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Common European Policy at future East-West Conferences

Draft order

tabled by the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Draft Order of the Assembly¹

The Assembly instructs the Committee on General Affairs, during the month preceding the opening of the Second Part of the Seventh Ordinary Session, to present a draft Resolution setting forth a common European policy to be followed in the East-West negotiations.

Introductory Report presented by M. de Menthon, Rapporteur

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Four-Power Conference at the level of Heads of State will begin in Geneva on 19th July, that is to say within the fortnight following the debate in the Consultative Assembly at Strasbourg. This imposes a great responsibility on our Assembly.

Certain persons, not members of our Assembly, have expressed doubts about the wisdom of holding this debate before the Geneva Conference. We disagree with this opinion : European public opinion, whose qualified representatives we are, should be heard on the eve of the Conference, of which the preparation should not be left exclusively to the secret negotiations of the Chancelleries. It should be remembered that our debate in 1953 made a notable contribution to Western unity of purpose at the Berlin Conference and that the Committee of Ministers subsequently thanked the Assembly for the help and support the debate had given to those who took part in the negotiations on that occasion.

2. Only two Member States of the Council of Europe will be represented at Geneva. It is of course the case that none of the Western Governments which will take part in the Geneva Conference intend to follow the procedure adopted at Yalta or at Potsdam, and there is no question of any one of them attempting to decide on the future of the States not represented at the Conference without reference to the latter. A number of discussions will have taken place before the Conference opens, in particular within the framework of N. A. T. O. But, since the questions to be examined are essentially European, the Council of Europe should be recognised by the Governments of the two Member States which will be represented at Geneva as being the organisation which is qualified to work out a common policy for the European States, Members of the Council, it is therefore of cardinal importance that the opinion of all the democratic countries of Western Europe should be given expression by their parliamentary representatives at Strasbourg before the negotiations begin. In this way, the British and French delegations at Geneva will be entitled to speak in the name of Western Europe as a whole.

It is equally evident that the problems which are the concern of any State in particular should not be resolved without the agreement of that State's representatives. It is for that reason that the German Federal Republic, as the most interested party in the problem of German reunification, has been closely associated with the preparation of negotiations on this question.

1. See 4th Silling, 6th July, 1955 (Draft Order adopted) and Order 69.



3. The Assembly, because it is concerned to help and not to embarrass the Governments responsible for the conduct of the negotiations, should confine itself in July to a statement of general principles. On the eve of such delicate negotiations great discretion is required from a parliamentary assembly; this is especially the case when one of the other parties to the negotiations is a totalitarian Power which has no need to concern itself with the reactions of public opinion. This discretion is, moreover, called for in view of the traditional technique of Soviet representatives at international conferences : that of submitting initial proposals going far beyond their minimum objectives, and, if as a result their adversaries appear to yield ground, of following up not with reciprocal offers of compromise, but only with fresh demands.

4. The question arises : what motives have inspired the recent Soviet initiatives.

It would appear a tenable deduction that the present rulers in the Kremlin have learned from the failure of M. Stalin's policy after 1948. They have realised that this policy provoked a close alliance of the western countries and led to the progressive strengthening of their unity and defensive power. They have no doubt inferred that a policy of so-called détente might more easily bring about a weakening of the western political alliance, a reduction of its military effort, and the strengthening of communist influence in the different western countries.

5. There are many indications that economic factors have played an important part in recent Soviet diplomatic moves, whether it be that the Soviet Government feels the necessity of reducing the Russian military effort in order to achieve an indispensable improvement in the standard of living; whether it be that the needs of industry, not only in the Soviet Union but also in the satellite countries and in China, demand a considerable development of international trade in order to carry out plans for economic expansion.

6. There are no doubt other factors, but, whatever the reasons for recent Soviet initiatives may be, Western policy for its part has always sought the establishment of a true and secure peace. That is why, after the failure of conference after conference, after rejection of countless Western offers, we are prepared once more to make an attempt to reach agreement. No effort is too great to achieve this end. We know that a war waged with the atomic weapons at present available would involve the destruction of civilised life on this planet. Furthermore, though the preoccupation with the risks involved in any war is fundamental, it is far from being the sole consideration. A genuine peace settlement requires a solution, respected by all parties, of the outstanding issues and the development of normal relations between all nations. Peace also demands that the basis of international relations shall no longer be the balance of military force between different States.

