

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NLE 2007-237<sup>#1</sup>  
By MMK NLDDE Date 9/20/10

FILE LIVE OAK

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American Embassy, SHAF/L,  
Paris, France,  
August 17, 1959.

OFFICIAL-INFOIAL

Dear Foy:

I refer to previous letters from George West and myself concerning LIVE OAK, the last communication in this category being my letter of June 23.

On August 3, General Horstad sent forward to the Chiefs of Staff of the Tripartite Governments the revised LIVE OAK Planning Group paper on "More Elaborate Military Measures", with which he stated his agreement. For your information, he decided to give his approval to this paper only after considerable soul-searching since, in fact, he considers it as only partly responsive to his critical comment on the first draft. He told me in confidence that he let this latest study go forward because (1) it was obvious that the British were not going to budge from their restrictive approach to the problem, and (2) he felt that his own views had been effectively put on the record in his written reaction to the first draft. I imagine he may well have been motivated also by the fact that given the present turn of events on the international scene, the LIVE OAK planning effort is not destined to get much attention from governments in the months immediately ahead.

I would assume that those in the Department who are charged with this matter have by now received a copy of this third LIVE OAK study. Though I am told by Dick Finn at SECDEF that the American military planners who participated in the study were still unhappy about the final version, I believe that everyone agrees that it is an improvement over the first draft. I would say that the final paper recognizes that local military activity in the Berlin access area, while in itself inadequate to have a decisive effect on the Soviets,

could be

The Honorable

Foy D. Kohler,  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for European Affairs,  
Department of State,  
Washington.

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could be an indispensable factor in forcing the Soviets to realize that we mean business and thereby to provide circumstances in which negotiations with them might prove fruitful. In other words, it is recognized in the planning document that a limited ground force, backed by the threat of nuclear war, would compel the Soviets to face the unmistakable imminence of general war should they persist in obstructing the access to Berlin. There is also an interesting section in the study on the possibilities of encouraging a revolt in East Germany so timed as to deter the Soviets from initiating general war.

Though the U.S. planners attempted to eliminate it, there remain in the study vestiges of a British-introduced assumption that our rights of access to Berlin relate only to the physical means themselves and that, for example, there would be a distinction between a Tripartite military movement restricted to the Autobahn per se as against, let us say, a trespass by such a military column on the area just adjacent to the Autobahn. In the latter case, "East German sovereignty" is said to be involved and the Warsaw Pact would be invoked. I don't for a minute believe that the responsible British policy makers are so legally and politically confused as this one indicates; rather it is a matter of putting wraps on the already stolid imaginations of the military planners.

It may interest you that although the LIVE OAK project has been technically maintained on its original non-HATO basis, a number of SHAPE officers of British, French and American nationality have been drawn into the effort recently. For example, Brigadier Cardiff, the head of Public Information Division, is now wearing a hat as a LIVE OAK planner on the public information side. British and French officers at SHAPE played the most important role in Horstad's message to the Chairman of the JCS, which was the subject of Exhibit 318. Horstad also used some of the American officer personnel at SHAPE to firm up the language in the final version of the "More Elaborate Military Measures" paper. As you probably know, JCS was informed in CINCPAC EC 9 10915 of July 13 that the Germans were being cut in on the LIVE OAK planning through the German National Military Representative at SHAPE.

One last matter. In late June, General Paget, a French officer at SHAPE, recommended to General Horstad that he seek to obtain from the North Atlantic Council authority in advance

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to put into effect NATO military alerts in appropriate phasing with whatever alerts the Tripartite powers might adopt in the light of Berlin developments. Though General Norstad never took a final position on this recommendation, I believe he would recommend that at such time as the three governments "consult the NATO Council before initiating a probe" (JCS message 962347 of July 14 to CINCEUR), they should request the Council to give the NATO military authorities this discretionary power regarding alerts.

As stated at the outset, there is some question as to how lively LIVE OAK will be in the coming months, so this is likely to be the last informal report in this series for some time. I am going on home leave in mid-September, but during my absence George Vest here at SHAPE and Dick Finn at EUCOM will continue to give this project appropriate attention.

Sincerely,

Raymond L. Thurston

cc: Mr. Barbour, London  
Mr. Lyon, Paris  
Mr. Tyler, Bonn  
Mr. Finn, EUCOM/L

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As stated at the outset, there is some question as to how lively LINC PAC will be in the coming months, as this is likely to be the last informal report in this series for some time. I am going on leave in mid-September, but during my absence George Vest here at CIAFE and Dick Finn at RUCOM will continue to give this project appropriate attention.

Sincerely,

Raymond L. Thornton

cc: Mr. Barbour, London  
Mr. Igou, Paris  
Mr. Tyler, Bonn  
Mr. Finn, RUCOM

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