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European Defence

Report

Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Rapporteur: Lord DUNCAN SANDYS, United Kingdom



A. Explanatory Memorandum

1.

1. At its meeting of 17th September 1950, the Bureau of the Consultative Assembly requested the Committee on General Affairs to submit to the Assembly for consideration a Report on " the developments, both national and international, which might have a bearing on Recommendation N° 52 ", relative to the creation of a European Army, adopted by the Assembly on 11th August last.

2. The Committee on General Affairs after discussion decided to recommend to the Assembly the adoption of the draft Recommendation which appears in Part II of this Report.

3. Voting on the separate paragraphs of the draft Recommendation was as follows :

in favour - against – abstentions

— - - - —

Preamble - 19 - — - 2

Para 1 – 19 - — - 2

— - 2 - 19 - — - 2

— - 3 - 18 - — - 3

— - 4 - 18 - — - 3

— - 5 - 16 - 1 - 3

4. On paragraph 2, dealing with the question of German participation, a German Representative proposed the following amendment :

" After paragraph 3, add the following paragraphs :

- a. " Recognises that no participation is possible for Germany without first restoring full equality of rights between herself and the other Western powers in all fields, particularly the political and economic; "
- b. Recognises that German participation can only be effected behind a covering screen of Atlantic armies sufficiently strong to ward off any attack from the East and to save Germany from scorched earth tactics."

This amendment was rejected by 15 votes against, 1 vote in favour and 5 abstentions.

5. The Greek and Turkish Representatives expressed anxiety lest Greece and Turkey should appear to be excluded from participating in the European Army and from sharing in its protection on the ground that they are not signatories of the North Atlantic Pact. Paragraph 5 was accordingly drafted in such a manner as to avoid this implication.

6. The text of the Recommendation, as finally amended, was adopted by 18 votes in favour, 1 vote against and 2 abstentions.

7. An introductory statement submitted by the Rapporteur to the Committee on General Affairs is attached as an Appendix to this Report for the information of the Assembly.

B. Draft Recommendation

The Assembly, recalling its Recommendation No. 52 of 11th August 1950, in the following terms :

" The Assembly,

" in order to express its devotion to the maintenance of peace and its resolve to sustain the action of the Security Council of the United Nations in defence of peaceful peoples against aggression, calls for the immediate creation of a unified European Army, under the authority of a European Minister of Defence, subject to proper European democratic control and acting in full co-operation with the United States and Canada,"

1. Welcomes the decision of the North Atlantic Treaty Powers to form a joint Atlantic Force for the defence of Western Europe, with the full participation of the United States and Canada;
2. Considers that the defence of a territory, which includes Western Germany, naturally requires German participation;
3. Recognises that such German participation will only be acceptable to democratic opinion throughout Europe, including Germany, if it is undertaken within a permanent European defence organisation;
4. Reaffirms the necessity for the creation of a European Army, in accordance with the Assembly's Recommendation of 11th August; and
5. Urges the Governments concerned to overcome the differences which exist between them on the problems of military and political structure, so that without delay the European Army may make its contribution to the Atlantic Force.

Appendix 1 APPENDIX I

Introductory statement on European Defence presented by Mr. Sandys, Rapporteur to the Committee on General Affairs

1. On August 11th, the European Consultative Assembly, by a large majority, passed the following Recommendation :

" The Assembly, in order to express its devotion to the maintenance of peace and its resolve to sustain the action of the Security Council of the United Nations in defence of peaceful peoples against aggression, calls for the immediate creation of a unified European Army, under the authority of a European Minister of Defence, subject to proper European democratic control and acting in full co-operation with the United States and Canada."

I. Atlantic Force

Decisions of North Atlantic Council.

2. Since August, a number of highly important and welcome decisions have been taken by governments under the auspices of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

3. As regards the desire for " full co-operation with the United States and Canada ", these decisions go far beyond anything the Assembly dared to hope for in August. Previously, under the North Atlantic Treaty, the United States and Canada had accepted the obligation to come to the assistance of the other signatory states in Western Europe only in the event of an attack upon them. The American and Canadian governments have now decided actually to contribute American and Canadian troops to a joint Atlantic Defence Force and to send them to Europe in the immediate future, with a view to providing in advance a deterrent against possible aggression.

German Participation.

4. Furthermore, the three occupying powers have guaranteed the territory of Western Germany against attack and have thereby virtually extended to her the protection of the Atlantic Pact. This has led automatically to the acceptance of the principle that the Germans should be invited to make their contribution to the common defence of western Europe.

Liaison with Greece and Turkey.

5. In addition, it has been arranged for regular contact to be maintained between the Mediterranean Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the General Staffs of Turkey and Greece. Whilst this will not confer upon these two countries membership of the Atlantic Alliance, it will provide them with increased assurance of help in the event of attack without extending their own military commitments.

Strengthening of national defences.