7. Even if the final goal of the Soviet Union remains the establishment of communism through the world, and only the means vary; even if no guarantee could ever be sufficient in the face of possible new volte-face in Russian policy, the Western Powers should enter these new negotiations—with prudence certainly— but, above all, with the will and the hope to make them succeed. There is nothing to prevent us from hoping that the present change in Soviet tactics may not be one that will last a long time. Moreover, we have not the right, nor is there any reason, to believe that the West will necessarily be the losing party in a period of détente and co-existence. The West has no reason to fear either the short-term or the long-term consequences of peaceful co-existence, for we have complete confidence in the triumph of democratic principles.

8. Before embarking on the consideration of the problem of German reunification, it is important to emphasise that the members of the Consultative Assembly are unanimous in recognising that it is entirely natural that the issue of reunification should be uppermost in the minds of all German Representatives. The Representatives from the other Member States of the Council of Europe fully share their concern, and realise that their desire for reunification does not include any intention whatsoever of " deserting; friends " but reflects an attitude that would equally be that of other Representatives were their countries similarly divided.

The desire of Western Germans for the reunification of their country will inevitably grow in the future. It is important in the interests of the unity of the free world that there be frank discussion of the problem now between the Western partners, in order to reach general agreement on the policy to be followed.

9. No real conflict exists between the general desire for security of the Western world and the desire of the German people for reunification. If German reunification were to be achieved on such terms that it led to the speedy communisation, not only of the Germany thus reunited, but of Western Europe as a whole, then it is clear that the term " reunification " would have no meaning for free men. The problem is not to accept this false dilemma between, on the one hand, the security of all including that of Germany, and German reunification on the other, but to find a solution which achieves both in the correct order of priority.

10. It would be unrealistic to believe that all the issues which separate the Communist from the non-Communist world can be resolved at one stroke, by means of a single all-embracing agreement.

It is held by some that we should proceed pragmatically, tackling one problem at a time : by others that the first step must be to establish general principles, or at least a general framework for discussion, and only subsequently to proceed with negotiations over problems, some of which could be considered simultaneously, while others would be dealt with one after the other.

The first method would be subject to risks if the immediate problems to be dealt with were not recognised as forming part of the general world situation. Peace is indivisible, and the West must therefore necessarily seek a world settlement. For the West, however, this world settlement must be based on the respect for certain fundamental principles, in particular the right of all peoples freely to decide their internal and external policies. It is essential that this should be appreciated by public opinion : if not, it will not understand the reservations which it may be necessary to make concerning partial settlements— for example, a settlement dealing with the future of the satellite countries—which, in themselves and taken out of the general context, might seem acceptable. Accordingly, each individual problem, and in particular the problem of German reunification or that of European unity, can only be considered in the context of the other problems which are connected with them.

It is, moreover, improbable that we shall know before the Conference opens what the Soviet Union is prepared to propose or to accept. Even then it may be many weeks or even months before the real Soviet position is made clear, as was the case in the London disarmament negotiations.

The attitude to be taken by the Western representatives at the opening of the Conference should be to recall, and to make explicit, the general conditions and consequences of a world *détente*, both in order to show that our peoples sincerely desire a peaceful settlement on the widest possible basis, leading to fruitful international co-operation, and in order to give a clear statement of the permanent aims of Western policy. It follows that thereafter the problems must be tackled one by one, in the spirit of the general policy thus expressed.

11. It is unnecessary here to dwell upon certain aspects, conditions and consequences of a complete international *détente* and of a genuine peaceful co-existence, for example, the development of economic co-operation and international trade; the increase of personal contacts ; the improvement of cultural relations ; the implementation of a joint plan for economic assistance to under-developed countries on a scale commensurate with their needs; co-operation in the peaceful use of atomic energy, or the political remodelling of the United Nations Organisation. We consider that important though these problems are for the organisation of peace and for the future of the world, it is impossible to deal with them effectively in the framework of East-West relations before certain prior conditions have been fulfilled. Sincere collaboration, be it economic, political or cultural, can be developed only between nations which believe that their security and their independence are assured and have eliminated the most acute sources of conflict between them. The benefits of peace can be secured only when peace really exists.

