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THE N.A.T.O. DECISIONS TO USE ATOMIC WEAPONS AS DESCRIBED
IN THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN PRESS

The Times, 18 December, 1954

'General Gruenther is understood to have ... requested formal agreement to military planning on the basis that nuclear weapons would be used. It was apparently agreed that the military planning should be conducted on this basis and that it should make the most efficient use of nuclear and other weapons ...

'As nuclear weapons become more readily available the day approaches when they will be necessary and normal for all N.A.T.O. forces... The decision to plan on this basis seems, therefore, to bring nearer a decision to distribute such weapons to N.A.T.O. countries which do not at present possess them - for instance to Germany once she has become a N.A.T.O. member...

'... There is now general agreement that military units and formations will have to be on a smaller, more highly trained scale and that they must be highly mobile, so that troops can be transported over positions contaminated in a nuclear war to seize or hold key points in uncontaminated areas.'

The Manchester Guardian, 18 December, 1954

'Thus the council has tacitly agreed that the military commanders can count on being allowed to use their atomic weapons in defence and the whole military organisation is to be recast on that basis...

'The North Atlantic Council has accepted the thesis ... that we are already "beyond the point of no return" with atomic weapons. It has accepted the view that our forces are bound to use atomic weapons against any major attack but has retained for civilians the power to decide what constitutes a major attack.

'The decision does not of course affect the independence of the United States and Great Britain to decide on the use of their long range bomber forces, which do not come under N.A.T.O. control.'

The Times, 20 December, 1954

'Commenting on this decision, Mr. Spaak said that it met exactly the wishes of the military, by authorising them to prepare for atomic war, but kept in civil hands the responsibility for deciding on the use of the atomic weapons.'

Press Interview of Mr. Foster Dulles reported in the Times, 22 December, 1954

'He explained that current military policies would gradually involve the use of atomic weapons for tactical purposes, in the same way that gunpowder had displaced the crossbow...

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'The issue of whether or not to use weapons of mass destruction arose in any war and, he suggested, did not involve a distinction between the destructive power of atomic weapons and that of old ones.'

The New York Times, 18 December, 1954

'Mr. Anderson (Robert B. Anderson, deputy Secretary of Defence) declared that military aid by the United States to its allies would be continued at "about current levels" and that both weapons and the training thus supplied would be "reoriented" to meet the needs revealed by studies of "the new concepts of warfare".'

New York Herald Tribune, 18 December, 1954

(Report by Don Cook)

'The United States position is basically : "We will consult if there is time and it seems necessary, but we will not have our hands tied". In any case the military planners have their clear directive, and the rest of the problem can only be decided by time or events'.

Atomic Weapons already available in Europe for NATO forces

In an article in The New York Times of 19 November, 1954 headed 'N.A.T.O. has cast the die for Atomic Defence' Hanson W. Baldwin describes atomic weapons already available in addition to 'thermo-nuclear bombs of million-ton TNT explosive power'. He says :

'Atomic weapons of lesser power ranging down to 12 or 14 Kilotons (thousand tons of TNT) have been ready in and around Europe for quite a long time. US Navy aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic have small "special weapons" (atomic) magazines and the aircraft ... to carry them.'

'On land the Forty Ninth U.S. Air Division, based in England and flying F.84 Republic Thunderjets and B.45 light bombers, has long been charged with the atomic support of N.A.T.O.'s ground forces.'

He then lists the following as available in Europe : Five six-gun battalions of 280mm 'atomic cannon' - range 30km; several battalions of 762mm free flight artillery rockets - 30km; the 'Corporal' guided missile with supersonic speed - range 160km; two squadrons Air Force guided missiles or pilotless planes - range 800km.

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ARGUMENTS DESIGNED TO CONFUSE THE PEOPLE

- 1- 'The decision whether to use atomic weapons has been left in the hands of the civilians'.

The aim of this argument is to confuse the issue and to gain acceptance of the idea that the use of atomic

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weapons is admissable. In fact the military plans are to be based on the use of atomic weapons. The military organisation is to be recast so that eventually the only way it will be capable of fighting will be by using atomic weapons. Thus the carrying out of these decisions will mean that if another war does start it will inevitably be atomic war. Furthermore these decisions, if applied, would make almost impossible any further negotiation on the banning or non-utilisation of atomic weapons. One of the aims of all the fuss that has been made about whether the politicians or the generals should decide has been precisely to distract attention from this principal question - that nuclear weapons must not be used at all, that experiments must be banned and that eventually all nuclear weapons must be forbidden with measures of strict international inspection and control.

2- 'It is only tactical weapons that are involved'.

It sounds so simple. And, in fact, this argument has had a certain success. 'Tactical' weapons sound so innocent and permissible. The aim of the argument is to disarm the opposition and win admittance for the principal of using nuclear weapons. These arms are 'tactical' only in the sense that they are comparatively easy to move about and do not need to be carried in long range strategic bombers, as, at present, the hydrogen bomb does. The smallest atomic missile among these weapons has an explosive power of 12 or more 'blockbusters' of the last war, with in addition dangerous radiation effects. The rockets and guided missiles can be equipped with warhead of the power and effect of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Once such weapons are used atomic war has begun. The only defence is to stop them being used.

3- 'There is not much point in developing new weapons unless we incorporate them in our armed forces and adapt our armed forces accordingly' (The Manchester Guardian : Editorial 20 December, 1954)

Once again the aim is to avoid the real question. It is assumed that atomic weapons are essential to 'defence' and must be produced. That the existence of these weapons is a threat to civilisation, that experiments with them threaten the continuance of life on this planet, are already having unpredictable effects on animal and vegetable organisms and on the atmosphere these facts are ignored. The dilemma is very simply solved. Universal agreement not to make these arms, to forbid experiments, to forbid their use, would make it unnecessary to incorporate them in the armed forces.

(Extract from an article which will be appearing in the next issue of the Information Bulletin of the World Council of Peace)

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