

Message from Dwight D. Eisenhower on the establishment of Western European Union (10 March 1955)

Caption: On 10 March 1955, the US President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, sends to the governments of Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom a letter in which he sets out the reasons why the United States welcomes the establishment of Western European Union (WEU) and his ideas on how relations between WEU and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) should be structured.

Source: Western European Union - Union de l'Europe Occidentale. [EN LIGNE]. [Bruxelles]: Union de l'Europe occidentale, [06.10.2000]. Disponible sur <http://www.weu.int/index.html>.

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Message sent by the President of the United States of America to the Governments of Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom (10 March, 1955)

At the time when there was under consideration the Treaty to establish a European Defense Community, I made a public announcement of certain principles which would guide United States policies and actions with respect to Western Europe in the event that Treaty should be ratified. Now, in substitution for that community, a plan has been evolved for a Western European Union. Obviously that union and related arrangements signed at Paris on October 23, 1954, when brought into force, will serve the vital interests not only of the members of the union, but of the peoples of the free world, including the United States. The United States has twice been drawn into wars which originated in Europe and today it maintains forces there to help minimize the possibility of another war. It is in the interest of the United States to help reduce such dangers.

To this end the United States committed itself to the North Atlantic Treaty. This Treaty is in accordance with the basic security interests of the United States, and the obligations which the United States has assumed under the Treaty will be honored.

The member nations are seeking to make the Atlantic Alliance an enduring association of free peoples within which all members can concert their efforts toward peace, prosperity and freedom. The success of that association will be determined in large measure by the degree of practical cooperation realized among the European nations themselves. The Western European Union and the related arrangements agreed upon in Paris are designed to ensure this cooperation and thereby to provide a durable basis for consolidating the Atlantic relationship as a whole.

It is my belief that the proposed arrangements when effective:

Will promote progress toward unity in Western Europe and draw together those whose past differences have led to recurrent war and gravely depleted Europe's human, material and moral strength;

Will restore sovereignty to the Federal Republic of Germany, a sovereignty which has now been withheld for ten years, during which time the Government and people of that republic have demonstrated that they are capable of worthily discharging their responsibilities as a self governing member of the free and peaceful world community;

Will, by controlling armament levels through an appropriate agency of the Western European Union, assure against militarism;

Will provide a core of unity at the heart of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, thus permitting adoption of practical defensive measures which offer good hope that any enemy attack could be stopped at the threshold;

Will enable the Federal Republic of Germany to make its appropriately measured contribution to international peace and security, in keeping with the spirit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization;

Will, through action of the North Atlantic Treaty Council, assure a closer integration of the armed forces in Europe of the member countries, thereby giving assurance that these forces cannot be used for nationalistic aggression or otherwise than for the security purposes envisaged by the North Atlantic Treaty.

At London on September 29, 1954, the United States Secretary of State, in order to facilitate efforts to produce an effective collective defense of Western Europe, indicated the conditions under which the United States might be prepared to make a policy declaration similar to that which was announced when the earlier European Defense Community plan was under consideration. I am glad to affirm that when the Paris Agreements have been ratified and have come into force, it will be the policy of the United States:

1. To continue active in the various organic arrangements established under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and to consult with other members of NATO on questions of mutual concern, including the level of forces from the respective NATO countries to be placed at the disposal of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe;
2. To consult, if so desired, with the agency for the control of armaments of the Western European Union with a view to assisting in the achievement of its objective of controlling armament and preventing unjustified military preparations within the members of the Union;
3. To continue to maintain in Europe, including Germany, such units of its armed forces as may be necessary and appropriate to contribute its fair share of the forces needed for the joint defense of the North Atlantic area while a threat to that area exists, and will continue to deploy such forces in accordance with agreed North Atlantic strategy for the defense of this area;
4. To cooperate in developing the closest possible integration among the forces assigned to NATO in Western Europe, including those contributed by the German Federal Republic, in accordance with approved plans developed by the Military Agencies and the Supreme Commanders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in accordance with the resolution adopted by the North Atlantic Council on October 22, 1954;
5. To continue to cooperate toward Atlantic security by sharing information authorized by Congress with respect to the military utilization of new weapons and techniques for the improvement of the collective defense;
6. In consonance with its policy of encouraging maximum cooperation among the free nations of Europe and in recognition of the contribution which the Brussels Treaty, as amended, will make to peace and stability in Europe, to regard any action from whatever quarter which threatens the integrity or unity of the Western European Union as a threat to the security of the parties to the North Atlantic Treaty calling for consultation in accordance with Article 4 of that Treaty.

In accordance with the basic interest of the United States in the North Atlantic Treaty, as expressed at the time of ratification, the Treaty was regarded as of indefinite duration rather than for any definite number of years. The United States calls attention to the fact that for it to cease to be a party to the North Atlantic Treaty would appear quite contrary to our security interests when there is established on the Continent of Europe the solid core of unity which the Paris Agreements will provide.

(signed) DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER.