directed against the British Prime Minister, I pointed out to the Chancellor that I was really present there in my NATO capacity, but that at the same time I would be sceptical of reports appearing in the Press, until one had had time to get the true and official story of what had in fact taken place. This did not quite convince the Chancellor, who replied that he thought that while the Press was untrue on occasions, it often was correct.

I told him that in so far as the SHAPE position was concerned, we adhered to and believed in the minimum forces, and the policy that lay behind the document MC 70, and from that we had no intention of deviating.

I lunched with the Chancellor, and he paid me the compliment of placing me on his right. Present at the lunch were:-

Dr. Strauss, Minister of Defence

Dr. Dittmann, Deputy Under-Secretary, Foreign Office

Dr. Rust, State Secretary, Ministry of Defence

Herr Globke, State Secretary, Federal Chancellery

Herr Von Braun, Chief of Protocol, Foreign Office

General Heusinger

General Foertsch

Finally, the British Ambassador was present, and, in spite of Protocol, was placed by agreement on the Chancellor's left.

The conversation at lunch was on general matters, and nothing of importance was said.

Remarks which the Chancellor had made to me in the course of our conversations together indicated quite clearly that he was impressed by and very much a supporter of de Gaulle. The whole illogicality of the situation seemed to pass him by completely, and he spoke of de Gaulle as the keenest supporter of NATO. I was tempted to make some comment on this, but deemed it wiser not to do so.

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 3 -

Alert Measures

By arrangement with Sir Christopher Steel and the other Ambassadors, we had a meeting at the British Embassy at 4 o'clock on 23 March, to discuss the procedures that we should take concerning the Alert Measures. I got the impression from my conversation with the Ambassadors that little had been done about this, but that it was recognised that the position was not satisfactory.

Sir Christopher Steel remarked that as matters stood at the moment, the Alert Measures could only be introduced by the action of the Ambassadors under Article 5 of the Paris Treaty, and that in fact the Germans might not react at all favourably to this in the event. Perhaps this was a pessimistic view, and perhaps by agreement with the Chancellor they could ensure that the Germans would react satisfactorily. I pointed out that this was of little use to SACEUR. What he very naturally felt was that we must be able to assure ourselves that in fact the Alert Measures would be implemented. Satisfactory implementation of the Alert Measures could not take place if no preliminary work had been done in the German Ministries concerned and in the Landers. None of the Ambassadors seemed to be aware of the amount of legislation that would have to be enacted to enable these measures to be put into effect. The position here was clarified by myself as well as by the legal adviser to the US Ambassador. Certain amendments to the Basic Law would be essential before the legislation could be put into effect at all, and there were a number of minor matters which could be effected by normal legislation but without any change in Basic Law. To change the Basic Law required a two-thirds majority in both houses, and, in the opinion of the Ambassadors, it was most unlikely that this would be achieved. So far this was not very satisfactory.

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 4 -

I decided with them that we should make a concerted approach. I would discuss the matter with Herr Strauss that evening. The US Ambassador agreed to raise the matter with the Chancellor, which he hoped to be able to do the following day. Thirdly, the British Ambassador would raise the matter with Herr Globke, the State Secretary.

Discussions with Herr Strauss, Minister of Defence

That evening, I met the Defence Minister at dinner given in the British Embassy by the British Ambassador. I mentioned to him there that I would like to raise the matter of Alert Measures, and he said he was only too delighted that I should do so. We were able to get together and have a serious talk on this subject. He welcomed the approach from SACEUR, and said that he himself was very perturbed that German legislation did not at the present moment permit her undertaking obligations which he was quite convinced she should do. He had himself with the Minister of the Interior approached the Chancellor on more than one occasion. The Chancellor's view was that it would take a two-thirds majority to alter the Basic law, and this was essential on certain of the issues. The Chancellor did not think he could sway both houses, in which this majority would have to be achieved, and he felt that the difficulty of this issue would make the last stage worse than the first.

Herr Strauss made it very clear that he did not concur with the Chancellor on this, but felt that as a politician he could force the issue with the Opposition by stressing the fact the security of Germany was at stake, and that if the Opposition voted against it they were voting against essential measures for the security of their own land.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

- 5 -

He said that in this the Minister of the Interior was at one with him, and this issue was a fundamental political difficulty between himself and the Chancellor. I mentioned to him that the American Ambassador proposed to raise the matter with the Chancellor, and he welcomed this. In fact, he said that any ammunition we could give him would be very useful.

We then discussed what measures, short of this legislation, could be taken. One suggestion he made was that the Germans should draw up what the legislation should be and that they should hand it over to the Ambassadors and by agreement with the Army would promulgate this at the time.

I pointed out that the weakness of this was that essential departmental work that should be done both in Bonn and in the Landers would not be undertaken, and so, in the event, they would be faced with measures which they would have to implement and for which they would be in no sense prepared. He agreed with me, because he said that that had been his point all along. Whereas the Ministry of Defence knew exactly what they wanted, no civil department in Germany knew it, and not knowing it could not prepare.

