

UNCLASSIFIED

NSC 22/A

COPY NO. 43

A REPORT
TO THE
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

by

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

on

PHASE-OUT OF THE BERLIN AIRLIFT

July 25, 1949

WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED
Auth: F.O. 11652
Date: 7/11/82
By: Scapone/H/12/82
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

UNCLASSIFIED

July 25, 1949

TOP SECRET
UNCLASSIFIED

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

to the

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

PHASE-OUT OF THE BERLIN AIRLIFT

References: A. NSC 24/3
B. NSC Actions Nos. 233 and 225

At the request of the Secretary of Defense the enclosed memorandum on the subject is submitted herewith for consideration as a matter of urgency by the National Security Council of the recommendation contained in the next to the last paragraph thereof.

It is recommended that, if the Council concurs in this recommendation, it be submitted to the President with the recommendation that he approve it and direct its implementation by the Secretary of Defense.

SIDNEY W. SOUERS
Executive Secretary

Distribution:

- The President
- The Secretary of State
- The Secretary of the Treasury
- The Secretary of Defense
- The Secretary of the Army
- The Secretary of the Navy
- The Secretary of the Air Force
- The Chairman, National Security Resources Board

DECLASSIFIED

Auth: E.O. 11650

Date: 7 APR 1979

By: SCOTT R. DAVIS

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

UNCLASSIFIED

25 July 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Phase-Out of the Berlin Airlift

You will recall that NSC 24/3, approved by the President on 15 June 1949, recommended as interim measures, while the Council of Foreign Ministers was in session and also thereafter, unless a clear written agreement were reached providing definitive arrangements for adequate rail, road and water access to Berlin, that:

"a. All efforts, including the airlift, be made to increase the reserve stocks of supplies in Berlin.

"b. The airlift system be kept in a state of readiness for full operation."

As you know, no definitive agreement confirming Western Allied transportation rights to Berlin was achieved at the recent session of the Council of Foreign Ministers. In recent messages to the Department of the Army, the United States and British Military Governors have estimated that the Berlin stockpile of 1,100,000 metric tons of supplies, a reserve of four to five months for the western sectors of Berlin, will be achieved approximately by 17 August 1949. This is regarded by them as a maximum stockpile that is practicable both from the point of view of storage and finance. When the stockpile is completed, there will still be a surplus of intake capacity by rail and barge of some 6,000 tons daily above requirements.

The Military Governors therefore consider that immediate steps are necessary to reduce the airlift by phases beginning 1 August 1949. The fastest and safest practicable rate of phase-out will, in their opinion, require three months to complete. With respect to the possibilities of a reimposition of the Berlin blockade, the Military Governors have recommended:

a. That two troop carrier groups, U. S. Air Force, and two heavy transport squadrons, Royal Air Force, remain in Germany.

b. That their governments make appropriate arrangements to insure that the airlift can be built up again so

as to attain full scale within a period of ninety days.

c. That each Air Force in Germany shall insure that installations within its control are maintained sufficiently to insure that the airlift can be built up again at the rate given in b above.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff feel, and I concur, that adequate provisions have been made to insure the establishment of the Berlin stockpile, and that adequate provisions can be made to insure resumption of the airlift if such resumption becomes necessary. However, the phasing-out of the Berlin airlift has implications beyond those of a purely military nature, and I therefore recommend to the National Security Council that the National Military Establishment be authorized, as a matter of urgency, to phase out the Berlin airlift, commencing 1 August 1949, provided that action by the National Military Establishment is taken to insure that in an emergency the airlift can be re-established at full capacity within ninety days.

Inasmuch as no meeting of the National Security Council is scheduled prior to 1 August 1949, I suggest that concurrences in the recommendations set forth in this memorandum be indicated by voting slips rather than by the calling of a special meeting for this purpose.

/s/ LOUIS JOHNSON