6. Furthermore, almost all the Western European countries have, in the last two months, taken far-reaching decisions to strengthen their national defences. These include the creation of additional combatant formations, increases in defence expenditure and the expansion of programmes of armament production.

II. European Army

7. The recent announcements of the Atlantic Powers have given new hope and confidence throughout Western Europe. Nevertheless, it has been made clear by several governments that the decision to form an Atlantic Force for the defence of Europe has not rendered the proposal for a European Army superfluous.

Two purposes of a European Army.

8. The Strasbourg Plan for a European Army was designed not only to meet the immediate threat from Soviet Russia, but also to prevent the less immediate, but none-the-less serious, danger of the revival of German militarism. Press and parliamentary reactions show that public opinion in Western Europe is almost as apprehensive about this second danger as it is about the first.

9. It will be recalled that in the debates of the Assembly last August, representatives of all nationalities, including the Germans, emphasised that any troops raised in Germany should be limited to the numbers required for her contribution to the international force. This attitude has since been confirmed in statements made by the German Federal Chancellor and other political leaders in Western Germany. Whilst, therefore, the formation of the proposed European force would not affect the right of any country to continue to maintain its existing national army, it is agreed on all sides that there can be no question of recreating a German national army or General Staff..

Equality of Status.

10. Dr. Adenauer has, however, made it clear that within the European force, the German contingent must enjoy a status of complete equality with the contingents of other nationalities; and that on no other basis would German participation be possible. The French Government have declared their acceptance of this principle.

Size of Units.

11. For reasons of political security, the French Government and Parliament have insisted that, in the proposed European Army, no large formations of a single nationality should be permitted. Under the Plevin Plan, it was originally proposed that the troops in each national contingent should not be organised above the level of battalions. This proposal met with strong criticism in military circles, particularly in America, on the ground that it would be difficult to build up rapidly an efficient international force with units smaller than divisions and that to attempt to mix nationalities at any lower level would greatly increase the complications of organisation and language.

12. The differences between Governments on this question have held up the appointment of the Supreme Commander of the Atlantic Force. This has caused impatience and criticism in the United States. However, the problem is at present being discussed between the Governments concerned and it seems likely that a compromise solution will be found, possibly on the basis of combat teams.

A permanently integrated force.

13. But whatever may be decided about the size of units, it is clear from the recent parliamentary debates that democratic opinion in France and Germany would not consent to the raising of German troops, except on the condition that they are incorporated in a permanently integrated European organisation.

14. The inclusion of the European contingents in an Atlantic Force would not be regarded as a sufficient safeguard, since it is uncertain how long this force would continue to exist. Some day the Soviet menace, which is the only reason for the creation of the Atlantic Force, will, it is hoped, come to an end. American troops would doubtless then be withdrawn from Europe. With them, the Atlantic Pact Supreme Command and military organisation would come to an end also. If there existed no European military framework to hold them together, the European contingents would automatically revert to separate national control.

15. Despite the most exhaustive examination of this problem between governments and in parliaments and press, no satisfactory solution has been proposed other than the creation of a permanent European Army within the wider framework of the Atlantic Force.

Composition of Atlantic Force.

16. The Atlantic Force would thus be composed of two elements under a Supreme Commander :

A homogeneous American Expeditionary Force (and possibly also a Canadian Expeditionary Force);

An integrated European Force, composed of contingents from the European countries, organised in mixed formations within the permanent structure of a European Army.

17. It will necessarily take a certain time to set up the organisation of a European Army. In the interval the defence of Western Europe would continue to be provided by the national armies organized as at present. However, these would presumably be placed at the disposal of the Supreme Commander of the Atlantic Force when he is appointed.

III. Ministerial Control

18. In its Resolution of 11th August, the Consultative Assembly recommended that the proposed European Army should be placed under the authority of a " European Minister of Defence, subject to proper democratic control."

19. At that time, it had to be assumed that, apart from American occupation forces in Germany, the responsibility for the defence of Europe would, in the first instance, have to be borne exclusively by the European nations themselves and that assistance from North America could only be counted on in the event of actual aggression. The welcome but unexpected decision of the United States Government to send American troops to Europe as part of an Atlantic Defence Force has introduced new factors which necessitate a revision of the Assembly's recommendation in regard to ministerial control.

20. The European Army would no longer operate independently as was envisaged by the Assembly, but would form part of the Atlantic Force. On all operational matters, the European Army would receive its orders from the Supreme Commander of the Atlantic Force, who will himself be responsible to the Council of Ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. There can, therefore, be no question, so far as the operational direction is concerned, of interposing any form of ministerial authority between the European Army and the Supreme Commander.

Special Responsibilities of European Nations

21. However, the European States of the Atlantic Alliance are in a special position and have special responsibilities. It is in their territories that the Atlantic Force will be stationed and it is over their countries that the battle, if there is one, will be fought. They will be responsible for providing the Atlantic Force with quarters, supply bases, military communications, aerodromes and a wide variety of civilian services. They will also have many common problems affecting the equipment, pay, training and administration of the contingents which they provide for service in the European Army.