My talks with Herr Strauss then turned on the question of the reorganisation of the German Army into Brigade Groups. He said that this reorganisation was desirable, but he wanted to make it clear that by implementing it now we would be placed in a position where the German Army would be virtually ineffectual until about September, and he wanted me to make this position quite clear to SACEUR. I said I felt SACEUR was aware of it, but I would nevertheless inform him as requested by the Defence Minister. I pointed out to the Defence Minister that really we were always likely to be in a position of crisis, and that if we were to wait for fair weather before making changes we might go on waiting ad infinitum. With this he entirely agreed.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

- 6 -

DISCUSSION WITH GENERAL HEUSINGER, INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF ARMED FORCES

I had a private and detailed discussion with General Heusinger on matters of current interest.

1. Organisation and training of the German Army

In order to overcome grave disadvantages to the active Army units resulting from their having to give basic training to their own recruits, the Germans propose to introduce a separate organisation to deal with this problem. To this end they are proposing to introduce additional training companies into every regiment. These companies will be responsible for the basic training of the recruits, who will on completion of this be placed in the active elements of the unit. This will require an increase in their manpower ceiling, which I understand to be something of the order of 30,000. From my own knowledge of this type of commitment, I think this figure is accurate. I told General Heusinger I thought this an excellent move, as I felt it was well-nigh impossible for any unit to be war-ready if a proportion of its personnel were untrained soldiers and recruits receiving their elementary basic training. I mentioned also that I felt that one year's National Service was really too short to achieve the skills necessary in a modern army. General Heusinger concurred in this, but of course at the present moment nothing can be done about it.

2. Denmark

General Heusinger made it clear that the Germans had no intention of re-raising the question of command in Denmark. They were, however, deeply perturbed at the present situation, in which the Danes are refusing permission for the Germans to place in Denmark their stocks of resources destined for fighting in Schleswig-Holstein.

/They would ...

They would hope that the difficulty might be overcome by considering these depots as NATO depots and not German depots. Germany would be quite prepared to pay for them, but if they can be called NATO and not German depots, the Danes might be persuaded to change their present opposition. I said we might run into considerable difficulties politically over this, as the rules for what is NATO and what is individually national are pretty strictly laid down. However, I said we would examine the German ideas very carefully here.

3. NIKE Sites

General Heusinger said that there would be no difficulty over obtaining the necessary number of NIKE sites in Germany. I said I was surprised but glad to hear this, as I had understood that there were difficulties. He said that there had been difficulties, but they were now largely overcome.

4. Training Areas

General Heusinger explained that one great problem facing the German Army was to obtain sufficient training areas. He said that he got fairly good cooperation from the Northern Army Group in the use of their training areas, but that it was not quite so easy in the South. He was hoping that he would be able to settle this on his own net, and did not particularly wish to raise the issue with SHAPE. My personal opinion was that he felt that he was likely to get a little more of what he wanted from General Eddleman than he had done in the past. I said that we appreciated here the complexities of the problem, and the vital necessity of the Germans having sufficient facilities for training, and that we would watch future developments with interest.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

- 8 -

5. General Heusinger's Letter to General Norstad

I told General Heusinger that General Norstad had been interested to receive his letter on his conception of armies in Central Europe, and that there was much in this letter with which he was in agreement. I said, however, that we could not go with him on his implied plan for separate command in the Centre on the Kassel-Koblenz axis. I said the problem of coordination in the particularly important area was unquestionably the responsibility of the C in C Centre. He agreed.

I then enlarged on the subject of command structure in general and said that we here were sure that we should aim at reducing headquarters and not increasing them. For that reason we opposed the idea of an Army HQ, and supported in general the idea of a Corps HQ on a national basis. General Heusinger said he entirely agreed with this. He himself quite firmly opposed the setting up of any Army HQ, and indeed hoped we would be able to liquidate the two Army HQs in the Central Area. There were, he said, too many headquarters in this area for the number of troops that they would ever have to command.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

- 9 -

I visited the III Corps at Koblenz

Lieut-General Freiherr von Luttwitz came to Bonn to escort me out. He is a charming cultured general of wide command experience and as he put it with some pride "I have never been on the German General Staff".

I saw individual training in a battalion of the 5 Armoured Division and the divisional signals battalion.

The system of training was sound and practical.

I was struck by the immature youth of almost all the instructors who are not experienced enough either to notice or to correct minor faults. The men were, of course, all young and immature. The general standard of appearance was good, and the intelligence standard I should say was high.

In the signal battalion I saw they were just about to discharge a batch of men who had completed their year's training. They were in fact due to go out the next day. That meant to say that about a quarter of the unit on the following day would be untrained raw recruits.

An Army working on this system is not ready for war, and really never can be.

The length of service, even allowing for a high standard of intelligence, is insufficient, and the proportion of regulars to national service men is too small.

The gap between the few last-war NCOs, who are not many, and the new army NCOs is frighteningly large. I think it will take at least a further two years to remedy this.

The gap in the officer structure is obvious to the eye, and

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~~TOP SECRET~~

- 10 -

just as bad. Only the officers in most cases are far too old for their rank. It will take longer to remedy this.

There is literally little or no logistic backing to the Army. Even boot repairs have to be done in shops in the Town.

We must be careful lest too much window dressing blinds us to military weaknesses.

Morale and keenness were of a high order, and I got the firm impression that they welcomed the interest being taken in them and the detail to which this interest was directed.

Richard N. Gale

General

DSACEUR

26 Mar '59