II. WESTERN AIMS AT THE CONFERENCE

12. The aim of Western policy is to establish conditions which will permit the creation of a free and united Europe, including a united Germany, in a world in which peace has been assured.

If a logical order of priority were to be laid down, we should say that security is the first condition; that reciprocal guarantees of security would then permit the reunification of Germany, and the creation of a free and united Europe; but the three problems are too closely connected for it to be feasible in practice to establish any such order of priority. It is more consistent with the facts to accept that the settlement of these three problems can only take place simultaneously and in association.

Security

13. This question must be introduced by re-stating the fundamental conditions of a general *détente*, even if such a *détente* appears difficult to attain in the immediate future, because our point of departure is a situation resulting from years of Soviet expansion followed by a long period of cold war.

14. Security in Europe cannot be assured as long as Soviet troops remain stationed in the centre of Europe. The Russian armaments policy and the forcible sovictisation of central and eastern Europe made necessary the conception and the development of the Atlantic Pact, which itself has always had a pacific and defensive purpose.

In order to preserve at least the precarious balance of forces which we have now attained, any modification of the position of the N. A. T. O. Powers would require a strictly similar modification of the Soviet positions. It would, for instance, be unthinkable that Soviet troops should withdraw 150 miles and American troops 3,000 miles. This means that there can be no question of a withdrawal of American troops to America and British troops to Britain unless all Soviet troops, technical personnel, etc. are withdrawn behind the present Soviet

frontiers. The partial evacuation of the satellite countries would likewise be insufficient. For example, the evacuation of Poland by the Red Army (but not by Marshal Rokossovsky and his fellow-officers in key posts), and her release from the provisions of the Russo-Polish Alliance (but not from the iron hold of the Communist Party), would be a mockery. The Soviet Union insists on the suppression of military bases on foreign territory. We need to know precisely how she proposes to apply this principle to her own arrangements.

15. Reciprocal respect for security and independence today has two aspects—the traditional aspect of military security, properly so-called, in face of an eventual attack across frontiers, the other a more recent development arising from the ideological causes of the present international tension inspired by Communist Russia. Security today requires a guarantee against all intervention, direct or indirect, in the internal affairs of other countries. The Soviet Union pays lip-service to the principle of non-intervention. It would be of value to know what the Soviet Union means in practice, in particular in respect of the satellite countries, and what proposals she has to make in that connection.

16. It would be impossible to establish any real degree of security whatsoever by measures limited in their effect to Europe. The West could risk no modification of its present defensive positions in Europe unless the most categorical assurances of the goodwill of the Soviet Union were at the same time given on the world level. If the Soviet Union claims proofs of goodwill from the West, the West has the right to demand the same of the Soviet Union. Only in the sphere of general disarmament can the Soviet Union offer convincing proof of its intentions never to have recourse to aggressive war. The view according to which disarmament comes after détente must be related to the fact that disarmament is necessarily a constitutive element of that détente. Nevertheless, to demand a final solution to the problem of disarmament as a prior condition to the settlement of European problems, would be clearly to condemn the forthcoming Conference to failure. But one decisive initial step at least must be taken.

Emphasis has rightly been placed on the more conciliatory position taken up by the Soviet Union towards the end of the negotiations within the Sub-Committee on Disarmament which met in London. Nevertheless, so long as the control of armaments is not effectively guaranteed and so long as the rule of unanimity is maintained concerning any violation of the undertakings accepted, it is only misleading to talk of genuine disarmament, or of a new Soviet position in this matter. The West should insist that the Soviet Union accepts :

*freedom for the disarmament inspectors to inspect other than designated " objects of control " ;
that the Control Authority take decisions by a two-thirds majority.*

An agreement of principle obtained on these two points could lay the foundation of a general and progressive disarmament pact providing for effective inspection and supervision, which the West could implement loyally without fear of its non-observance by the other side.

