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(First Part)

Weaponry after the Gulf war –
new equipment requirements for restructured armed forces

REPORT

submitted on behalf of the
Technological and Aerospace Committee
by Sir Dudley Smith

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1. Adopted in committee by 12 votes to 2 with 0 abstentions.

2. *Members of the committee:* Mr. Stegagnini (Chairman); MM. Garrett (Alternate: Lambie), Lopez Henares (Alternate for Pedregosa) (Vice-Chairmen); MM. Atkinson, Biefnot (Alternate: Uyttendaele), Mrs. Blunck, MM. Böhm, Caccia, Conceição, De Bondt, Dimmer, Mrs. Francese, MM. Lagorce, Le Grand, Lenzer, Lopez Valdivielso (Alternate: Vazquez), Malfatti (Alternate: Pieralli), Menzel, Moreira, Palacios, Parry, Lord Rodney (Alternate: Sir Dudley Smith), MM. Tummers (Alternate: Aarts), Valleix, Verbeek, Worms.

N.B. *The names of those taking part in the vote are printed in italics.*

Draft Recommendation

***on weaponry after the Gulf war –
new equipment requirements for restructured armed forces***

The Assembly,

- (i) Welcoming the continuing improvement in relations between all countries participating in the CSCE;
- (ii) Recognising that the process of political détente, combined with the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the territory of Central European nations and reductions of troops and equipment in the framework of the CFE agreement have reduced the security risk in Central Europe;
- (iii) Aware that economic deterioration and increasing political instability in the Soviet Union still constitute a residual security risk for Central and Western Europe which cannot be ignored;
- (iv) Conscious that, in some parts of Eastern Europe, recent democratisation has also brought to the fore a number of ethnic, national and economic difficulties, thus creating instability;
- (v) Recognising that the Gulf war was very different from past wars, particularly in regard to new technology and lessons and consequences have to be drawn from it;
- (vi) Expecting that for many years to come the Near and Middle East will be an area of instability with serious risks for the security and other interests of Europe;
- (vii) Concerned that existing intelligence and surveillance systems failed to provide adequate information on the military build-up prior to the invasion of Kuwait as was also the case in Afghanistan in 1979;
- (viii) Alarmed by developments in ballistic missile technology in a number of countries in the Mediterranean and in the Near and Middle East;
- (ix) Aware that as a consequence of institutional constraints some possible security risks cannot be controlled by NATO as such, but that in certain conditions, such as out-of-area crises, WEU can play a useful complementary rôle;
- (x) Convinced that WEU will need an operational capability in order to give Europe more influence within NATO and the ability to respond with the United States to world events;
- (xi) Convinced that a European rapid reaction force for use outside the NATO area would be logical and compatible with NATO's responsibilities to defend NATO territory;
- (xii) Aware of the new force structures which will be introduced in the allied forces, on both a national and multinational level, based on the principles of flexibility, mobility and reinforcement,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Urgently establish a WEU centre for satellite data interpretation as a first step towards setting up a European observation satellite agency;
2. Thoroughly review national force reductions as soon as the Atlantic Alliance has reached decisions regarding future allied force structures;
3. Instruct the committee of chiefs of defence staff of WEU to examine in detail the consequences of future allied force structures and the lessons of the Gulf war for European military co-operation, in particular with a view to studying:
 - (a) the possibility of setting up a European strategic airlift command equipped with a military version of the Airbus A-340 and operating in a WEU framework;
 - (b) the ballistic missile threat on Europe's southern flank and a possible subsequent common European requirement for an anti-ballistic missile capability;
 - (c) a common European requirement for a stand-off capability and precision-guided weapons.

Explanatory Memorandum

(submitted by Sir Dudley Smith, Rapporteur)

I. Introduction

1. Less than one year ago, in July 1990, European governments might have thought they had finished with war as an ultimate resort in crisis situations. The Soviet Union had been extremely co-operative in solving a number of remaining problems regarding the unification of the two parts of Germany, the CFE was making extraordinary progress, the Warsaw Pact had practically decided to give up its military rôle, its disbandment in the near future was inevitable and NATO had held its London summit which terminated its sole existence as a leading instrument in the containment of the Soviet threat as it was perceived during the cold war.

