



General Lauris D. Norstad
24. März 1907 – 12. September 1988.
Amerikanischer General und Manager.
Ausbildung an der Militärakademie
West Point. 1930 Eintritt in die Kavallerie, später in die Luftwaffe. Bei Eintritt
der USA in den Weltkrieg stellvertretender Stabschef verschiedener Luftnachrichtenzentralen. 1942 Berufung in den
Stab von General Arnold. Bekanntschaft mit General Eisenhower. 1943 als
Brigadegeneral Leiter der Operationen der alliierten Luftstreitkräfte im Mittelmeerraum. Ab August 1944 verantwortlich für den Luftkrieg gegen Japan.
1951 Oberkommandierender der US-Luftstreitkräfte in Europa mit
Dienstsitz in Wiesbaden.
1953 als 4-Sterne-General Kommandeur aller NATO-Luftstreitkräfte. 1956–1962
NATO-Oberbefehlshaber. Anschließend in der Industrie tätig.

General Lauris D. Norstad
Alliierter Oberbefehlshaber von Europa
«The Task of NATO»

It is a great pleasure for me to visit Hamburg, and I am particularly happy to do so under the auspices of the Overseas Club. Your invitation is a great honour, and the welcome I have received here has moved me greatly.

I suppose that this city is one of the best known throughout the entire world. Certainly, in my own country every schoolboy has heard in his studies of the free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg. In the world of today you are respected as one of the great commercial and industrial centres, and as an important gateway to and from Europe. When we, as outsiders, think of this city, perhaps two of your characteristics are foremost in our minds: the great spirit of enterprise which has made you so important in a material sense and which in a short time raised you literally from the ashes of World War II; perhaps more important, however, is the love of freedom which has marked you throughout your long history and which today provides such a strong bond with other cities, other states and other countries.

It is this common bond of interest, to which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization provides the strongest ties, that I wish to discuss with you tonight.

When the last war ended, you citizens of Hamburg promptly and with great effectiveness undertook to repair the physical damage of battle. At the same time, I know that you shared the almost universal hope that we and our children could look forward to a world free from the threat of war – a world of normal, friendly relationship between men and between countries. But little more than a year later, it was clearly established that we would be faced with political aggression and military threat. The seizure of power by the Communists in Czechoslovakia, against the will of the majority of the people of that country, occurred in 1948. That same year, the brave people of West Berlin were besieged by a blockade. At almost the same time conditions were being created which would shortly lead to the unprovoked attack against South Korea, which was eventually to be thrown back by the forces of free countries under United Nations command.

There was at that time every reason, in prudence and selfpreservation, why twelve free nations of the West, who saw a common danger and felt a common sense of responsibility, should look urgently to their physical defense. This led to the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which was formally established by the signing of the Treaty in Washington in April of 1949 and which was enlarged by the addition of Greece and Turkey in 1952 and the Federal Republic in 1955. At my headquarters, we have just marked the Tenth Anniversary of the organization of Allied Command Europe and the supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe – SHAPE – which were established to develop and to unify our defense means.

The fact that there have been many and varied reactions in NATO suggests that it has many facets; that what each of us sees in it may be influenced to some extent by the particular position from which he looks. To some, NATO means armed forces – army, navy and air forces – deployed on or near the Iron Curtain for the purpose of defending the people and territory of the Atlantic Community. This is certainly correct so far as it goes, but it is perhaps incomplete. Some others seem to think only in terms of great and growing atomic armaments. Although it is true that such armaments do exist and must exist within the NATO arsenal, to think only in these terms presents a dangerously distorted picture. Still others think of the Alliance in political and economic terms, and quite correctly. I think that balance was introduced into the composite idea of the spirit of the Alliance by a London newspaper which said a year or two ago that «NATO has itself come to be synonymous with other combinations of letters which also stir deep emotions in the hearts of men – freedom, peace, independence, human comradeship and the will to survive.»

I myself think of NATO first as a purpose and as a set of principles to which we have dedicated our efforts, and then as responsibilities which relate to or derive from these principles – responsibilities which we are formally committed to meet.

In the simplest and most direct form, the aims to the Alliance are stated in the preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty. On this occasion, so near the Tenth Anniversary of Allied Command Europe, I think it is proper to consider the actual language of that document:

«The Parties of this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purpose and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all Governments.

They are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.

They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area. They are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defense and for the preservation of peace and security.»