17. It is only if the Four Powers at Geneva, or thereafter, succeed in exchanging the reciprocal guarantees of security defined above, that it will be possible for the West to envisage implementing Western rearmament only within the framework of a general European security pact, which with the necessary modifications would extend the principles of the reciprocal limitation and control of armaments established within the W. E. U., to a much larger area. This development—which would in no way discriminate to the disadvantage of Germany—would of course be linked with the gradual reduction of all armed forces under the authority of an international controlling body.

German Unity

18. There is no difference of opinion about the need to re-establish the unity of Germany. We must therefore seek the practical means of achieving it.

19. For the sake of uncertain future gains the Soviet Union has not been willing to abandon the real advantages she holds at present : the strategic and political bases afforded by the Eastern Zone, with its mineral resources, particularly uranium, and the investment represented by ten years' effort to implant communist regimes in that area. It has been all the less inclined to do so now that the events of 17th June, 1953 have left few illusions as to the likely results of any free elections in a united Germany.

20. On the Western side the question has been asked : why exchange 50 million free Germans, whose allegiance to the West is assured and whose reconstructed economy is making rapid progress in a well organised State, for 68 million, whose international sympathies might, in the view of some, be less certain, whose economic viability and political stability more precarious? Would such a risk be worth running? How, could the Atlantic Treaty Powers a fortiori contemplate renouncing without compensation the economic and

scientific resources of Western Germany, and with it the air and ground defence space essential to the defence of the Continent? How could the other Western European nations renounce the partnership of Germany in the construction of a United Europe, which could evidently not exist without her?

21. If they are to have any chance of success, proposals for the settlement of the German question must not be directed towards radically modifying the balance of forces between west and east.

22. It is, however, equally true that the neutralisation of Germany is unacceptable for the West, including the great majority of Germans. The reasons for this are several, but the most important ones tersely summed up by M. Robert Schuman in the phrase :

" The neutralisation of Germany would lead to the neutralisation of Europe."

No word, however, has ever given rise to such confusion of thought as the word " neutralisation ". The neutralisation of a territory, or of a State, or of a group of countries, or of a continent, signifies that they have been neutralised by a decision imposed on them by others ; such neutralisation is total if it forbids accession to bilateral or multilateral agreements of any kind; it may also be partial, if for instance only military agreements are prohibited. The counterpart of this is necessarily a collective agreement given by the States imposing neutralisation in the form of a two-fold guarantee, on the one hand, that the territory concerned will not be used for military purposes and, on the other hand, that they will intervene militarily should this territory be violated by others.

There seems no doubt that the total neutralisation of Germany, with the maintenance of the present situation in the East, would be followed by a chain reaction leading to the total neutralisation of the other Western European countries which are members of the North Atlantic Treaty. In the present situation, even if the neutralisation of Germany were conceived only in a military sense, it would lead almost inevitably to total neutralisation, since the other countries of the European mainland would thereby be rendered militarily indefensible and would have no other course open to them.

The neutralisation of Europe in such circumstances is clearly inconceivable for reasons both of military security and of political independence. It would indeed mean the end of Europe : a great and probably final defeat of the West, it would give Russia " the prizes of war without paying war's price."

23. The neutralisation of Germany—even if in the military sense only—as a condition for her reunification, is therefore entirely unacceptable to the West. On the other hand, there is no question of laying down as a prior condition for the reunification of Germany, that reunited Germany should adhere to the Atlantic Pact or other international commitments to which the German Federal Republic is a party. Once free elections have been held, a reunited Germany will be free to decide its own foreign policy and participate in whatever European institutions it may choose.

However, it may be conceivable that the States concerned would agree to only a limited and controlled rearmament of a united Germany, under similar limitations to those applied within W. E. U., and eventually written into a European mutual security pact. In any event such an arrangement would not involve any discrimination against Germany once reunited; the limitation, inspection and safeguards accepted by Germany would later be extended to all European nations.