2. In many Western European countries, the public at large started to think that armed forces were a remnant of a cursed past which should now be forgotten. For some, the only reason not to abolish armed forces at once was the possible social and economic consequences for the military and the suppliers of arms.

3. Events since August 1990 have again proved how illusory those perceptions were. In the Gulf area, Saddam Hussein's unpredictable and volatile behaviour led to a major conflict, but the military victory of the coalition forces was by no means a guarantee of durable peace in the Middle East, where many other questions still remain unresolved. For years to come, the Middle East will remain an area of instability fraught with different possible threats to Europe's security.

4. In the Soviet Union, the general situation is apparently deteriorating and it is increasingly clear that the central government is losing control of the economic and political situation. Inevitably this has already led to political compromise where, in many instances, "old guard" forces have obtained the upper hand. In early 1991, Vilnius and Riga were the scene of incidents which could in no way be compared with the systematic repression which took place under previous Soviet leadership but were indeed a sobering reminder to the western public that not all has yet changed in the Soviet Union and attention should not therefore be slackened. In fact, the Soviet Union's military posture on NATO's northern and southern flanks has not diminished. On the contrary, the military forces assembled on the Kola peninsula on Norway's northern border have been refined and reinforced in recent months. Both the Soviet Union and the Balkans are still inherently unstable, bearing the seeds of possible conflicts

which may again threaten peace and security in Europe.

5. History has shown that in international relations it is extremely difficult for any of the countries or alliances concerned to control more than one serious conflict at a time.

6. The allied countries, be they American or European, should therefore use any peaceful means at their disposal to promote peace and security in areas threatened by conflict. At the same time, however, they should continue to maintain armed forces which are capable of guaranteeing their borders and controlling a conflict when it comes to the worst and military action is inevitable.

7. Referring to a sometimes confusing debate on the future of Europe's security structures, it should be clearly stated here that, according to the committee's firm conviction, NATO is vital for European defence arrangements to be credible. The United Kingdom Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, put it rightly when he said that there is a case for a stronger European defence identity, but that NATO must be an integral part of the future defence of Europe. An approach which emphasised the separateness of Europe would seriously weaken its real security¹.

8. The aim of this report is to attempt to see what the alliance and in particular member states of Western European Union are doing to adapt their armed forces to a changing geopolitical and military situation. At the same time, a preliminary inventory is made of lessons from the Gulf war, which may lead to new or more detailed equipment requirements.

II. Revision of doctrines and strategies in NATO

9. The turbulent events of 1989 brought about so many changes in the political and military situation in Europe, which until then had seemed frozen in immobility, that even NATO was taken aback. It did not wait very long to react, however, and the first important sign of changes in NATO thinking appeared in the London declaration on a transformed North Atlantic Alliance issued by the heads of state and government in London on 6th July 1990.

10. Some quotations from this declaration and from communiqués of subsequent high-

¹ Financial Times, 13th April 1991.

level meetings will be given here, since they should form the basis for restructuring armed forces in alliance countries and possible new equipment requirements.

11. The London declaration stated that

- “ – NATO will field smaller and restructured active forces. These forces will be highly mobile and versatile so that allied leaders will have maximum flexibility in deciding how to respond to a crisis. It will rely increasingly on multinational corps made up of national units.
- NATO will scale back the readiness of its active units, reducing training requirements and the number of exercises.
- NATO will rely more heavily on the ability to build up larger forces if and when they might be needed.

To keep the peace, the alliance must maintain for the foreseeable future an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces, based in Europe, and kept up to date where necessary. But, as a defensive alliance, NATO has always stressed that none of its weapons will ever be used except in self-defence and it seeks the lowest and most stable level of nuclear forces needed to secure the prevention of war.

The political and military changes in Europe and the prospects of further changes now allow the allies concerned to go further. They will thus modify the size and adapt the tasks of their nuclear deterrent forces. They have concluded that, as a result of the new political and military conditions in Europe, there will be a significantly-reduced rôle for sub-strategic nuclear systems of the shortest range. They have decided specifically that, once negotiations begin on short-range nuclear forces, the alliance will propose, in return for reciprocal action by the Soviet Union, the elimination of all its nuclear artillery shells from Europe.”