This is not the occasion to trace development of our concept and strategy and I am sure that you understand that I cannot give you details of the strength, the very real power, which has been created since 1951 and which is being maintained and enhanced. We should note, however, that the increased effectiveness of weapons has permitted us to think in terms of a true forward strategy – and by forward strategy I mean defense on the eastern boundary of the NATO countries – a point of particular interest to the city of Hamburg. Although this posture has not been achieved in all respects everywhere throughout NATO Europe, it is the objective to be achieved as our growing strength makes it possible. This ability to think in a forward sense has given an expanded function, a great opportunity, to the armies, navies and air forces deployed in Europe.

The word «deterrent» has great currency in our time; although it is not always used in the same sense. Within the NATO meaning, the deterrent is made up of several essential elements. One is, of course, the retaliatory forces – the great strategic forces with which we are all generally familiar, and which for this reason I shall not discuss at any length now. I wish only to remind you that defense as well as deterrence requires that our military posture be built upon a foundation of adequate strategic retaliatory forces, in being and effective.

The other element of the deterrent – the one which I desire to talk to you about tonight – is also vital to both deterrence and defense. This is the Allied Shield Force, made up of the soldiers, sailors and airmen of the fourteen nations who serve in Allied Command Europe and who man the long forward line of NATO from the north cape of Norway to eastern Turkey, a distance of more than 4,000 miles. As military forces deployed along the NATO frontiers they contribute directly to the prevention of war by their presence and by their power. Added to the moral strength of which they are a symbol, they give us confidence that freedom can be preserved; they give a sound basis for the hope that war may be prevented.

Among the missions of this command is the classic one of defending – protecting the people and territory of the NATO countries. The presence of Allied forces in the forward areas – perhaps particularly the presence of the overseas elements of these forces, the British, the Canadian and the American – supply silent but constantly visible evidence of Allied determination and Allied strength. Just by being there for peaceful men and women to see as they pursue their normal life, they nourish the spirit of the Alliance; they give reality to the hope for peace; they certify to the watch being kept over their lands, their villages, their cities. This is a fact which I know means such to you people of Hamburg.

The important, perhaps the most important, task of Allied Command Europe is to contribute to the prevention of war – to complete the deterrent of which I have just spoken. To do this we must be prepared to meet with appro-

priate means the demands of any incident, intentional or unintentional, from the smallest consequence of an aggressor's miscalculation to conditions approaching those of all-out war. For this reason we feel that any valid strategy for Europe must have three objectives: *first* should an incident start, whether it is the result of a deliberate probing effort, or an unorganized and misdirected flare-up as the result of an accidental border incident, we must have here in Europe the means to force a pause, to compel a break in the continuity of the action that has started; *second* during this pause our posture, political and military, must be such that we can compel the aggressor to make a deliberate choice between ending the action or permitting it to grow; *third* while he is making this decision we must always confront the aggressor with the total cost of his action. He must be forced to realize that expanding the incident will not only place on him the moral responsibility for starting a general war, but it will promptly bring to bear the full strength of an alert and ready Shield and, if necessary, the full weight of the retaliatory forces. To this task the Shield Forces, with their ability to meet a threat with the strength in men and weapons appropriate to the situation, to provide a response adequate to the challenge, make a unique contribution; they can create the necessary pause, gain some time for thought, and, we would hope, prevent force from overcoming reason.

Another purpose of the Shield is to give real validity to the great strategic retaliatory forces. Were our strength inadequate, our equipment unsatisfactory, or our deployment improper, we would be permitted no choice of response between all-out, full-scale retaliation or no action at all. In such a case, doubt would certainly be cast on the deterrent value of all forces, particularly on the heavy strategic forces. Thus, the purpose of the Shield is to bridge the gap between all or nothing; to provide a means of defense appropriate to the measure of the threat; to give validity to the principle of deterrence and credibility to the role of the heavy strike forces.

It is NATO policy, and a sound policy in my judgment, that we must not use more strength than is necessary. But it is also NATO policy, and also sound, that we must be prepared to meet an attack with a counter effort that is clearly adequate. The force needed for this, as defined by our plans and programmes, is made up of army, navy and air force units of suitable size and types, with a balance of conventional and nuclear weapons. The substantial dependence which we must place on nuclear weapons is reflected in our plans; nevertheless, as conventional capabilities improve or increase, it should clearly be possible, under certain conditions, to raise the level of involvement at which such weapons would have to be introduced into the battle. Certainly, where the military situation permits, our forces must be sufficiently flexible to operate without resorting to arms or weapons equipped with nuclear warheads. On the other hand, they must be prepared to do so wherever such action is clearly necessary for our defense. The performance of these tasks will require Shield Forces of at least the general magnitude projected by our present programmes. I have never made a secret of the fact that I wish we could have even more.

