Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 8
05 May 1951

Political Aspects of European Defence

Report[1]
Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy
Rapporteur: Ms Margaretha Albertina Maria KLOMPE, Netherlands

1. 1951 - 3rd Session - First part

A. Draft Resolution

The Committee on General Affairs submits to the Assembly the following Resolution :

" The Assembly,

(i) Taking due note of the efforts of the free peoples of Europe to increase their defence potential and to ensure their own security and the security of the free world,

Reaffirms the common determination of the peoples of Europe to ensure the maintenance of peace and to oppose all acts of aggression,

Declares that the countries of Europe should, in close collaboration with one another, take all measures necessary for their defence. Such measures will thus contribute to the strengthening of the political and economic unity of Europe,

(ii) Drawing attention to its Recommendations of 28th August and 23rd November, 1950, on Specialised Authorities (Docs. 121, 123 and 154, 1950) :

Renewing its Recommendations 52 and 162, 1950 of 11th August and 24th November, 1950, on the European Army,

Considers that unity of Europe can only be guaranteed if all the Membpr States remain free to take part in the measures initiated by the Council of Europe,

Expresses the hope that all the free States of Europe who may so desire should be invited to take part in the present negotiations for the creation of a European Army,

Desires that such negotiations should in the near future lead to a result which should be in accordance with the aspirations of the Assembly and with the interests of the European community. "

B. Explanatory Memorandum

1.

1. In the course of its previous discussions the Assembly emphasised that it did not propose to deal with the military aspects of defence but solely to study the general aspects of peace and European security. This point of view is very clearly expressed in Motions adopted in August, 1950 (Doc. 80 and122,1950). Initsinitialreportto the Second Session the Committee on General Affairs expressed a similar concern, and this view was supported by Representatives to the Assembly in the course of recent discussions in the Joint Committee bearing on this delicate question of the competence of the Assembly. Having these considerations in mind, the Committee has deemed it scarcely expedient to submit to the Assembly a report of a technical nature. The Assembly will, moreover, appreciate the difficulties which would be experienced in establishing such a report. The Council of Europe has no official sources of information available on military matters, and the documentary material likely to be assembled by Representatives would invariably risk being open to dispute. On the other hand, it would not be practicable to divulge, in public reports, confidential data relating to national defence.

2. Our Committee has therefore deemed that it should confine itself to picking out a few important political aspects of the present situation, to which the Assembly might usefully call the attention of Governments. The problems of European defence are constantly undergoing development. They are contingent upon the efforts undertaken by each country, upon the course of certain negotiations, such as the Paris Conference, upon the work of the international Organisations formed to strengthen the security of the free world and, above all, upon developments in the world situation. In these circumstances the Committee can do no more than submit an interim report. It will proceed further with its study during or after the Session of the Assembly.

3. A large number of democratic States in Europe, whatever the principles of their foreign policy, are now making a considerable effort to increase their defence potential. This effort is motivated solely by the desire to ensure their security. On various occasions the Assembly has expressed the desire for peace of the countries which it represents. The Committee has deemed it useful to proclaim.it-again, at the same time emphasizing the extent to which the peoples of Europe are opposed to any policy of surrender as also their profound solidarity in the' face of threats of aggression.

4. In the course of previous debates in the Assembly several Representatives expressed their concern that the efforts undertaken in the cause of defence might relegate to second place the moral, political and economic principles on which the ideal of European union is based. A United Europe conceived as a military coalition seemed to them a pis-aller, to be avoided at all costs. The economic problems raised by the defence effort, the common desire to prevent its involving widespread inflation and a fall in the stan- dard of living of the countries concerned, should encourage the Governments to increase their efforts to achieve the economic integration of Europe. In the last few months various concrete proposals have been made, either by the Governments (institution of a common defence budget enabling costs to be evened out) or in the Assembly (establishment of a European Office for Raw Materials).

5. It is not for your Committee to study the technical aspects of these problems. Other tendencies have, however, manifested themselves. Fears have been entertained lest the defence effort should involve the danger of the nations reverting to a policy of economic nationalism. There is not the slightest doubt that the Assembly is absolutely opposed to such an attitude. While pursuing their defence policy, European countries must seek to promote closer ties with one another in all fields, and the defence effort may indeed be considered as a favourable opportunity to achieve new progress in the political and economic integration of Europe.

6. The Assembly is faced with a clear-cut problem. The Paris Conference on the European Army has been going on for several months. Proposals have already been made by several Representatives on the possible structure of a European Army. M. Scherer has, in particular, put forward various suggestions to the Assembly. A Motion submitted by M. Mercouris (140, 1950), was referred back to the Committee on General Affairs. The latter also received a copy of a memorandum sent by Mr. Sandys in his own name to Governments taking part in the Paris Conference. Your Committee was of the opinion that it was inexpedient and even dangerous for the Assembly to embark at the present time on any discussion of the detailed structure of a European Army. In the absence of precise information with regard to the progress of negotiations such discussions, whatever the spirit underlying them, run the risk of hampering inter-Governmental talks. It would, moreover, be difficult for Representatives to take any firm stand at the present time without having available complete data enabling them to do so.

7. The Committee has, however, deemed it advisable to draw the attention of the Assembly to the problem of general policy raised by the selection of the participants in the Conference. It has furthermore considered that the very creation of the European Army, whatever the obstacles to be overcome, should remain in the forefront of the considerations of the Council of Europe.