12. The declaration explicitly approved the mandate given in Turnberry to the North Atlantic Council in Permanent Session to oversee the ongoing work on the adaptation of the alliance to the new circumstances. It then continued as follows:

“ In the context of these revised plans for defence and arms control, and with the advice of NATO military authorities and all member states concerned, NATO will prepare a new allied military strategy moving away from forward defence, where appropriate, towards a reduced

forward presence and modifying flexible response to reflect a reduced reliance on nuclear weapons. In that connection, NATO will elaborate new force plans consistent with the revolutionary changes in Europe. NATO will also provide a forum for allied consultation on the upcoming negotiations on short-range nuclear forces.”

13. The Eurogroup ministers met in Brussels on 5th December 1990 when the tension in the Gulf crisis was steadily increasing. They stressed a specific European responsibility within the alliance framework and confirmed the London declaration as follows:

“ Recent and continuing developments have reinforced our conviction that the European allies should take on an even greater degree of responsibility for our own defence. We welcome the development of a strong, coherent and outward-looking European identity, including in the security area. It is part of a long-term trend that the alliance has welcomed and encouraged. It is also necessary for the maintenance of a balanced and equitable transatlantic partnership.

The alliance is in the process of adapting to the changing security environment and is therefore reviewing its strategy. We fully endorse this process. We support both the work in hand to develop a coherent and credible allied force posture in line with the emerging new strategy, and the general directions in which this work is moving. We stress the continuing need for a co-ordinated approach to our defence planning. We welcome in particular the increased emphasis on multinational formations as a contribution towards strengthening collective defence, transatlantic links and the European security identity. We have approved work on the defence planning issues arising out of the impact of the CFE Treaty undertaken in various Eurogroup fora, which we will make available to the alliance. We have tasked Eurogroup's subgroups to continue to concentrate their work on meeting the defence planning challenges of the post-CFE era.”

14. This meeting was followed by meetings of the Defence Planning Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group of NATO. In the final communiqué of these meetings, more details were provided concerning the strategy review process and the future character of allied forces, in particular in paragraphs 7 and 8, which read as follows:

“ In this time of transition we are looking forward and concentrating on the require-

ments of the future. As directed by the London summit, we are developing a new military strategic concept for the alliance. An important aim will be to provide NATO's military authorities with policy guidance upon which to develop a new force posture and operational concepts. We shall also take into account the inter-relationship between defence capabilities, arms control and the emerging co-operative security structures. Work on the strategy review is proceeding well and we expect to be in a position to approve the new strategic concept next spring.

In our Defence Planning Committee meeting we continued our consultations on the changes which many member countries are contemplating making in the forces they contribute to the common defence. We attach particular importance to the close co-ordination of national force plans, so that we maintain a coherent alliance force posture, in line with the emerging new strategy. Our aim is to ensure enhanced stability and security throughout the current period of transition and also in the new co-operative European security environment. Our future force posture will be based on smaller, more mobile and flexible active forces, able to respond to aggression from any quarter. A considerable portion of our forces will be held at lower levels of readiness and availability but able to be built up and reinforced if the need arises. We will increasingly rely on multinational formations, which will enhance co-operation between allies and underline the collective nature of our defence arrangements. A continued significant presence in Europe of forces from the North American democracies is indispensable."

15. At the press conference, Secretary-General Manfred Wörner elaborated on the idea of multinational forces. SACEUR had submitted a report on the progress made in the study of this subject. An agreement on the principles had been reached, but conclusions should be presented before the summer of 1991 together with conclusions on the new NATO strategy. Mr. Wörner recalled that NATO already had multinational forces such as AWACS and on-call naval forces. The form and mix of new multinational forces would be different, as well as their geographical zones and tasks. The whole issue would be discussed in the NATO Council, with the participation of France.

16. Mr. Wörner announced recently that this transatlantic summit, originally planned for June 1991, which would have approved the new

NATO strategy, will now take place in November 1991². It seems that the discussion on out-of-area activities and co-operation between NATO, EEC and WEU and also a possibly changing attitude of France in the alliance is requiring a longer period of reflection than expected, while the attitude of the Soviet Union towards implementation of the CFE Treaty should also be clarified.

