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NINE POWER MEETING, SEPTEMBER 28-29, LONDON

Eden-Benelux Foreign Ministers
Meeting September 11

The attached paper is the unofficial transcript of the meeting of the Benelux Foreign Ministers and Eden held in Brussels on September 11. It was handed to Buchanan by Bech who requested that it be held in strict confidence.

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Report on the meeting of 11 September 1954 at Brussels between Mr. Eden, Foreign Secretary, and the three Foreign Ministers of the Benelux Countries.

1. Framework of the Problem

After the rejection of the EDC by France, it is necessary to examine how to proceed to maintain Germany in the Western orbit and to have Germany participate in the defense of Europe.

It is firstly a political problem: the question of German sovereignty. This question, not coming under the competence of the Benelux Countries, was only touched upon the the Ministers.

German rearmament is recognized by all the Atlantic nations as a necessity. Without it, the military structure of NATO risks floundering.

It is thus necessary to find a solution to have Germany participate in the European defense. This solution must be such that the Germany of today will find it acceptable. But the solution must at the same time prevent the renaissance of German militarism. On the other hand, moreover, it must also be acceptable for France, that is to say such that France can not legitimately refuse it without risking seeing herself accused of desiring to have a neutralist policy.

2. The British Proposal

a) The British Government has taken the initiative of finding another solution.

Mr. Eden, after having seen the Benelux Ministers, will go to see Chancellor Adenauer, then Minister Piccioni at Rome; finally, he will meet, towards the end of the week, M. Pierre Mendes-France at Paris.

After having confronted his ideas with those of his colleagues and after the questions will have been examined by the Chancelleries and their experts, a preparatory Conference will be called, on the 8th or 9th. The participants at this Conference will then take the question before NATO.

b) Great Britain wishes to bring Germany into NATO, while stipulating guarantees with regard to Germany.

An EDC with supranationality removed hardly seems desirable to Great Britain. NATO would be perfectly suitable moreover to attain the desired end.

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The British Government believes that one could give a new substance to the Treaty of Brussels. Germany and Italy would be admitted. The 7 Powers of the Treaty of Brussels would place themselves within the framework of NATO.

3. Advantages of the British Proposal

The Benelux Countries recognize the advantages of the British proposal.

- a) Psychologically, the effect upon public opinion, even in France, should be excellent, the initiative coming from Great Britain.
- b) Great Britain, within the Treaty of Brussels, assumes the same obligations as its partners. This is what France has always requested.
- c) For Germany and Italy, the solution appears perfectly acceptable.
- d) The Treaty of Brussels exists, it would only be a matter of expanding it and giving it a military substance. Politically, the situation of the British Government vis-a-vis its Parliament seems rather advantageous, because the principle of such a Treaty is already accepted.
- e) The guarantees of the Treaty of Brussels (Article IV) are more efficient (efficacious) than those of NATO.

4. Intrinsic Difficulties the British Solution Faces

a) The Treaty of Brussels is a treaty of alliance. Any idea of supranationality is excluded. The Benelux Countries regret it, but they are in agreement for accepting the solution, never abandoning the final goal of a European integration.

M. Spaak would have preferred a watered-down EDC or perhaps a little NATO. But he accepts the idea of the Treaty of Brussels.

The abandonment of the idea of supranationality must, on the other hand, facilitate the support of France to the proposed solution.

b) The text of the Treaty of Brussels contains, in its preamble and its Article VII, references to Germany which, under present circumstances, are irritating. It should be recalled that these phrases were inserted in the Brussels Treaty to meet U.S.S.R. susceptibilities.

c) From the technical point of view, there are equally some difficulties requiring study. Thus notably, the Powers of the Treaty of Brussels have transferred their military attributions to NATO.

But all of these difficulties are not of a nature to lead to a rejection of the British proposal. The true difficulties are found in the political level.

5. German

5. German Incidences

Germany of today is no longer that with which we have negotiated the EDC. The situation has evolved.

Germany demands its sovereignty.

From the military point of view, Germany does not accept, in principle, that one imposed limitations upon it. Adenauer has declared that Germany would agree to consent itself to limitations. But what would be the value of such a declaration by the Chancellor or his Government? It would be necessary, first, that the German Parliament ratify such a declaration, at least that one could arrive - which will be difficult enough - to fix it conventionally.

Adenauer seems to be sincere; he is a convinced European. But what would be the situation in Germany and even within his coalition? What would happen the day when Adenauer will no longer be in power? Better to proceed seeking a solution with him.

The great danger, that is the renaissance of German militarism. Adenauer himself is worried about this. In an integrated European army, German militarism could have been extinguished. It is to be feared that German militarism does not crystallize around autonomous German divisions.

Adenauer has played the European card. He has said that if the European idea succeeds, nothing but the idea of German nationalism only remains. Presently, German youth is, in its majority, for the European idea. One must not throw the youth back into nationalistic and militaristic ideology.

A Germany living outside the European community perhaps would wish to play the game of balance between the USA and the USSR.

It therefore must be done, while there is still time, that we definitively fix Germany in the Western orbit.

6. French Incidences

The great enigma is on the French side.

What does the French Parliament desire? Is it only hostile to a supranational solution or will it oppose German rearmament as such?

What does Pierre Mendes-France wish?

After the

After the Conference of Brussels and notably after the use of it he made before the French Parliament, it is permissible to doubt his sincerity. Pierre Mendes-France wears a mask. So long as he does not let it fall, negotiations are difficult, because they are not carried out in an atmosphere of confidence.

(Omission)

It is necessary to say without ambiguity to the French and above all to French public opinion that if France does not wish to accept a reasonable solution, the solution will be made without her.

No one desires the isolation of France. It would be agonizing for the Benelux Countries to make, finally, a choice for Germany and against France.

But it is to France and to her Chief of Government to choose. If Pierre Mendes-France wishes the isolation of France, if he wishes to install a neutralist policy, he must carry all the responsibility.

Pierre Mendes-France has repeatedly declared that he wishes to attach to the present question the liquidation of that which he calls "all the Franco-German contentions".

The Three Benelux Ministers affirm that they can not accept the interdependence of these two questions.

The question of the Saar has greatly evolved since the rejection of the EDC. The Luxembourgish Government is not in agreement with French plans for the canalization of the Moselle.

7. Possible Guarantees

While admitting Germany into the Brussels Pact and NATO, one must seek guarantees against the dangers of German militarism.

These guarantees can be found in a limitation of the German contribution, in a control of the use of German forces, in a control of the production of arms, etc., etc.

But one must seek for limitations which, while being fully efficient, would not appear discriminatory towards Germany and would be accepted by it.

It does not seem impossible to arrive at a solution in this regard, with the assistance of technicians, counting on the European spirit of Adenauer.

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