It is my own opinion that the basic combat elements should be so organized, trained and equipped that in the event of an incident they would normally respond with conventional weapons. If, however, nuclear weapons must be introduced into the battle, the threshold of action at which this step would be taken should be a high one and the use of these weapons should result only from a specific and deliberate decision made at a level decided by proper authorities.

I believe that we must, throughout our planning and our training, give even greater emphasis to the need for conventional forces, for adequate manpower, for the so-called conventional weapons of the most modern type, and for increased tactical mobility; but we must also have suitable atomic units associated with our conventional forces, units which could be used if the situation requires. This would form a balanced team to halt the aggression, to force the pause.

The idea of the balanced team is illustrated by the mobile force which

SHAPE is now organizing. This has been called «the fire brigade». This mobile force was actually activated several months ago and we are now pressing vigorously to give it real life and substance. It has committed to it at this moment an initial nucleus of four reinforced battalions and four air squadrons. The mobile force may be considered a sort of strategic reserve, since its purpose is to provide a prompt reinforcement to any point within NATO where it could be effective in countering a threat which may have developed. A well-known general of the American Civil War – a great character – summarized his first principle of strategy as getting there «firstest with the mostest». This general principle is, of course, even more applicable in defense today than it was 100 years ago. Although in the mobile force the «mostest» may be relatively small in numbers, in terms of timely application, in terms of potential fire power, it could be more than the most which has ever been employed in this manner up to this time.

Such a force – the mobile force – could also serve an important political function. NATO political authorities could, for example, direct its use to demonstrate NATO solidarity and unity of purpose in a threatened area, to make it clear to an aggressor that an attack against one is in fact an Attack against all, not only in the abstract words of the North Atlantic Treaty, but also in solid reality.

I am sure that all of us must accept the fact that when one speaks of defense in the context of our times, the subject of nuclear weapons must play an important part. For this reason, the nature of the NATO atomic capability, its use and control, are subjects of the most serious study in NATO headquarters, political as well as military, and in many – perhaps most – of the capitals of the Alliance. I, as a military man, would under no circumstances wish to endorse a specific solution to what is overwhelmingly a political problem.

Since our political authorities are now preoccupied with this subject, for me to advocate a particular solution would be as unnecessary as it would be inappropriate. However, on the basis of my interests, my responsibility as Supreme Allied Commander Europe, it seems incumbent upon me to assist in defining the problem, at least so far as it pertains to my command. In doing this I wish to emphasize the fact that I speak as an Allied Commander. Nothing that I say should be construed as even suggesting the views or the positions of any government, of any individual, or of any agency other than myself and my headquarters.

The Heads of all the NATO countries gathered in a historic meeting in Paris in the fall of 1957. At that time they took certain important decisions relating to new weapons. The statement of the Heads of Government at the conclusion of that meeting may help to put the subject into proper perspective:

«The Soviet leaders, while preventing a general disarmament agreement, have made clear that the most modern and destructive weapons, including missiles of all kinds, are being introduced in the Soviet armed forces. In the Soviet view, all European nations except the USSR should, without waiting for general disarmament, renounce nuclear weapons and missiles and rely on arms of the pre-atomic age.

As long as the Soviet Union persists in this attitude, we have no alternative but to remain vigilant and to look to our defenses. We are therefore resolved to achieve the most effective pattern of NATO military defensive strength, taking into account the most recent developments in weapons and techniques.

To this end, NATO has decided to establish stocks of nuclear warheads, which will be readily available for the defense of the Alliance in case of need. In view of the present Soviet policies in the field of new weapons, the council has also decided that intermediate range ballistic missiles will have to be put at the disposal of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe.»

Very important progress in this field has been made since these decisions were reached. I wish to emphasize the fact that we have even now a very substantial nuclear-delivery capability, and this capability is distributed to almost every major Allied command. Some of the delivery vehicles have a dual pur-

pose; that is, they can deliver conventional as well as nuclear explosives. They are of many types, ranging from those designed for very short-range air defense and battlefield use to the mid-range ballistic missiles and the fighter and medium bomber aircraft. Let me emphasize again that equipment of this type is now deployed within Allied Command Europe.

In this discussion we should clearly distinguish between delivery means which, as I have stated, are distributed throughout the command, and warheads – that is, the actual nuclear components – which are handled quite separately. Under the NATO atomic stockpile system, the actual nuclear components would be supplied to combat units only when the situation clearly demands and only after a specific decision has been made to do so. Until that decision is made, the nuclear components themselves are retained in the strictest custody of the country from which they came. I wish to emphasize that the needs of Nato do not serve to enlarge or to expand the number of independent authorities having control of atomic warheads. There is no proliferation of independent nuclear capabilities; there is no extension of custody or control of nuclear devices.