17. The communiqué after the North Atlantic Ministerial Council meeting on 18th December 1990 contained no news about the strategy review or armed forces structures, but reflected awareness of increasing discussions on a European security identity and defence rôle in paragraph 5, where it was said:

"The adaptation of our alliance to new circumstances will include enhancing the rôle of the European allies with a view to ensuring a full and equitable sharing of leadership and responsibilities between Europe and North America. All allies agree that the foundation of European stability and security will continue to be a strong and viable North Atlantic Alliance which requires the continuing active political engagement and significant military presence of the North American democracies in Europe. A European security identity and defence rôle, reflected in the construction of a European pillar within the alliance, will not only serve the interests of the European states but also help to strengthen Atlantic solidarity. In this context, and as this process evolves, we will consider how the political and military structures of the alliance must be adapted accordingly.

We support current efforts to strengthen the security dimension in the process of European political integration, and recognise the importance of the recent decisions of the European Council in Rome. We emphasise, in this regard, the importance of safeguarding complementarity and transparency between the two processes of the adaptation of the alliance and of the development of European security co-operation."

18. One of the uncertainties of the moment is that the western allies have not yet worked out a new military strategy for the future. Strictly speaking only a new common defence strategy can be a sound basis for new force structures and new equipment requirements. High-ranking officials are negotiating now to adapt NATO's long-standing strategy of forward defence and flexible response to the new political and mil-

2. Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 20th-21st April 1991.

itary situation in the world. It seems, however, that little progress is being made, since the debate on strategic issues is directly linked to the political debate on the future rôle of NATO. The central issue in this political debate is whether NATO should be transformed into a more political body with a broader task in order to guarantee western security interests worldwide.

19. It is a significant indication of the changes taking place in the alliance that France, which left NATO's integrated military structure in 1966, apart from its long-standing participation in the meetings of the North Atlantic Council which is discussing issues of a political nature, is now participating again in the work of the NATO Defence Planning Committee since March 1991. This committee is actually assessing the change in risks since the actual dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, while taking into account the still formidable strength of the Soviet armed forces.

20. At the same time, however, France has indicated that it will not participate in the next phase of the committee's work, which is to establish a new strategy in order to respond to the changed risks. There can be no doubt that France's behaviour is inspired by its wish to keep up the appearance that it remains completely independent in establishing its strategy and deploying its armed forces.

21. It remains to be seen how long it can maintain this seemingly complete freedom of action if it wishes seriously to set up a common European security policy.

22. Undoubtedly, an up-to-date assessment of the security risks faced by its members must be the cornerstone of the alliance's new strategy and doctrine. There is little disagreement that the withdrawal of Soviet troops and equipment from the territory of its former Warsaw Pact allies and the continuing democratisation in Central Europe greatly diminishes the risks of a Soviet surprise attack on Western Europe. At the same time, the instability, if not explosiveness in the Middle East, in the southern republics of the Soviet Union and the potential for conflict in North Africa is obvious enough for the allied countries not to diminish their vigilance on the southern flank.

23. Be that as it may, opinions on the situation on the northern flank are less clear and when it comes to the security of Europe, both politicians and the military in Norway feel their country is being isolated. General Vigleik Eide, chairman of NATO's military committee, admits that Soviet forces in the north have been kept at the same level, but he has pointed out that the Soviet back-up system as a whole is being reduced under the arms control treaties, thus reducing the overall capacity for a real

offensive in the north. On the other hand he is aware that Soviet troops in the north can more rapidly be a threat since warning times in the flanking regions will be shorter.

24. The Norwegian defence minister, Johan Jorgen Holst has pointed out that the Soviet military concentration on the Kola peninsula is still being reinforced. This view is backed on all political sides. Aging bombers and combat-aircraft have recently been replaced by Tu-26 Backfires and MiG-27 Floggers, the aircraft carrier "Admiral Kuznetsov" is joining the northern fleet and Soviet amphibious forces have been strengthened with the redesignation of motor rifle divisions as naval infantry. As another sign of the Soviet belief in the importance of this zone, it should be mentioned that it has announced large amphibious exercises in the northern area, to be held in September 1991.

