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Tibbetts

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American Embassy,
The Hague, Netherlands,
March 15, 1957.

Dear Bruce:

Here is the further letter I promised you on the subject of Defense Minister Staf's visit to Washington. It may contain information you already have, but better to give you that than to omit something.

Minister Staf leaves here on March 26, arriving in New York on the 27th. He will be accompanied by General McQueen and Mr. Jacob Everts who is now acting head of Military-Economic Affairs in the Foreign Office since van der Beugel moved up to become State Secretary. The General and Everts will proceed direct to Washington from New York to complete final arrangements for Staf's Washington visit. The Minister will visit Fort Sill on March 28-30 where he will see a demonstration of modern weapons. On Sunday, March 31, he will be in Baltimore and will proceed to Washington on April 1. On April 3 he returns to New York, leaving there aboard the Nieuw Amsterdam on April 4.

While we have not heard finally from Staf about the subjects he will wish to discuss, the agenda to date, as we know it, will include the following subjects:

(1) Modern weapons. As you already know, we have informed Staf of our intentions regarding the Honest Johns and the conversion kits, and the MAAG is now in the process of sending him a letter setting forth the conditions to be accepted by the Netherlands prior to action by the MAAG in recommending that these weapons be provided to the Netherlands Armed Forces. As this subject is so current, and undoubtedly is moving faster in Washington than we know here, there is little else to be said on the subject. The only thing I might add is that those who talk with Staf might be reminded that it was he who suggested at the NATO meeting last December that, when U.S. dual-purpose weapons have been stationed in Dutch and other NATO territory, the atomic warheads also be stored there under U.S. control for use by the Dutch and other NATO members should an emergency require. I should add that we have had some

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correspondence with Leonard Unger on this subject and he will be directly interested in this part of the talks with Staf.

I'm talking to Leg + Man Ribbentrop about this

See that OSD knows this

(2) Spare parts. Although the Dutch have known for some time that they will be responsible for providing their own spare parts, the MAAG finds that they have as yet made no arrangements for purchasing the parts nor, in fact, have they established the necessary organization within the RAAF, the branch directly concerned. There is difficulty involved in committing funds now for 1958 since the funds have yet to be appropriated - hence the delay in arranging to purchase spare parts. The MAAG is working on this with Staf and his people and they expect to be able to find a satisfactory solution. As to the necessary organizational arrangements, these have apparently been put off because of the financial problem. However, the MAAG has urged Staf to go ahead now so that the organization will be ready to move when the financial questions have been straightened out. This he has now decided to do.

(3) Army reorganization. Now that the Dutch Army is being reduced from 5-1/3 divisions to 4-1/3 divisions (resulting eventually in 2 active divisions rather than 1 with the other 2-1/3 divisions being reserve), the question arises of possible excess materiel. Staf has two concerns in this respect. First, he fears that there may be a premature decision to remove from the Netherlands the excess materiel produced by the Army reorganization before it has been possible to make a clear determination how much materiel will be excess. The MAAG has reassured him on this point. His second concern stems from the fact that he would like to be able to keep at least some of the excess materiel for training purposes. However, on this score, the MAAG has been able to give him no assurances.

This appears to complete the roster of subjects so far as we now know. If there are others which we subsequently learn Staf intends to raise, we will endeavor to let you know in time. In any case, General McQueen will be fully briefed and, since he will be in Washington several days before Staf arrives, I think it would be a good thing for you to get in touch with him. Besides, he is a Marine General and a good guy so you should certainly know him.

Sincerely,

Bill

William B. Dunham

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