In the course of the last year there has been increasing speculation on the future position of atomic weapons in the Alliance, their types and how they should be controlled. Here is where I feel that I may be of particular help by defining the problem rather than by proposing a solution.

There appear to be several related, but separate and distinct, areas for consideration. Of these, the question of control is of the greatest over-all importance, since it applies to what we have now as well as to what we will have in the future, regardless of the size or the particular nature of the stockpile or delivery capability.

The forces which are assigned to the NATO mission require the support of nuclear weapons. The defense of Europe against a serious, large-scale attack certainly depends on these weapons, as I have stated earlier this evening. This has given rise to two important questions: how can the Alliance as a whole be assured that such weapons will be available to it in all reasonable circumstances for the defense of Europe; and how do we meet the apparent desire for a broader sharing in the control of these particular weapons? The search for a fair solution to this problem of sharing of control is certainly of the most vital concern to all of us. I am pleased that this subject is being considered by the political authorities of the Alliance.

There is another subject now being discussed which bears very directly on my command. This is our need for mid-range ballistic missiles, which was recognized at the Heads of Government meeting in 1957. These are weapons whose range would permit them to operate where the battlefield types leave off, that is, from the 200 to 300 mile range, up to the 1,000 to 1,500 mile distance which is necessary to give us depth and flexibility and to permit the target coverage essential to the direct and immediate defense of Europe. This requirement does not go beyond the scope of the tasks presently assigned to my command; it springs directly from the functions and the responsibilities which we now have and which we have had for several years.

It is unlikely that even by 1970 the missile will entirely supplant manned aircraft in NATO Europe, perhaps particularly because of the continuing need for a conventional capability. However, it is clear that some of the roles which now could be performed by the fighter and bomber aircraft would in the future have been taken over by the missiles if our mission is to be accomplished. In fact, if in the 1965-70 period we are to have in this important field the same relative strength that we actually have had for the last several years, there appears to be no alternative. As we see it, this is a modernization programme. Such a programme does not create a NATO strategic force; in fact, in itself it is not even a step in that direction. It does not involve new functions, new tasks, or even, in principle, new weapons.

It simply calls for a modern delivery system. I have made my views on these military requirements known to our governments, as well as to the appropriate NATO authorities. I am confident they are giving full consideration to this subject. I have discussed it tonight for the sole purpose of clarification,

of definition. I am not here endorsing or proposing any particular solution to the problem.

At this anniversary period, as we look back over the last ten years, I think we can all be thankful that our countries joined together and seized the opportunity to protect our people from possible subjugation, humiliation and despair. As a result, we can – all of us – hold our heads high and point with pride to a full decade of peace and security – and I would certainly add prosperity – in our North Atlantic Treaty area.

This happy result has not been accomplished without effort and sacrifice. Nothing worthwhile, I believe, is accomplished without sacrifice; and no doubt or joint sacrifice for freedom will have to continue for many years to come. Nor was it accomplished without developing a concept of defense which in many respects is new and bold, a concept designed to match the speed and power of modern warfare – a concept of *collective* defense. I profoundly believe this concept is both sound and necessary. By its very nature it threatens no one and because it is unified it multiplies our power. It has maintained peace in the NATO area.

Behind the Shield of our defenses our countries have not only lived secure from invasion; they have prospered and they have learned to work together. Through the exercise of their free institutions they have developed the resources and the means to project their set of values – their way of life – beyond the area guaranteed by the North Atlantic Treaty. I think we have reached a point where we can grasp new opportunities and accept new challenges in our Alliance. Since our opportunities are greater and our joint resources are more adequate to the task, I believe we can think in broader terms and act in broader ways than we have done over the past ten years.

This reaching out to new horizons can only be done on the basis of the position of strength and confidence that has been achieved. I need to say to you that I am an advocate of continued NATO military strength, fully adequate to defend against, and hence in deterring any attack which may be launched against us. This collective defensive strength must be maintained. It must keep pace with the requirements imposed by the threat against us. It must be maintained until an agreed system of controlled and thoroughly safeguarded disarmament, unhappily not yet achieved but sincerely sought by all of our countries, is established.

A great American, one-time Secretary of State and one-time Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, said:

«I have lived with the reality of war, and I have praised soldiers; but the hope of honorable faithful peace is a greater thing and I have lived with that too. That a man must live with both together is inherent in the nature of our present stormy stage of human progress, but it has also many times been the nature of progress in the past and it is not reason for despair.»

May I say that this great man was right – we do not know despair. We have created strength, moral as well as material. We have gained confidence in ourselves and respect from our opponents. May we worthy of this heritage of faith and hope we now enjoy. ■