25. He said that the defence of the northern flank is still very dependent on reinforcement, and this should remain a priority not to be diminished. Since reinforcements for northern Norway have to be arctic-equipped and trained, there should at least be an element of NATO's future rapid reaction corps to meet these requirements.

26. It is quite clear that notwithstanding the lack of decisions on a new strategy and on connected issues, member states on both sides of the Atlantic did not wait to introduce major cuts in defence expenditure with important consequences for the future of their armed forces. Likewise, the mutual consultations ministers called for before taking national decisions have apparently been less decisive than the national finance ministers' calls for budget cuts. There is a rush for budget cuts without regard for the long-term consequences in an Atlantic or European framework.

27. The question remains if this process of the apparent lack of international co-ordination in national defence expenditure reductions does not draw heavily on the alliance's capability to respond adequately to the changes in security risks.

28. Possible options now being considered in allied discussions such as facing the risk of regional conflicts, improved reinforcement capability outside the central region, the eventual need for graduated military options in the fields of readiness and mobilisation and also for available, combat-ready forces of high flexibility and of a multinational character demand careful planning. Meticulous co-ordination of all different national force structures and procurement is essential for building a successful new defence posture. It deserves more attention.

III. Future allied force structures

29. While both the North Atlantic Council and the Defence Planning Committee respectively are still continuing their drawn-out discussions to define a political concept of NATO's rôles and purposes in the future and to review strategic concepts, the Military Committee has made great progress in designing a new force structure.

30. This appears to be building a new security framework in reverse order, but the Military Committee was particularly keen to reach early conclusions because all allied member countries are already making national force plans and reducing their defence expenditure in order to adapt to the changing East-West relations.

31. In an early stage of the discussions, agreement had been reached on a number of basic principles:

- there will be a lower level of forces and a lower degree of readiness;
- flexibility and mobility are essential in order to allow for rapid counter-concentration options against any kind of threat;
- reinforcement capacity, also implying a greater reliance on reserve forces, will have greater importance;
- a multinational integration of some key forces will be indispensable³.

32. Military experts generally agreed that any reappraisal of force structures should take account of the gradually inevitable fact that the United States forces in Europe will be considerably reduced in the near future. Recently, a United States panel of twenty-six experts on Atlantic security, including leading Republican and Democrat members of Congress, recommended that the United States cut its NATO forces by two-thirds in an effort to give the Europeans the job of defending Europe.

33. Most European security experts are also assuming that the United States will not leave more than about 70 000 of its troops in Europe after 1994, when the Soviet troops should have left the territory of its former Warsaw Pact allies in Central Europe.

34. The abovementioned panel advocated limiting United States ground combat forces to a small number of troops and placing them in multinational units instead of the large, wholly American units now deployed.

35. The French Foreign Minister, Roland Dumas, while explaining the Franco-German

proposal for a common European foreign and security policy, radically suggested that Western European Union could well be the point of departure for a European armed force *sui generis*⁴.

36. Mr. Willem van Eckelen, WEU's Secretary-General, in trying to steer a reasonable middle course, proposed the establishment of multinational European as well as American-European units which could be deployed as rapid reaction forces. The strictly European forces could be deployed for out-of-area operations not only in the Mediterranean and the Middle East but also in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. These European multinational forces should be organised at the lowest possible level. An air-mobile division for the northern sector could for instance consist of Belgian, British, Dutch and German units. French forces would have no difficulty in participating because they could consider these forces as inherently European⁵.

37. The Federal Republic is preparing to change its constitution so as to enable its armed forces to operate outside the area covered by the North Atlantic Treaty. According to the recent debates on the Federal budget in March 1991, the government is seriously examining how the Federal armed forces could participate in joint action in the framework of an adequate European security structure such as Western European Union. Mr. Stoltenberg, the Federal Defence Minister, said that valuable and proven ways of multinational co-operation should be maintained in essence. At the same time, however, he said, there are cases, such as the creation of rapid reaction forces, where increased integration makes sense and others where it is useful and compulsory, when a country is no longer able to deploy its own operative forces in certain sectors⁶.