24. The problem of Germany's eastern frontiers cannot be passed over in silence. However, the settlement of this problem can only be reached within the framework of a peace treaty. It should be remembered that the German Federal Republic has, in the Paris Agreements, already given an undertaking not to resort to force in order to alter the present de facto situation.

European Unity

25. In her report on European integration ([Doc. 362](#)), Mlle. Klompé recalls the many reasons in favour of the unification of Europe. We desire the creation of a united Europe whatever the course international relations may take, and independently of considerations arising from the atmosphere of tension or of détente between East and West.

In the present report dealing with the East-West negotiations we must emphasise that European unity is the primary aim of the nations which form the Council of Europe, and moreover that its achievement will represent an essential contribution to the establishment of international peace.

26. To work for the unity of Europe is our absolute right; more, it is a vital necessity for our countries. The U. S. S. R. has, however, never ceased to denounce our efforts as a hostile 'move, and has striven to hinder their successful outcome by every means in its power. Can this attitude be explained otherwise than by a

desire to prevent us from strengthening the internal stability of Europe, from improving the economic conditions and living standards of our peoples, and from eliminating all sources of conflict between the European countries? A change in the attitude of the U. S. S. R. towards the idea of European unity would constitute a valid proof of her intention to give due consideration to the rights and interests of the Member States of the Council of Europe.

27. Paragraph 2 of Resolution 44 adopted by the Assembly on 26th September, 1953 declares that " the task of unifying the whole of Europe... constitutes an essential factor in the establishment of an enduring peace", an affirmation which it is unnecessary to amplify.

(i) European unity is an essential constituent of the whole peace structure, since it will establish a zone within which the possibility of armed conflict, or even of acute tension dangerous to world peace, will be rendered progressively more remote as the solidarity of our peoples is confirmed, and common institutions with effective powers are set up. Recent history reminds us that it was in Europe that the two world wars began, the second of which left behind a number of problems which have not yet been settled by a peace treaty. That Europe should cease at last to be the cradle of wars is evidently a development which has the most direct bearing on the prospects for the establishment of a lasting peace. The only possible opponents of this peaceful construction are those who harbour designs for reviving old quarrels to their own advantage,

(ii) It is inconceivable that a united Europe could be actuated by motives other than those of peace. Europe's military and geographical situation, its recent history, lead it inevitably to search for peace and to oppose any rash undertaking which might provoke armed conflict. Europe united and thereby restored to its rightful place in world politics, holding the key position in the regional security organisation of N. A. T. O. could contribute powerfully to the peaceful development of international relations. If the U. S. S. R. sincerely desires peace, it can wish for no better guarantee than the creation of a united Europe.

28. Europe is not co-terminous with the present frontiers of the free world, and the cleavage of our continent into two blocs is one of the most serious sources of insecurity and international tension. The West can never accept as final any settlement which would perpetuate the loss of their national independence and their political liberties by a large number of the peoples of central and eastern Europe.

Every country must be entitled in full independence to choose its political régime and its social structure. This choice implies that its elections shall be free, its government independent and that there shall be no intervention by foreign countries in its internal affairs.

If on the one hand it may be accepted that in the framework of a European collective security system provision be made for the arrangements which the Soviet Union might require in the interests of her military security, on the other hand every European State which desires to do so should at the least be entitled to join the European organisations of a political and economic character. In other words, the countries of central and eastern Europe should be entitled to join the Council of Europe provided they satisfy the conditions of membership. The unity of Europe in fact requires that certain standards be accepted which we are not willing to forego.

29. The establishment of a real system of security, the reunification of Germany by means of free elections, the construction of a united Europe in accordance with the conditions which have been outlined above, these represent the three fundamental principles on which should be based the common policy of the Member States of the Council of Europe, on the eve of the opening of general negotiations with the Soviet Union.

It is not for us to anticipate the course of the Conference in order to decide what attitude should be adopted to meet any particular proposal or refusal by the Soviets. We would simply assert that if it should prove necessary to accept certain compromises or certain interim agreements in order to establish normal relations between East and West, any arrangement thereby involved which might jeopardise the comparative security of the West so hardly won, or which might lead to the abandonment of an essential principle, would hinder rather than help the main purpose of the negotiations.