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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Proposed Conference between delegations from the Congress of the United States, the Canadian Parliament and the Assembly of the Council of Europe

Report
Bureau of the Assembly
Rapporteur: Mr Bengt F. ELMGREN, Sweden

A. Draft Resolution

The Assembly

1. Considering that it is most desirable to consolidate the relations of confidence existing between the democratic countries of Europe and North America;

2. Recalling that a first conference took place in Strasbourg in 1951 between a delegation from the Congress of the United States led by Senator J.F. Green and Representative Eugene Cox and a delegation from the Consultative Assembly;

3. Considering that since then the peoples of Europe have laid the foundations of a United Europe community by creating the European Economic community—to be completed, it is hoped, by the formation of a Free Trade Area; Euratom; the Coal and Steel Community; and the European Atomic Energy Agency;

4. Considering that a discussion of these developments and other problems of mutual interest, by disclosing opinions on both sides of the Atlantic, will lead to better understanding and contribute to the solidarity of the Western world;

5. Recalling that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has welcomed " any initiative by the Consultative Assembly to establish liaison with the Canadian Parliament and the Congress of the United States " and that the Ministers have expressed their approval in principle of a Second Strasbourg Conference[1]

6. Requests the President to make- the necessary contacts and to send invitations at the appropriate time to the presiding officers of the two Houses of the Congress of the United States and of the Canadian Parliament with a view to holding a Second Strasbourg Conference in 1959 on a date and with an agenda to be mutually agreed.

1. See Resolution (51) 37 of the Committee of Ministers and Doc. 635, para. 38.

B. Draft Order of the Assembly

The Assembly instructs the Secretary-General, in accordance with Article 38, paragraph (d), of the Statute of the Council of Europe, to bring Resolution... to the notice of the Committee of Ministers and to request the Committee to include the necessary credits in the budget for 1959.

C. Explanatory Memorandum

1.

1. On the 17th January 1958 the Assembly requested the Bureau "to study the possibility of organising another meeting between delegations of the Assembly of the Council of Europe, of the United States' Congress and of the Canadian Parliament. The object of this meeting would be to discuss the political problems arising out of the development of close relations between Europe, the United States and Canada " (Order 119).

2. Informal contacts have been made in Washington and in Ottawa with a view to ascertaining whether a second Strasbourg Conference as proposed by the Assembly would be practicable.

3. The following points emerged from these informal and exploratory discussions:

a. The persons contacted both in Ottawa and in Washington were clearly interested in the idea of a second Strasbourg Conference, provided a convenient date could be found. It is believed that, subject to this condition, invitations would be accepted.

b. It was felt, however, that the Conference, if it takes place, must be given a specific purpose. There was much interest in Ottawa in the Common Market and the proposed Free Trade Area and their possible effects on the Atlantic Community as a whole. While it was a little early to see precisely what the subject-matter ought to be, it was considered thatthere must be a clear distinction between the Second Strasbourg Conference and the Conference of Members of Parliament from NATO countries, which, of course, discusses the purely military and political affairs of N.A.T.O.

c. The date of the second Strasbourg Conference ought probably to be chosen independently of the Conference of Members of Parliament from NATO countries. The autumn of 1959, possibly October, appeared suitable for the Canadians and Americans. It was not unlikely that the delegations would be different from those sent to the Conference of Members of Parliament from NATO countries.

d. The proposed distribution of seats (14 United States, 10 Canadian, 24 European) was acceptable. There would be no objection, from the North American side, to a slight increase in the European delegation to make it fully representative.

e. It was felt in Ottawa that it would be useful if, nearer the date of the Conference, the President or a Vice-President of the Assembly could go over to America so that the agenda could be definitely settled and all necessary arrangements made. It was strongly felt that all details must be agreed in advance of the Conference. This was the procedure adopted for the first Strasbourg Conference.

f. Any official invitation from the President of the Consultative Assembly should be sent, in the case of Canada, to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, who would transmit it to the Speaker of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Commons. In the case of the United States, the invitation should be addressed to the Vice-President of the United States and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, but transmitted through the State Department.

4. In the light of this information, the Bureau considered that it is appropriate to go ahead officially with arrangements for a second Strasbourg Conference and that at the appropriate time formal invitations ought to be sent to Canada and the USA. The Bureau consequently submits to the Assembly the draft Resolution and the draft Order contained in the present report.