22. All these are matters which call for ministerial consultations and joint decisions on the European plane.

French Proposal for European Defence Minister

23. The French Government under the Plevin Plan have suggested the appointment of a European Defence Minister to undertake these and other related responsibilities ; and since a Minister must be subject to democratic control, they have recommended the creation of a European parliamentary body to whom the proposed Minister should be made accountable. The governments of Western Germany and Italy have shown themselves favourable to the proposals.

Alternative Proposals

24. The reactions in political circles in certain other countries show that any proposal to set up a supra-national parliamentary authority of this kind would, in present circumstances, be rejected by a substantial number of the Member States, including Great Britain. On the other hand, the exercise of democratic control through an inter-governmental council composed of Ministers responsible to their respective parliaments would, in these countries, have a much greater chance of acceptance.

25. In this connection, it has been suggested that the Ministerial Council envisaged might appoint either one of its own number or an independent person to be its permanent chairman with authority to act on the Council's behalf.

26. Another possible solution which is being considered is to revert to the proposal originally made in a Motion submitted to the Assembly in August by MM. de Menthon, Bidault, Reynaud and other Representatives that, instead of a Minister, a High Commissioner for European Defence should be appointed.

27. Whilst the Assembly will, no doubt, be willing to consider favourably any solution which may be agreed between governments and which will enable its plan for a European Army to be implemented, it would be wise to await the outcome of these negotiations before formulating any further detailed proposals.

Review by Consultative Assembly

28. In any case, the European Consultative Assembly should continue to keep under close review the international problems of European defence and to make such recommendations as it may from time to time consider necessary.

Appendix 2 APPENDIX II

Communication concerning the Report relating to European Defence, made on behalf of the Committee on General Affairs, by M. BIDAULT, Chairman

The Committee on General Affairs considered the following proposal submitted to it by M. Mac-cas. It decided to ask the Assembly to transmit this proposal as a document for the information of the Committee of Ministers.

The Assembly,

Considering that, though it is not within the competence of the Council of Europe to make decisions on the defence of a free Europe, it is fully qualified to give its opinion, so that it may help in co-ordinating the initiatives already taken and the efforts made up to the present time towards the attainment of European security within the framework of the security of the free nations of the world;

Recommends the Committee of Ministers to propose to the Governments of the Member States of the Council of Europe that they conclude an agreement, in the following terms :

Draft Convention

The Member States of the Council of Europe,

Considering that both their fundamental duty towards their peoples and the various contractual obligations assumed by them either under the Charter of the United Nations, under the Brussels Treaty, under the Atlantic Pact or under the recent Resolution of the United Nations advocating united action for peace, imposes upon them the vital necessity of seeing that the collective security of their peoples is strengthened and of co-ordinating all the efforts so far made to this end, at any rate in so far as they concern the security of Europe.

Considering, also, that such co-ordination may be achieved either by the progressive strengthening of the various organs that already exist within the Atlantic Pact, or, without prejudice to this method, by the conclusion, within the framework of this Pact, of partial agreements binding only on certain of the Powers signatory to the Pact or co-operating in it, and integrating them into a closer grouping of their resources for common defence,

Agree as follows :

1. The High Contracting Parties or certain of them are authorized to bring about by special negotiations and to achieve by partial agreements as close a co-ordination as possible of their resources for defence. These resources, having been thus co-ordinated, placed under a common command and united under the direction of a common High Commissioner for Defence, who will himself be subject to the control of a common authority, will, within the structure thus set up, be entirely at the disposal of the combined signatories of the Atlantic Pact with a view to achieving the specific purposes of that Pact;
2. Those of the High Contracting Parties engaged in these special negotiations will, at regular intervals, give an account of their progress both to the other Member States of the Council of Europe and to the other parties to the Atlantic Pact and will keep the latter informed among other things, of the means envisaged for the co-ordination of their united defence resources with the forces assigned to the security of Europe by the other signatory States of the Atlantic Pact ;
3. At every phase in these negotiations, as also following the ultimate achievement thereby of a partial agreement, one or more of the High Contracting Parties not sharing in it will be at liberty to participate, and it will be possible for them if they wish to declare their adherence to a partial agreement already conducted, either by the adhering State appending its signature later or by means-of a special protocol laying down, if necessary, the precise degree of adherence which it is thus prepared to give ;
4. The present Convention when put into effect shall not in any respect impair the validity of the Atlantic Pact and the Résolutions already jointly adopted by the States signatory to this Pact, with regard particularly to the single command of the European defence forces of these States, it being understood that the joint command of the forces of those of the States which may be grouped together under the terms of Article (1) of the present Convention will be subject to the single command established by the signatories to the Atlantic Pact.