1.1. Participation of the Member States of the Council of Europe in the Conference on the European Army

8. When the Assembly formulated its policy with regard to Specialised Authorities, it frequently emphasised that this policy should be developed within the framework of the Council of Europe. In particular, it considered that it should be possible for the Member States of the Council, if they so desired, to take part in the negotiations for the establishment of a European Specialised Authority. That seemed to it essential as a guarantee of the unity of the Council of Europe. There is no doubt that the Conference on the European Army was to a very large extent brought about by the Recommendations of the Assembly. First of all, on 11th August, 1950, the latter requested " the immediate creation of a unified European army. " On 24th November, 1950, it renewed that Recommendation, stating clearly " that no discrimination should be made between the participating countries. "

9. It would not be inappropriate at this point to recall certain passages in the statement made before the Consultative Assembly, on 24th November, 1950, by M. Robert Schuman. M. Schuman said inter alia : " W e desire the unification of Europe. This idea is the very raison d'être of the Council of Europe. To unite Europe—this is our chief and most immediate task. A guiding principle of this kind is only satisfactory to the extent that it proves itself to be useful and workable from a great many points of view. " and he continued : " Th e reason why we advocate organising our defence on a European scale is that we are intent on building up Europe, one single and complete Europe. "

10. The fact that the Assembly has always shown its wish that the European Army should be developed in close liaison with the United States and Canada, and should make its contribution to the unified Atlantic Force, is no reason why all the Member States of the Council of Europe, who so desire, should not take part in the negotiations on the European Army. It will be necessary to take particular measures, both political and military, with regard to the States which are not at present signatories to the North Atlantic Treaty. The formulation of such provisions should not cause any great difficulty, since measures for co-operation have already been considered by the Atlantic Council with regard to the organisation of the Mediterranean sector.

11. It must not be forgotten that the establishment of a European Army has a political significance far greater than that of the purely military organisation provided for within the framework of the Atlantic Pact, and that fact should encourage the Governments to overcome the difficulties mentioned above. This was excellently stated to the Assembly on 24th November by M. Schuman. After pointing out that the creation of a single Atlantic command still allowed for the existence of national units—and even of whole national armies—and did not solve the problem of the countries which were not signatories to the Pact, he added : " Lastly , as has rightly been pointed out, the Pact has a purely temporary aim, whereas a European Army, in our opinion, constitutes a permanent solution and should guarantee peace against every sort of threat to Europe, internal and external, present and to come. "

12. The Assembly has always considered that one of its most important functions was to contribute to the maintenance of the unity of the Council of Europe. Bearing in mind the previous Recommendations adopted by the Assembly and statements by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, your Committee suggests that the Assembly express the wish that the basis of present negotiations on the European Army be widened. Invitations to take part in the Paris Conference should be extended to all Member States of the Council of Europe. The Committee has not deemed it opportune to submit too clear-cut a proposal on the manner in which such invitations should be sent (whether on behalf of the initiating Government or the plenary conference).

1.2. Progress of the negotiations on the European Army

13. The observations made above on the political implications of a European Army acquire particular significance on the morrow of the signature of the Treaty setting up the European Coal and Steel Community. The creation ôf a European Army would constitute a positive step towards the establishment of the " political community " which the States signatory to the Treaty have expressly stated to be their political objective. Your Committee therefore proposes that the Assembly renew its Recommendations of August and November, 1950, on the European Army and express its keen desire to see the Paris negotiations result in solutions acceptable to all, in the higher interests of a United Europe.

14. The Motion submitted in the second part of this Report summarises the various considerations set forth above. It was adopted by 10 votes to 3, with 2 representatives abstaining. Some of the Representatives who voted against the Resolution or who abstained from voting revealed that they themselves and their friends had either voted against the Recommendations of August and November, 1950, or had abstained and that, as their views remained unchanged; they were not in à position to agree to a new text incorporating the previous Recommendations. Other Representatives could not agree to the text of the Motion because it appeared to them to go beyond the functional scope and prerogatives of the Council of Europe. Lastly, one Representative was of the opinion that the Conference on the European Army should have been organised by the Council of Europe itself, and that this procedure alone would have maintained the European character of the proposed institution. The text of the present Motion appeared to him insufficiently explicit, and he preferred to abstain from voting.

15. The Committee studied the present report in the course of its eighth session, on 23rd and 24th April, 1951, with the Chairman, M. Bidault, in the Chair, and the following Representatives being present : MM. Georges BIDAULT (France), Chairman (SCHERER, Substitute), ASQUINI (Italy, Substitute for M. TREVES), CROSBIE (Ireland, Substitute for Mr. NORTON) GERSTENMAIER (German Federal Republic), VAN DER GOES VAN NATERS (Netherlands), KAPANI (Turkey), MANDALINCI (Turkey), MOMMER (German Federal Republic), MOUTET (France, Substitute for M. MOLLET), MULLER (Saar), VON RECHENBERG (German Federal Republic), DE LA VALLÉE POUSSIN (Belgium, Substitute M, STRUYE), VIARD (France, Substi-iule for M. BONNEFOUS), WISTRAND (Sweden), and Mlle. KLOMPÉ, Rapporteur. I should like to express to them and particularly to the Chairman, M. Bidault, my deep appreciation of the help they have afforded me.