38. German sources consider multinational forces consisting of units from different allied nations to be of great importance for reinforcing the political basis for the deployment of armed forces in an allied framework. Such forces would also contribute to keeping alive the defence co-operation between the United States and Europe after the CFE arms reductions. The deployment of allied armed forces should be more evenly spread over Europe's territory in order to improve flexibility and mobility in crisis situations and also to replace the east-bound forward defence on German territory by multifaceted distribution with capabilities to reassemble quickly, but without permanently being directed towards the east⁷.

39. William Taft, the United States permanent representative to the North Atlantic

3. The issue of multinational forces is being considered in detail in the Defence Committee's report: Arms control: Force reductions and the rôle of multinational units.

4. *Le Monde*, 12th March 1991.

5. *NRC-Handelsblad*, 1st March 1991.

6. Address in Bonn on 13th March 1991.

7. *Die Welt*, 29th June 1990.

Council, speaking on European security in a new world order, made it clear that his nation supports a European pillar which does not duplicate the alliance and one which operates within the alliance to do alliance tasks and outside the alliance only where it wishes to take on new missions.

40. At the same time he stressed that NATO's efforts towards a more collective approach to defence – for example, the development of multinational units within the integrated structure – should continue to parallel progress towards greater European integration in other areas.

41. In order to understand better what Ambassador Taft meant, it should be noted here that the alliance's future tasks are an issue on which the United States and a number of its European allies still disagree.

42. On 12th April last, the NATO Military Committee reached agreement on the design for a new force structure which will be submitted to the ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Copenhagen on 6th and 7th June 1991. This agreement makes a distinction between three different levels of formations.

- (i) *Main defence forces.* These forces are the largest section of the forces of allied countries and they will be in a lesser state of preparation.
- (ii) *Reaction forces.* A distinction will be made between:
 - (a) *Immediate reaction forces,* to be formed after the fashion of the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (AMF), a multinational brigade-sized force, supported by fighter squadrons from several nations, and trained for operations on NATO's northern and southern flanks.
 - (b) *Rapid reaction forces,* which should be of army corps size (70 000 to 100 000 men) and drawn from units of European member countries' forces, with United States air support. The type of command for these forces has not yet been decided. It is still to be decided whether one country should assume command or whether it should be rotated among participating countries. These forces may be based in Germany, but several other options are still being discussed. The combat-ready rapid reaction force could be sent from Central Europe to keep the peace or do battle elsewhere. It is thought that the whole force need not always

be activated in cases of emergency. Parts of it may be sent, shaped to fit the circumstances of action. It could also intervene under different hats. It could operate under NATO command within the area covered by the North Atlantic Treaty; if an out-of-area operation were required, the European units could do the job under WEU responsibility. The equipment of this force should be adapted to its rôle, which means that it should have a wide range of armour and armaments, and also be able to move quickly if required. Air-mobility would be an essential characteristic. It goes without saying that, with a view to combined operations, the equipment and resources of the different national units should be interchangeable and based on standardised designs.

- (iii) *Back-up or augmentation forces.* While part of these forces should be active serving units for maintaining and exercising purposes, they would mainly consist of reservists. The equipment of these forces should be stored and prepositioned in combat-ready conditions.

IV. The restructuring of national armed forces

43. In this chapter, a succinct synopsis will be given of the state of affairs in the restructuring of the armed forces in each of the member countries of WEU.

Belgium

44. On 24th December 1990, the Belgian Government approved the Charlier II programme for restructuring the armed forces.

45. One of the programme's objectives is to reduce the defence budget by 10% over a five-year period. The army's total strength will be reduced from 4 active and 2 reserve brigades to 3 active, of which one will remain on German territory, and one reserve brigade. As a consequence, the number of active army battalions will be reduced from 41 to 22. The paratroop regiment will not be affected.

46. The air force will phase out its B-727 transport aircraft and a programme to update its existing 12 C-130 Hercules should be completed by 1995. One fighter-bomber attack squadron equipped with Mirage-5 BA will be disbanded. The Mirage-5 BRs of the tactical reconnaissance squadron will be updated, while all F-16 A/Bs of